

SEATAC MUNICIPAL COURT



“Prominent Women in Court history”

Did you know.....?

- Six of the nine Washington State Supreme Court Justices currently serving are women, including the Chief Justice. From left to right: Justice Mary Fairhurst, Justice Sheryl Gordon McCloud, Associate Chief Justice Charles Johnson, Justice Charles Wiggins, Chief Justice Barbara Madsen, Justice Steven Gonzalez, Justice Susan Owens, newly appointed Justice Mary Yu, and Justice Debra Stephens.



While women secured the right to vote over one hundred years ago in Washington (November, 1910), women have been part of Washington’s legal framework for a much longer period of time. Lelia J. Robinson moved to Washington Territory in 1883 because Washington had passed a law that allowed women to vote, serve on juries, and practice law (that law was later repealed, until women secured the vote permanently in 1910). Ms. Robinson had been the first woman lawyer to practice in Massachusetts when she decided to re-locate to Washington Territory. Here in Washington, she was the first female lawyer to present a case to a jury and the first female lawyer to present to a jury made up of both men and women.

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The first woman to win an election to any state Supreme Court was Florence E. Allen, who was elected to the Ohio Supreme Court in 1928. Thirty-two years passed before a second woman, Lorna Lockwood, was elected to a state Supreme Court, in Arizona.

The caption in the photograph below reads:
 “Wearing the hat which the Times recently said she refused to remove in the court room, when requested by a Seattle judge, saying ‘that the law said men must remove their hats, but it does not apply to women.’ When Mrs. Browne visited the local Equal Suffrage Club, a few weeks ago, she was requested by the members to wear this hat when addressing them. When she appeared wearing it, she was warmly greeted by her sisters.”- *Photograph of Attorney Leonia W. Browne, 1909; Courtesy Washington State Library*



ATTORNEY LEONIA W. BROWNE

Wearing the hat which the Times recently said she refused to remove in the court room, when requested by a Seattle judge, saying “that the law said men must remove their hats, but it does not apply to women.”

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The first female judge was the Honorable Reah Mary Whitehead, who graduated from the University of Washington Law School, and passed the Washington State Bar exam in May 1905. She struggled to find work as an attorney, but was appointed as Washington’s first female prosecutor in 1909. While prosecutor, she did not receive pay equal to that of her male counterparts. According to an article in the Seattle Times regarding Ms. Whitehead, “Although she has authority to try cases the same as other deputy prosecutors...Miss Whitehead will remain as clerk in the office of the prosecuting attorney and will not draw salary as a deputy prosecuting attorney. She will hold the title, however....” Ms. Whitehead fought to receive equal treatment and the same caseload as her male counterparts. She won every case she tried in Superior court.

She then successfully ran for Justice of the Peace of the precinct of Seattle in 1914, and held that position for nearly 27 years.

More than 55 years later, the Honorable Judge Nancy Ann Holman was appointed to the Superior Court of King County, making her the first female judge to preside over a county superior court. In 1981, Mrs. Carolyn Dimmick became Washington’s first female Supreme Court Justice.

“Seattle has two women jurists, Judge Othilia G. C. Beals and Judge Reah M. Whitehead, both regularly elected Justices of the Peace who handle all kinds of civil cases without discrimination as to sex. Judge Beals, a beautiful woman of what is generally termed the society type, is a magnetic public speaker as well as a judge of fine discernment.” – *Good Housekeeping, February, 1920.*

COURTROOM WORD SEARCH

S U S T A I N W O B J E C T R S
 D E L U R R E V O V U M B V W W
 S E C O O D I P T N D N J E D R
 U T I O P T N E M U G R A X A E
 Y U H A N D V R O B E R L N P D
 E T C G H Z X M T S S W N R B N
 R A N O I T U T I T S N O C C E
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 A E M O T I O N N M S U B P Q C
 S P K C D B T O C O E S R E D I
 P P A S E N S S E N T I W L M W

APPEAL, ARGUMENT,
 ATTORNEY, CASE,
 CONSTITUTION, COURT,
 DEFENDANT, DISMISS,
 EVIDENCE, JUDGE,
 JUDGMENT, JURORS, MOTION,
 MOTION, NOTICE, OBJECT,
 OVERRULED, PROCEDURE,
 PROSECUTOR, PUBLIC
 DEFENDER, QUESTION,
 RECESS, RIGHTS, ROBE,
 RULES, SENTENCE, STATUTE,
 SUBPOENA, SUMMON,
 SUSTAIN, SWEAR, TESTIFY,
 WITNESS

NOTE: "MOTION" IS FOUND
 IN TWO SEPARATE
 LOCATIONS WITHIN THE
 WORD SEARCH.

Visit http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_lawreview/vol68/iss1/7/ for an article about Lemma Barkeloo and Phoebe Wilson Couzins, believed to be the first female law students. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4S0IXC1RS8> to watch a video about Belle Babb Mansfield, the first female attorney in US History.

Visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myra_Bradwell for information on Myra Bradwell, a political activist and legal publisher, who appealed to the US Supreme Court for the right for women to practice law. Visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_E._Ray for information on Charlotte E. Ray, the first African-American female lawyer in the United States.



Newspaper clipping from the Seattle Sunday Times, "To Temper Justice With Mercy," 12/14/1908; Courtesy, Washington State Library, From the Scrapbook of Ms. Emma Smith DeVoe.



Newspaper clipping, "A Jury of Representative Women," 12/13/1908, Courtesy, Washington State Library, from the Scrapbook Collection of Ms. Emma Smith DeVoe.

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