



## Community Advocacy & Services Division (CAS)

Government  
Access

Civic  
Engagement

Community  
Connection

Youth  
Leadership

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### One Division, Seven Offices

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Office of Asian and  
Pacific Islanders

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Office of Deaf Services

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Office of Latino Affairs

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Office of Persons with  
Disabilities

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Office of Native  
Americans

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Office on the Status of  
African Americans

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## Celebrating the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and Women's Equality Day on August 26th

On Saturday, August 26, the [Iowa Commission on the Status of Women](#) and [Iowa Department of Human Rights](#) will honor five outstanding women for their contributions to empowering women of Iowa—and around the world. It is fitting that National Women's Equality Day is August 26 because these women define what it means to be an equal player in their respective fields. Nothing has held them back. No one has been able to stop them from a mission of service, sacrifice

## Office on the Status of Women

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### Our Commissions

Each commission is composed of Governor appointed volunteers. They have specific assigned duties under [Iowa Code](#).

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### **Iowa Department of Human Rights**

Lucas State Office Building  
321 E 12th Street, Second Floor  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone 515-242-5655  
Fax (515) 242-6119  
<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/cas>

and selfless determination to make a difference for all Iowans.

The inductees are U.S. Senator Joni Ernst of Red Oak, Governor of Iowa Kim Reynolds of Osceola, Christine Hensley of Des Moines and Jane Boyd, posthumously, of Cedar Rapids. Alicia Parrott Claypool of Des Moines will be receiving the Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice.

The free, public event will be held at 9:30 a.m. at Valley High School ([Staplin Performing Arts Center](#)), 3650 Woodland Ave, West Des Moines. Each year, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women and the Iowa Department of Human Rights pay tribute to women leaders who are role models making a difference.

The Iowa Women's Hall of Fame started in 1975 to highlight women's heritage and recognize their important contributions to society. Historically, women have been underrepresented in leadership positions and in Iowa, it is no different. Iowa women comprise 23% of the Iowa Legislature, 29% of the State Executive positions, 50% of the U.S. Senate and none are represented in the U.S. House of Representatives. Over 85,000 Iowa businesses are owned by women who are part of over 1.5 million citizens of the Hawkeye State.

Posthumously inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame will be [Jane Boyd of Cedar Rapids](#), an early civil rights leader, social worker, educator and leader for social change in an era when it was a difficult challenge.

[U.S. Senator Joni Ernst of Red Oak](#) is in her first term representing Iowa in the United States Senate. Not only is she the first female senator from Iowa, she is the first female combat veteran in U.S. history in the U.S. Senate, serving the nation as a commander in Iraq. Last year, she retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the Iowa Army National Guard.

Never one to shy away from the tough issues facing Iowa's capital city, [Des Moines City Council Member Christine Hensley](#) is recognized for her commitment to the betterment of the quality of life in Des Moines. She is a business leader, longest-serving Des Moines city council member; a mentor,

philanthropist and active with many causes and charities throughout Iowa. Her city council term ends in January 2018 after 24 years. She has served the downtown Des Moines and the tremendous construction boom.

Earlier this spring, our Women's Hall of Fame inductee [Governor Kim Reynolds of Osceola](#) became the first female Governor of the State of Iowa, joining Iowa's first Speaker of the House and Iowa's first Auditor of the State. She is recognized for her commitment to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program and her leadership acumen to all women and girls. She recently completed her term as the President of the National Lieutenant Governors Association.

[Alicia Parrott Claypool of West Des Moines](#) is aptly honored with the Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice because of her dedication and devotion as an Iowa civil rights leader and activist. She is widely regarded as an advocate for all Iowans, serving as the co-founder of Iowa Safe Schools; and founding member of Interfaith Alliance of Iowa.

Proudly with these inductions, 172 outstanding women of character and leadership will have been inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame. Please join us on August 26 for the Awards ceremony at the Staplin Performing Arts Center at Valley High School, located at 3650 Woodland Avenue in West Des Moines, followed by a reception to visit with the inductees. This is a moment of history for the Iowa Commission of the Status of Women and the Iowa Department of Human Rights.

*Written by [Sherill Whisenand](#), Commissioner and chair of the 2017 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame selection committee, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women*

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**August 26th  
is Women's Equality Day**

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The 19th amendment, which granted women the right to vote, was finally signed in late August of 1920 after decades of struggle. The 19th amendment passed when Tennessee Representative Harry Burn (the youngest member of the Tennessee House) cast his deciding "aye" vote. His mother, a suffragist, had written him "to be a good boy" and vote for ratification.

At that time, Tennessee became the 36th state out of the 36 required states to ratify the amendment. It was declared to be law and signed into the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920. Vermont and Connecticut shortly followed suit. Holdouts were:

- Alabama
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Virginia

Women's Equality Day (August 26th) has been an official national holiday since 1972.

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## **Some of Iowa's Most Famous Suffragettes**

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### **Carrie Chapman Catt**

Although born in Wisconsin, Carrie Chapman Catt prided herself on being an Iowan. She lived in Charles City, Iowa and later attended Iowa State Agricultural College (which is now known as Iowa State University) in Ames, Iowa. Catt was the only woman in her graduating class and was also the valedictorian. Catt became the first female superintendent of Mason City, Iowa and was an outspoken activist for women's suffrage throughout the state. Catt became involved in the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association as well as the National American Woman Suffrage Association

(NAWSA). Catt became one of NAWSA's most famous members and was good friends with famous suffragette Susan B. Anthony who she succeeded as president of NAWSA in 1900. Catt's most famous work is the ratification of the 19th amendment which granted women the right to vote. Catt was an outspoken supporter of the amendment and is credited as being one of the main driving forces towards its ratification. Catt was one of the first women to be inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 1975.

### **Amelia Bloomer**

An enthusiastic activist and suffragette, Amelia Bloomer moved to Council Bluffs at the age of 17. Bloomer attended the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York and shortly after, she founded and began editing the first-ever newspaper for women, *The Lily*, which became a model for future women's publications. While working on *The Lily*, Bloomer advocated for new wardrobe standards for women. She believed that women should not have to conform to the clothing criteria geared towards them that greatly impeded movement and simple, daily activities. Dress reform was believed to be an important step in defying traditional conforms. In her newspaper, she promoted the idea of women wearing loose trouser style pants underneath skirts; an idea that inspired by what women in the Middle East had already been wearing. This style became popular after Bloomer's endorsement and became widely known as bloomers.

### **Mary Jane Coggeshall**

Nicknamed the "mother of woman suffrage in Iowa", Mary Jane Coggeshall was a major figure in Iowa's suffrage movement. Coggeshall was a founding member of the Polk County Woman Suffrage Society, president of the Des Moines Equal Suffrage Club and a founding member of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association (IWSA). Coggeshall also marched in one of the nation's earliest suffrage parades that took place in Boone, Iowa in 1908. Coggeshall was appointed to the board for NAWSA, making her the first ever woman west of the Mississippi River on the board. She was

also the first suffragette from Iowa to further the cause nationally. In 1908, Coggeshall filed a lawsuit against the city of Des Moines because women were denied the right to vote in a city bond election. This action went against an 1894 ruling that allowed women in Des Moines to vote in such elections and the Iowa Supreme Court deemed the election void since women were unable to vote.

### **Arabella Mansfield**

Arabella Mansfield was born in Burlington, Iowa and became Iowa's first female lawyer during a time when the bar was still restricted to men and minorities. Mansfield graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College as valedictorian in 1865. In 1869, Mansfield began work as a law apprentice in her brother's office before deciding to take the bar exam and passing with high marks. Mansfield challenged the bar's restriction against women and minorities, won her challenge and caused Iowa to become the first state to allow women and minorities to take the bar and allow female lawyers.

*Co-written by Liz Dorwart (intern), Liz Nimmo (intern) and Kristen Corey, [Office on the Status of Women](#)*