

Women's Suffrage and Citizenship Marker Blurbs

1. **Sen. Arcada Stark Balz:** JOHNSON, MARION, MONROE COs.—Bloomington native Arcada Stark Balz grew up in Indianapolis, where she attended Normal College. In the 1930s, she served as president of the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs and director of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. In her club work, she delivered speeches encouraging women to get involved in policy making and advised on the Indiana club's legislative department. Balz became the first woman to serve in the Indiana Senate when voters elected her to office in 1942; she was reelected in 1944. As a representative of Marion and Johnson Counties, the Republican Senator authored legislation to eliminate neglect and abuse in nursing homes. Sen. Balz also served as chairman of the Postwar Planning Committee in World War II.
2. **Carrie Barnes:** MARION CO.—African American public school teacher Carrie Barnes served as president of Branch No. 7 of the Equal Suffrage Association of Indiana (ESA) in 1912. Of the branch's work, Barnes proclaimed "We all feel that colored women have need for the ballot that white women have, and a great many needs that they have not." While branch president and later as president of the Women's Council, she spearheaded local black suffrage work, collaborating with white branches and trade unions to obtain the right to vote.
3. **Virginia Brooks:** LAKE CO., IN, COOK CO., IL—Dubbed the "Joan of Arc" of West Hammond, social reformer Virginia Brooks organized for suffrage in the Calumet Region. Determined to end the mistreatment of immigrants and expel corrupt politicians from West Hammond (now Calumet City)—an Illinois town that overlapped into Indiana—she delivered speeches in barrooms, confronted law enforcement officials, and founded her own publication. At the encouragement of Indiana suffrage leader Dr. Hannah Graham, Brooks enrolled in the junior class of the Indiana Law School so she could better fight corruption. Close with African American suffragist Ida B. Wells, Brooks insisted that Wells be allowed to walk with the white delegation at the 1913 March on Washington.
4. **Bessie Eaglesfield:** CLAY, VIGO COs.—In 1875, under the ruling of the Vigo County Circuit Court, Elizabeth "Bessie" Jane Eaglesfield became the earliest known woman admitted to the Indiana State Bar. A Clay County native, Eaglesfield studied law in Terre Haute and in 1878 earned a degree from the University of Michigan Law School. After graduation, she practiced in Terre Haute, Indianapolis, and Brazil, Indiana before moving to Michigan in the 1880s. There, in addition to litigating cases, she practiced real estate, established businesses, and operated a steam ship on the Great Lakes called the "Golden Girl."
5. **Bertha Ehrich:** VANDERBURGH CO.: Elected president of the local Woman's Franchise League in 1916, Bertha Ehrich employed innovative methods to campaign for women's enfranchisement. She convinced the local movie house to show slides about the campaign for suffrage, challenged Mayor Benjamin Bosse about women's right to vote in an interview, and stamped her checks and mail with "Votes for Women" seals. Ehrich established training classes for suffrage activists and examined the impact women's suffrage would have on agriculture and immigration. In addition to enfranchisement, Ehrich lobbied for working women's equal pay and their appointment to positions related to public health and education.

6. **Lillian Thomas Fox:** MARION CO.—Nationally-acclaimed African American reformer and journalist Lillian Thomas Fox began her work as a reporter for the *Indianapolis Freeman* in 1891. She became the first African American in Indiana, and possibly the Midwest, to write for a white newspaper when the *Indianapolis News* hired her in 1900. Through her columns, activism with the Indianapolis Anti-Lynching League, and organization of the Indiana Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, she worked to empower the Black community in an era of extreme prejudice.
7. **Dr. Hannah Graham:** MARION CO.—Leading Indianapolis physician and suffragist Hannah Graham was born in Illinois in 1874. She graduated from the Central College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1897 and opened offices in Indianapolis. Dr. Graham was elected president of the Indianapolis branch of the Equal Suffrage Association (ESA) after reviving the organization in 1912. In this role, she was instrumental in garnering the support of organized labor for the suffrage movement. Along with African American leaders like Freeman Ransom, Dr. Graham was essential in founding African American ESA Branch No. 7.
8. **Equal Suffrage Association Branch No. 7:** MARION CO.—Madame C.J. Walker hosted the first meeting of Branch No. 7 of the Equal Suffrage Association of Indiana (ESA) in June 1912, where African American public school teacher Carrie Barnes was elected president. The branch welcomed men into its membership and worked with white ESA branches and trade unions to forward women's right to vote. The Women's Council replaced Branch No. 7 in 1914, holding meetings and debates at the Senate Avenue YMCA and local African American churches.
9. **Ida Husted Harper:** VIGO CO.—Prolific writer and journalist Ida Husted Harper was born in Fairfield in 1851. She settled in Terre Haute, writing "A Woman's Opinions" column for the *Terre Haute Saturday Evening Mail* for twelve years, despite her husband's disapproval. In 1887 she helped organize a state women's suffrage society before studying at Stanford University. Her press work for the National American Woman Suffrage Association so impressed Susan B. Anthony—to whom she was reportedly introduced by Eugene V. Debs—that she asked Harper to be her official biographer. Harper and Anthony documented the woman's franchise movement as editors of the fourth volume of the *History of Woman Suffrage* in 1902.
10. **Alfaretta Hart:** DELAWARE CO.—Wealthy social reformer Alfaretta Hart became Muncie's first female police officer in 1914. During an era of progressive reform, Hart advocated for vulnerable communities, including "wayward" girls and "drunkards." To aid them, she donated the salary she earned as a police officer and lobbied to reform Indiana's criminal justice system. Hart also confronted Muncie's male prohibitionists for moralizing against drinking while frequenting the red light district and engaging in behavior that harmed the disenfranchised. She faced backlash for her efforts and resigned at the end of the year, citing "health reasons."
11. **Virginia Jenckes:** VIGO CO.—Terre Haute native Virginia Jenckes unseated sixteen-year incumbent Fred Purnell in the 1932 congressional election, becoming the first Indiana woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Widowed at a young age, Jenckes took over the family farm along the Wabash River and mobilized the community in 1927 to contain a flood

that threatened their livelihood. The Democratic National platform's adoption of her flood control plans inspired her to run for public office. Jenckes ran on an anti-Prohibition platform during the Great Depression, arguing that repeal could stimulate the agricultural economy. Once elected, the Democratic Representative advocated for U.S. veteran rehabilitation programs, staunchly opposed communist influences, and embraced New Deal programs, especially as they affected women. Jenckes retired from Congress in 1939 and spent her time volunteering for the Red Cross before permanently moving back to Terre Haute in 1969.

12. **Dr. Amelia R. Keller:** MARION CO.—Pioneering physician and suffrage leader Amelia Keller graduated from Indianapolis's Central College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1893. She opened her own practice in the city and in 1908 became the first female faculty member at Indiana University's School of Medicine. Along with Grace Julian Clarke, Dr. Keller co-founded the Woman's Franchise League (WFL) of Indiana in 1911, which became the state's preeminent organization working to secure woman's universal suffrage. Under Dr. Keller's presidency, the WFL conducted statewide automobile tours, offered training schools for speakers, and marched on the statehouse. Her organizational prowess and collaborative efforts with African American suffragists contributed significantly to Indiana's ratification of the 19th Amendment.
13. **Dr. Daisy Lloyd:** MARION CO.—Kansas native and African American reformer Dr. Daisy Lloyd moved to Indianapolis in the 1950s. The homemaker successfully ran as a Democratic candidate for the 1965-1966 Indiana General Assembly, becoming the first African American woman to serve in the state legislature. As a lawmaker, activist, and a real estate agent, Lloyd fought to open the housing market to African American buyers. She earned her doctorate in Human Development and Family Studies at Purdue University in 1985 and then established a counseling practice that specialized in women's issues. Dr. Lloyd also advocated for women in her work with the League of Women Voters and through her efforts to encourage more women to run for political office.
14. **Luella McWhirter:** MARION CO., VERMILLION CO.— Born in Perrysville in 1859, Luella McWhirter moved to Indianapolis in 1888, where she worked as an activist for suffrage and temperance organizations. While she was president of the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs in 1911, she served as vice president of the Woman's Franchise League of Indiana. Deeply interested in politics, McWhirter became president of the Indiana Woman's Legislative Council (WLC), a powerful lobbying group. The WLC operated out of the statehouse, appealing to legislators on issues like suffrage and protective legislation for working women. In addition to her work for women's rights, she served as director of People's State Bank of Indianapolis from 1900 to 1936.
15. **Emma Barrett Molloy:** ST. JOSEPH CO.—South Bend reformer and prohibitionist Emma Barrett Molloy wrote for and helped found various Indiana newspapers, like the *Elkhart Observer* and the South Bend *National Union*. She advocated for women's suffrage in the 1860s and 1870s by writing for the journal *The Revolution* and lecturing throughout the United States and England. Molloy also fought to liberalize divorce laws, reform prisons and half-way houses, and provide women with educational opportunities.

16. **Rep. Julia D. Nelson:** DELWARE CO., MORGAN CO.— Muncie suffragist and Delaware County Republican Women’s Club chairwoman Julia D. Nelson became the first woman to serve in the Indiana General Assembly. She replaced Rep. J. Clark McKinley, who died shortly before the November 1920 election, the first in which women could legally vote. During Nelson’s term, she advocated for support of impoverished parents and children, and introduced bills related to issues of sexual assault and motion picture regulations.
17. **Laurel Thayer:** FRANKLIN CO., MARION CO., MONROE CO., VIGO CO.—Progressive Era reformer and suffragist Laurel Thayer was born in Laurel, Indiana. In 1896, she majored in economics at Indiana University before spending much of her professional life in Indianapolis. There, she worked as a journalist and wrote about social work and women’s clubs for papers like the *Indianapolis Sun*. In 1916, she began working as the Indianapolis Municipal Court’s first unofficial probation officer. Thayer wrote and delivered speeches advocating probation and mental health care rather than incarceration for offenders. This reform work led to progressive legislation. Throughout her life, Thayer lobbied for equal pay and better working conditions for women, and successfully sued for back wages upon realizing she was paid less than male colleagues in her municipal work.
18. **Dr. Mary Thomas:** WAYNE CO.—Quaker abolitionist Dr. Mary Thomas studied medicine in Wabash County and briefly practiced in Fort Wayne before moving to Richmond, Indiana. In 1859, she became the first woman to address the Indiana State Legislature, where she presented a petition calling for women’s suffrage and property rights. During the Civil War, she nursed wounded soldiers at the Battle of Vicksburg and served as an assistant physician in a Tennessee hospital for refugees. After the war, Dr. Thomas served as a physician for Richmond’s Home for Friendless Women. She broke barriers when she was elected as a Wayne County Medical Society member, after being rejected twice because she was a woman. The reformer also fought for women’s rights as editor of the *Lily* and in her work with the Indiana Woman Suffrage Association.
19. **Maria Carmen Velasquez:** GRANT CO.— Grant County reformer Maria Carmen Velasquez worked to improve conditions for local Mexican migrant workers, vital contributors to Indiana’s economy since at least 1900. In the 1960s, Velasquez walked into the fields near her family’s home, asked migrant workers about the needs of their families, and then procured donations. During the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, her work evolved from charity to advocacy. In the 1970s, she gained the support of local Catholic organizations and helped found Associated Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (AMOS). This non-profit, funded by the Indiana Office of Economic Opportunities, advocated for migrants across the state. Velasquez led the Grant County AMOS office and continued her work into the early 1980s.
20. **Woman’s Franchise League of Indiana: MARION CO. with branches throughout the state**—In 1911, Indianapolis suffrage leaders Grace Julian Clarke and Dr. Amelia Keller founded the Woman’s Franchise League of Indiana (WFL). The state’s preeminent suffrage organization, the WFL utilized savvy publicity methods, like automobile tours and speakers bureaus, to ensure

Hoosiers throughout the state understood the need for women's right to vote. The group secured a lobbying office in the statehouse and pressed legislators to amend the state constitution so as to remove "male" as criteria to be a voter. By World War I, the WFL had established 238 local branches and mobilized to support defense efforts, while using the opportunity to secure support for suffrage. After ratification of the 19th Amendment, the Woman's Franchise League evolved into the League of Women Voters.