

OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Jennifer Paustenbaugh and R. Darcy

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy created the President's Council on the Status of Women with Eleanor Roosevelt as its first Chair. The Council urged each state to create its own organization for looking at issues facing women. Oklahoma Governor Henry Bellmon's executive order created the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in 1965. Each successive governor issued their own orders establishing a similar commission or committee. Membership ranged from twenty to ninety members.

The need for continuity led Claudia Tarrington, working with Governor David Walters, House Speaker Glen Johnson, Senate President Pro Tempore Bob Cullison, Senator Angela Monson, and Representative Laura Boyd to establish the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women as a statutory commission. In 1994, Claudia Tarrington became the first chair. She was followed by Linda Maxey, Jilda Motley, Rebecca Kennedy, Debbe Leftwich, Bernice Mitchell and current chair Patricia Presley. In 1997 Bob Darcy became the only male Commissioner.

The Legislature charged the Commission to act as an advisory entity on equity issues relating to gender bias; monitor legislation to determine whether it is discriminatory toward one gender or the other; act as a resource and a clearinghouse for research on issues related to women and gender bias; report annually to the Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives regarding its activities; and make recommendations concerning needed legislation or regulatory changes relating to equity and gender bias. The Commission consists of thirty members who serve staggered five-year terms; ten members are appointed by the Governor, ten by the President Pro Tempore, and ten by the Speaker.

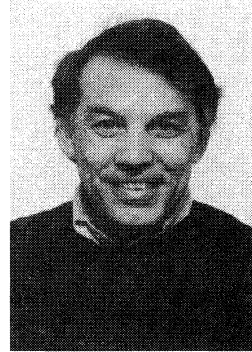
All photos in this section have been provided by Commission members.



Betty Boyd
Tulsa



Kipp Crutchfield
Ardmore



Bob Darcy
Stillwater



Marilyn Ehlers
Oklahoma City



Sally Frasier
Tulsa



Vicki French
Foss



Catherine Haynes
Ponca City



Kathryn Jones
Oklahoma City



Rebecca Kennedy
Seminole



Lou Kerr
Oklahoma City



Denise Kinzie
Cushing



Debbe Leftwich
Oklahoma City



Pat Martin
Purcell



Bernice Mitchell
Stillwater



Angela Monson
Oklahoma City



Jilda Motley
Tulsa

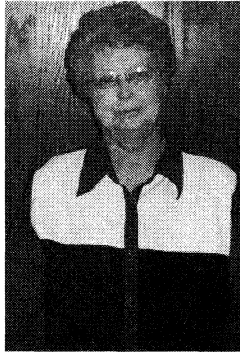


Rita Newton
Oklahoma City



Anita Norman
Perry

104 Notable Women/Oklahoma Commission on Status of Women



Rowena Ogden
Stillwell



Jennifer Paustenbaugh
Stillwater



Patricia Presley
Oklahoma City



Claudene Reynolds
Stillwater



Sheila Sheaman
Ardmore



Renita Shofner
Tulsa



Marlene Smith
Muskogee



Margaret Swimmer
Tulsa



Janelle Walker
Oklahoma City



Mary Walker
Tulsa



Ginny Wilson
Tahlequah



Christie Woodson
Lawton



DID YOU KNOW?

Claudia Tarrington was a tireless champion for the advancement of women and is credited with the legislation creating a permanent Commission on the Status of Women. During her tenure as chair the Commission established the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame, the Women's Summit, and coordinated passage of a law that eliminated gender bias in all future state legislation. A political consultant and government relations specialist, Tarrington also worked on women's issues at the national level. She served as the outreach director and Senate lobbyist for the ERA Countdown Campaign, a director in the National Women's Agenda Project, and as a member of the Women's Leadership Forum of the Democratic National Committee. At her death in 2003, she was working as a lobbyist and fund raiser for Tulsa's Expo Square



Claudia Tarrington and Bob Darcy before the 1997 Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame dinner in Tulsa.

Photo provided

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
ADVISORY COUNCIL ACTIVE MEMBERS**

Co-Chairs

Jilda Motley, Tulsa
Lou Kohlman, Oklahoma City

Members

Rita Aragon, Edmond
Carol Axley, Tulsa
Amy Bahora, Oklahoma City
Isabel Baker, Tahlequah
Fern Bowling, Stillwater
Laura Boyd, Norman
Glenda Carlile, Oklahoma City
Linda Dodson, Oklahoma City
Rev. Carol Fincher, Stillwater
Gloria Fletcher, Enid
Kimberly Grayson, Glenpool
Sallie Henderson, Tulsa
Robin Hudson, Tulsa
Kathy Huston, Stillwater
Letitia Jackson, Tulsa
Shelia Kennison, Norman
Lou Kohlman, Oklahoma City
Donna Lawrence, Oklahoma City
Mary Anne Lewis, Tulsa
Susan Marcus-Mendoza, Norman
Elizabeth Martin, Tulsa
Chris Morriss, Edmond
Penny Painter, Tulsa
Linda Parker, Oklahoma City
Jeanetta Shipp, Stillwater
Marcia Smith, Oklahoma City
Jean Warner, Oklahoma City
Gina Wendling, Oklahoma City
Carolyn Whitener, Oklahoma City
Correna Wilson, Wilson
Esther Winterfeldt, Stillwater
Sue Ann Woodward, Tulsa