



Creative Campaigns

Grades: 7-9

This lesson is based on the Women of the Oklahoma Legislature Oral History Project. It is provided courtesy of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program (OOHRP) at the Oklahoma State University Library with generous support from the Women's Archives at OSU and the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women.

Formally established in 2007, the OOHRP has collected and preserved firsthand accounts from individuals who have witnessed historic moments. The Program explores the lives and contributions of Oklahomans from all walks of life.

The Women of the Oklahoma Legislature is one of many projects undertaken by the OOHRP. This oral history project captures and records information about female Oklahoma legislators in their own voices and provides an opportunity to reflect on their individual paths to the Capitol. It also documents more completely the presence of these women in state government.

The OOHRP invites you to explore the website (www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/) and meet the women who have played an important role in Oklahoma politics.



Oklahoma PASS Objectives

- **Visual Arts 3:1** Use observation, memory and imagination in making original works of art. (Grades 7 and 8)
- **Visual Arts 3:1** Create original two-and three-dimensional works of art from observation, memory and imagination using a variety of art media. (Grade 9/High School)
- **Visual Arts 4:2** Demonstrate respect for personal artwork and the artwork of others. (Grades 7, 8, and 9)
- **Visual Arts 4:3** Demonstrate thoughtfulness and care in completion of artworks. (Grades 7, 8, and 9)
- **Information Literacy 3:1** The student will be able to organize the information in a manner that meets the need of the assignment or problem. (All grades)

Lesson Objective

The students will be able to design a unique campaign slogan for their own campaign. They will then design a full page newspaper advertisement using their own slogan.

Lesson

We have been learning about the many women who have served in the Oklahoma Legislature. They were members of either the House of Representatives or the Senate. Today we are going to learn some of the unique campaign tactics used by some of these women. When our lesson is completed, you will design a full page newspaper advertisement using your own slogan. This is the slogan you will use when you run for office.

Today you will have the opportunity to read specific pages from interview transcripts of some of the women who have served in our Oklahoma Legislature. Each woman had a unique story to share about her campaign.

Remember that the seats in the House of Representatives change every two years. The Senate seats in each district change every four years. Senators are elected to four-year terms on alternating cycles. The odd senatorial districts are elected in the same cycle of every presidential election year. The even numbered senatorial districts are elected during the gubernatorial election year, which occurs the second year after the presidential election.

Can anyone in the class share a campaign slogan with us? (When David Boren was running for governor, he had the Boren Broom Brigade. They were going to “sweep” out the former administration or “clean house”. He passed out small brooms as part of his campaign. Boren won that election. He went on to become a United States Senator from Oklahoma.) (When Dwight Eisenhower campaigned for President of the United States, his campaign slogan was “I like Ike”. “Ike” was his nickname. He had been the head of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II. He was an internationally known and respected military leader before he ever ran for political office. You will find older half dollar coins with Dwight Eisenhower’s image on them.)

Today we are going to read excerpts from interviews of some of the women who have served in the Oklahoma Legislature. First we need to learn more information about these women. (Show

Chronological Chart of Legislators. Point out the party to which each woman was affiliated. Point out the membership. Some were state Senators. Some were state Representatives. Point out the years in which they served. This chart was specifically designed to show the information chronologically.)

(Establish relevance: Next show the House of Representatives District Map. [<http://www.okhouse.gov/Documents/52ndLegislature.pdf>] Allow the students to locate the specific districts in which the women on the chart served. You are looking for Atkins—District 97, Hamilton—District 89, Peltier—District 93, Dank—District 85, Kern—District 84. Next show the Senate District Map. [http://www.oksenate.gov/Senators/images/districts/state_districts_map.pdf] Allow the students to locate the specific districts in which the women on the chart served. You are looking for Trish Weedn—District 15 and Debbe Leftwich—District 44. Allow the students to come to the board or screen and point out the specific districts to the class. If you are using a Smart Board, they can circle the district with a colored Smart Board marker.)

We are now going to divide into small groups and read the excerpts from the interview transcripts. (Allow time to get into small groups. If you choose to put the information in PDF format on the computers, please have that information ready at this time. Instruct the students to go to the computer area to read the excerpts.) As you read the information, please pay close attention to the special campaign tactics or slogans used by each candidate. I want one person in the group to write down the information. This person will then become the “spokesperson” for the group. Please designate that person now. (Pass out the photocopies of the excerpts from the interview transcripts. Allow ample time for the groups to find the information.)

I would like to hear the information gathered by each group. When your group spokesperson gives the report, I want the entire class to listen to the information. This will give you some great ideas for your personal campaign. (Allow time for each group spokesperson to give the report.)

Take time for a “grand conversation”. Which ideas were the class favorites? Would a man take his children campaigning door to door as Hannah Atkins did? If she had not used the phrase “Hannah’s Helpers”, what other catchy slogan could she have used? What type of carnival could you have in your yard like Wanda Jo Peltier did? If your yard is too small for a carnival, where could you have it? Trish Weedn took out a full page ad in the local newspaper. What would you say in your full page ad about your campaign? Sally Kern is considered a conservative. What does that mean? What is the opposite of a conservative? Did you see how she combined her last name with the word conservative? Could you combine your first or last name with a word to use as your campaign slogan? Rebecca Hamilton uses the phrase “good ‘ole boys”. What does she mean by that term?

Now we are going to return to our original seating. Please pass up your excerpts from the interview transcripts. You are going to design a unique campaign slogan for your own campaign. You will then design a full page newspaper advertisement using your slogan. You will use plain paper or construction paper or a combination of both. You can use markers, crayons, or colored pens or pencils. Tomorrow we will share our advertisements with the class.

Today we learned about different campaign slogans and strategies from a few women who have served in the Oklahoma Legislature. After discussing your campaigns, we were able to design our slogan and campaign ad for the newspaper. Tomorrow we will see our finished products.

Evaluation

Design a rubric for this assignment. Assign specific points for the slogan and the full page advertisement. Tomorrow you could take time for them to write a rationale for their slogan and newspaper ad. You could combine both class sessions into one grade with a rubric.

Materials

Teacher Resources

- Excerpts from the interview transcripts with the following former legislators accompany this lesson plan in the Resource Addendum at the end. For additional information, or to copy these segments yourself, the URL is <http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/legislators.htm>

The teacher can either duplicate these shortened transcripts for the students and use as handouts OR have them available on computers.

- Wanda Jo Peltier
- Debbe Leftwich
- Odilia Dank
- Sally Kern
- Rebecca Hamilton
- Trish Weedn
- Hannah Atkins
- Chronological Chart of Legislators, Senate District Map, and House of Representatives Map—Teacher can use these with a Smart Board or computer and projector or transform the chart and maps into overhead transparencies for an overhead projector.

Student Supplies

Markers, crayons, colored ink pens, colored pencils, plain photocopy paper, colored construction paper

Enrichment

Visual Arts

- Design a yard sign for the student's campaign.

Technology

- Allow the student to conduct an Internet search to find old political campaign buttons, bumper stickers, or signs from past campaigns. They could print them out and share them with the class.

Mathematics

- Allow the students to read area newspapers to find out how much it costs to run a one page advertisement for one day. Turn that into a “math for everyday” lesson. How much would a half-page advertisement cost? How is this calculated? Find the cost amount for running a campaign advertisement for one week. If the newspaper does not include this information, allow them to call the newspaper to find the answers.

- Compare the cost of newspaper advertisements between or among different newspapers. What is the cost difference between the *Daily Oklahoman* and the *Tulsa World* and your local newspaper.

Language Arts

- The students will write a newspaper story covering the campaign of one of the women they read about today. They will take the point of view of a newspaper reporter. For example, they could write a newspaper story about Hannah Atkins taking her sons door to door with signs that read "Vote for Mom". They could write about Daisy Lawler winning her election. "The voters definitely 'picked' Daisy Lawler to serve in the Oklahoma Senate."
- Turn the newspaper articles into a "news report" for the morning or evening news. Select a news station name to associate in some way with your school or school mascot. Designate a location in the classroom in which the news anchor will sit during the broadcast. The teacher can use a camcorder to record the individual news broadcasts. These can be transformed into a DVD. Check with your school administrator to be sure you meet the parental permission requirements to video record students.

Resource Addendum

Transcript Excerpts:

HANNAH ATKINS

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/atkins/index.htm>

Pages 15-16

Tanya Finchum: When you were campaigning, you had a group of kids called “Hannah’s Helpers”?

Hannah Atkins: Oh, yes. Nobody had ever had that kind of help. They would go door to door. My sons were kind of the leaders, and that just opened doors for people who had never had even a politician come directly and ask them to do it. I would campaign for months going door to door and with my kids. “Vote for my mom. Vote for my mom.” I was even on TV, and my dad had predicted that, “You’re gonna be on the front page of the newspaper,” and sure enough, I was. That was sparked because it was so unique to see children campaigning for mamma. “Vote for my mom”—my little son would carry a sign, and that got people’s eye.

I’ll have to go back and see if I can find the picture from the newspaper.

They have it in the archives at the Oklahoma State University now.

Okay. I’ll look. So “Hannah’s Helpers” were kids about the age of your son?

Right. They were mostly his friends. Yes.

REBECCA HAMILTON

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/hamilton/index.htm>

Pages 6-7

Tanya Finchum: Do you have a slogan?

Rebecca Hamilton: It changes every time, but I think the first time I was elected it was, “Put Hamilton in the House,” which is pretty goofy. When I came back in 2002 it was, “She’s Not Just One of the Boys,” I think, or something like that because I had two opponents at that time and they were both men. “She’s Not Just One of the Good ‘Ole Boys.” That was my slogan.

So in that race, were you up against an incumbent as well?

No. No, it was an open seat, but the two opponents were good opponents. They were both very—well, they had all the support, not me.

In that difference in time, had campaigning changed quite a bit from the '80s to 2000?

Not too much—not in the little races. I think that the big difference is that the computers—you now have computers. When I ran in 1980, everything was by hand. We ordered mailing lists. We ordered labels from a computer company in 1980, but other than that we kept all of our records by hand. We did everything—I had big three-ring binders—those great big ones, those five-inch three-ring binders that I kept records of every voter contact and everything. Everything we did was by hand, and that took an army of volunteers.

Sure.

When I came back in 2002, everything’s by computer and I could do that myself. So the big difference is that you don’t need nearly as many volunteers to run a campaign, with computers doing so much of the work. That’s good and bad. I mean, the involvement of the volunteers is—losing that somewhat diminishes the power of democracy unfortunately, I think.

I hadn’t thought of that.

It makes money more important and people less important, and that’s not really good.

WANDA JO PELTIER

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/peltier/index.htm>

Page 8

Wanda Jo Peltier: Well, you mean where did the money come from?

Tanya Finchum: Or how much you had even.

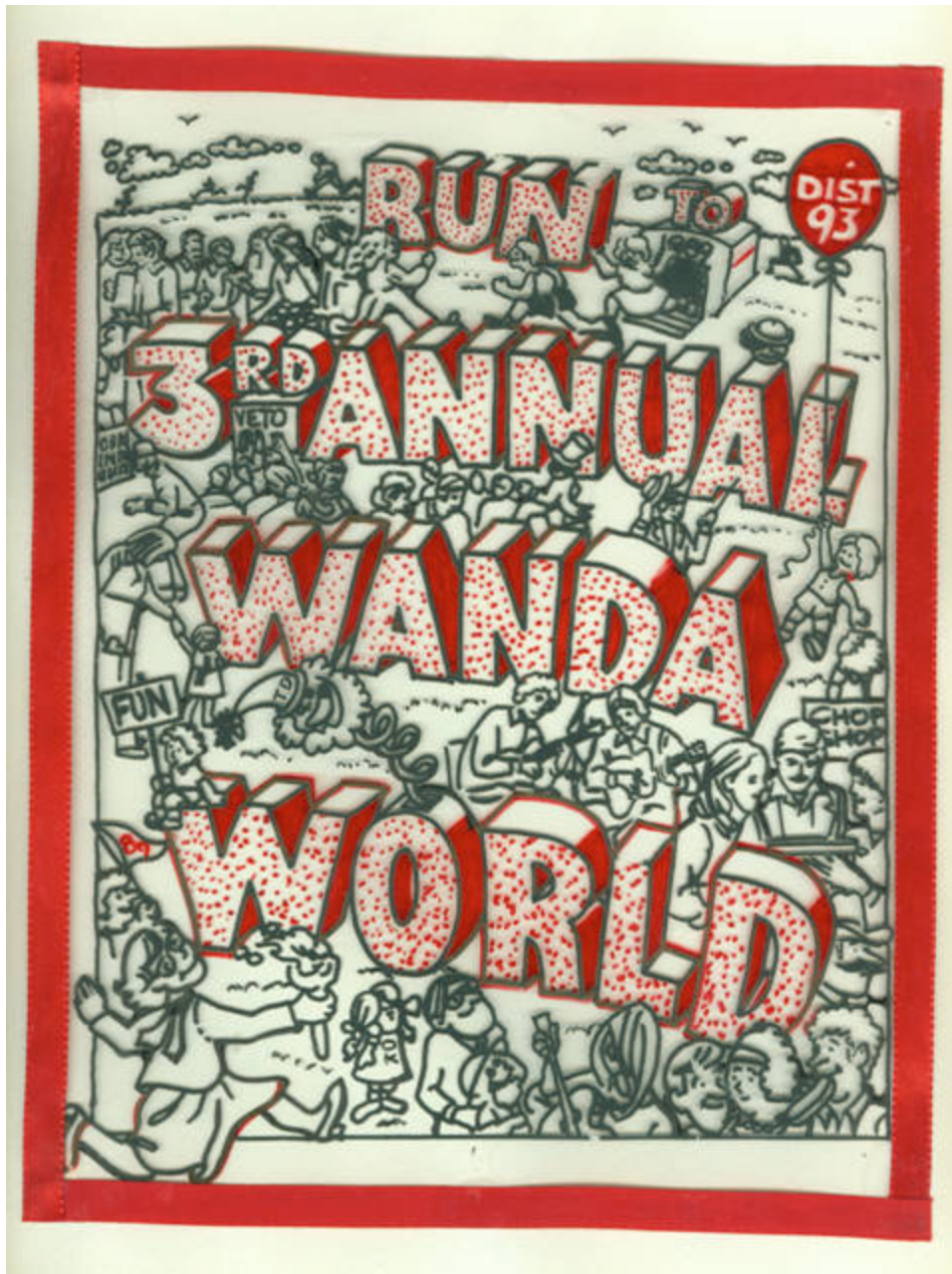
Well, not very much. As you can see, I didn't need very much. I got the most support from individual members of the Oklahoma Women's Political Caucus. They sent me checks, and I didn't take any PAC [Political Action Committee] money at all during my ten years in office. I didn't ask the Democratic Party for any support.

For any of the campaigns?

No, for any of the campaigns. But I had a carnival after I was elected. I started having a carnival every year. We have a huge back yard and my constituents come and friends and caucus members—everybody came, and we ate barbeque, drank lemonade, and played games that had political names—fun games really. For example, "Play veto. You too have power." "Play Porko. Bring home the bacon." And one was—whatever was current at the time, whatever issue—and one game I remember one year was "Tin cups. Tin cups for lame ducks. Help them fly high at taxpayer expense." [That game was about last-minute trips made by those going out of office.]

About how many people would be in your back yard at one time?

Oh, a lot—fifty to a hundred. They'd come and go and I raised about \$2,500 each year. That was ample. Postcards didn't cost much, and I really communicated mostly on postcards. You can't get people to read big long things. What they can read between the front door and the trash is about all that works.



"Wanda World" poster from Wanda Jo Peltier's campaign.

<http://dc.library.okstate.edu/cdm/ref/collection/legislature/id/103/show/102>

TRISH WEEDN

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/weedn/index.htm>

Pages 8-9

Trish Weedn: I think my signature, when I ran from the very beginning to even the last year I ran in 1996 for Senate, was my business card. It had my information on it, my picture on it and my name. That's what I spent my money on and that's all I had. I spent \$752 in two races. I walked in my first race in '78, and I made phone calls. And my opponent spent, I think, \$14,000 in the two races.

Tanya Finchum: Male or female?

It was a male. I've never ran against a woman, ever, in any of the races that I've ever been on the ballot, even in the Senate race, even then. Yes, I ran against a lot of money. People had money, their own personal money that they used, and I didn't. I had the least amount of money of anyone ever in every race except my last one, I think. It was the first time in twenty-two years that I had more money than my opponent did. I'd been in the Senate for eight years then and I had been elected ten years in the assessor's office. And I have a hard time asking for money for myself. Now I can raise you a lot of money, but I can't raise myself very much. I can raise people money. I love to raise money for things that I believe in.

Did you have a campaign slogan?

My pastor, I can remember, I still have the article—it's a newspaper article and it was an ad when I ran for assessor. The slogan was (Laughs), and I debated whether to do this or not, was a full-page ad when it was the first year of my Senate race. I ran against a senator's brother that had been in the Senate. His name was Senator Bill Branch, and his brother ran after I'd been in the Senate for four years. And my pastor at the time said, "Hey, I thought up a slogan last night." And I said, "Oh, what is it?" because it was in a primary run-off, and I said, "What is it?" and he said, "I'd rather be Lead'n with Weedn than out on a limb with a Branch." (Laughs) And I still have that. We printed that on a full-page ad with my picture and everything. I look back now and I think, "Oh, my." That was the funniest ad I think, the most memorable ad that I ever had. Our pastor thought it up and he said, "You know, we're going to have to get somebody to write something up in a cartoonlike thing, you know," and we did. We had it done and we put it in the paper.

Purcell paper?

Yes, it was the Purcell paper. It was a full-page ad in 19—had to have been in '92, probably '92.

We'll have to see if we can find that.

I have it. It was framed for me. Some friends framed that. It was a full page ad in the Purcell Register and it was fun at that time.

www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/



ODILIA DANK

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/dank/index.htm>

Pages 7-8

Tanya Finchum: Let's back up a little bit and talk about your first campaign then. Did you have a slogan?

Odilia Dank: I did and I kept it for twelve years, and when I first said I wanted to do it my family said, "That's so corny." And I said that's what people will remember! It was, "Bank on Odilia Dank," or, "Bank on Dank." And I tell you, when I knew it had caught on, one little boy was in his car with his mother and he said "Bank on Dank." Because we had six republicans running in the primary, there were all kinds of signs along the roadways.

For the first time around, okay.

For the first time around because there was a vacuum, an open seat. And so we really had to have success getting out our campaign signs. People were very good to let us put them in their yards and whatever. And this little boy said to his mother, "Bank on Dank, what does that mean?" And she was telling me about that. Then a few campaigns down later people would holler, "Bank on Dank!" And so I kept that all twelve years.

Did you have particular colors?

Definitely colors. I had blue predominately and some red and white—tried to be very patriotic, and you know little things like that are big decisions, because you put a lot of money into signs and some signs don't show up well. I was inexperienced with campaigning and we used to put them up on the fire place and compare which one we liked better. My husband was always part of the decision because he had been in the journalism business, had owned a paper and had had some experience with campaigning. So, yes I kept those colors all the way through.

SALLY KERN

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/kern/index.htm>

Page 17

Tanya Finchum: Did you have a campaign slogan?

Sally Kern: Yes, I did. And I have to give up front credit to my wonderful husband. "Vote KERN-servative" And I would have "Vote" and then "Kern" was in all capital letters, red I think and then "-servative" I think was smaller letters in blue. And I've had a lot of people tell me that it was really catchy. In fact, I do remember one night I was knocking on doors, and it was on 36th Street and a young lady came and I was talking with her and she said, "You know, I just want to say this. I'm in PR work and I want you to know that your slogan 'Vote KERN-servative' is fantastic because it ties a person and an idea together. She said that was really good."

Did you tell your husband?

Oh yeah, I told my husband that. And he gets all the credit for that. I was going to have "Rally Around Sally," you know. (Laughs) My son says that's too cheesy.

DEBBE LEFTWICH

<http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/wotol/leftwich/index.htm>

Pages 6-9

Debbe Leftwich: Well that was a very long journey. I was not involved in student government in OBU (Oklahoma Baptist University). It wasn't big in the bible college, back then anyway. There were no active young political groups. And so I really didn't get too involved. I was out of school a couple of years when an OBU professor I had had a couple of classes with ran for governor. His name is David Boren. (Laughs) I think just about everybody that went to OBU during that period did something in his campaign. I mean, there were so many young people involved in his campaign for governor. It was such a huge grassroots movement, and again when you couple that with the fact that there's so many young people being involved, that was pretty exciting. I worked on that campaign and after he was elected, my life kind of took a few other directions and I wasn't too politically involved until years later.

I got married shortly after that and then I got divorced shortly after that. (Laughs) So that kind of took up a lot of time. It wasn't until I met my second husband that I got involved in politics again. And it was because he had ran for office before I met him and he had been involved in politics since he was a young child. His mother had been an activist and I think she drove him to every political meeting that she ever went to and he was her only child, and so he grew up with it far more than I did. He had been active with Young Democrats at OU [University of Oklahoma], where he went to college. And he had worked in a lot of Senate races out in Choctaw and the Del City area—he grew up in Choctaw. He had run for a House seat once before I met him, like I said.

When we first met he told me he was going to run for office again, he just wasn't sure when. And so it was just a year after we got married, we hadn't even been married a year, when he ran for a House seat and he won that one. That threw both of us in to just being really active in his campaign.

I got involved with a local democrat women's club. I got involved with party. I had never been involved with a party before but I decided I wanted to do that because I wanted to help him. That really started it. He was in the legislature and the House for six years, three terms. Then he decided to run for a statewide office, he ran for Corporation Commission in 1988 but he lost in the primary run-off election and he worked for the Del City Chamber for a couple of years. Then he ran for the Senate in 1990 and was elected. And then he passed away in 2003 and that's when I decided to run for his Senate seat shortly after his passing.

Tanya Finchum: He served another thirteen years?

Thirteen years. So twenty of the twenty-two years we were married, he was in politics.

And your fingers were in it too, then.

Absolutely, it was just a way of life in our household.

So how did your first campaign differ from the ones you had helped him for himself?

First of all, it's different when you're the candidate, pure and simple. It's just a whole lot different than being a spouse. Secondly, it was a special election. It was late in the year. It started in October. We only had eight weeks to run a special election where normally you're in it for about five months. So you cram five months into eight weeks.

Not so much...

You don't. It's very fast-paced. You've got a lot of information to get out in a short period of time to the voters. And special elections are tough anyway because not that many people turn out on special elections. You've really got to work the voters to get them to turn out to vote.

So then when you ran for a full session...

Well I ran again. I filed last year in 2006 and there was only one individual that filed against me and he withdrew. So I did not have a race last year and no one was more shocked than me.

And happy.

Absolutely, I could go help some friends.

Then you can't answer—I have some questions about strategies and slogans. Did you have a slogan in those eight weeks?

In those eight weeks?

Yes. Did you have time?

Not really. Not really. During that kind of period, I know it was a really sad period for my family and for a lot of supporters of his, too, that basically—a lot of them knew me. I had been that involved in his political career. And I think it was just the message I can gave them that if they trusted me and elected me that I would continue to vote and do the same things he did, vote the same way and represent that district in the same manner. And I guess they liked it because they elected me. (Laughs)

Tell me a little about your campaign sign. I read somewhere where it's just a little different from his.

Mine is right behind you. I wanted my sign to be almost identical to his, but I didn't want to confuse the voters. Now he always had a theme—he was the walking candidate. When he ran in '82 when we first got married, or after we first got married, he put a big footprint on his signs. A big man's footprint because he was the walking candidate, that he knocked every door and believe you me, he did back in those days. It got a little tougher as we got older, but he walked every door. So that was his slogan. He was the walking candidate. But that meant that he was close to the people. He was out in the district and he was, you know, talking to them at their doors, listening to their concerns and always available and that was kind of what that symbolized. So what I wanted to do, he never put his first name on his sign so I put my first name on the sign and I put a woman's footprint. Even though eight weeks is not enough time to walk (Laughs) an entire Senate district but it was just a symbol that I would remain close to the people in every way that I possibly could that they were used to and accustomed to and what they deserved, quite frankly.

And it worked. On election day, tell a little about what you might have been doing or thinking or...

That was a very emotional day. And it was very cold—it was winter—December 9th and it had snowed that morning. I had volunteers out waving signs at corners and I was at the corner nearest to my house but it was so cold we were all bundled up. You couldn't tell who we were because of all the layers of clothing and coats and mittens and out waving signs and waving at voters and just freezing to death. That part was still kind of fun and exciting even though it was cold. I was concerned that some of my voters may not turn out because it was getting pretty slick outside and we had telephone polls running all day trying to get people out to vote.

We were offering rides out to the polls and that sort of normal things during the campaign that we always did anyway. Some of them were saying that we aren't getting out in this unless it really clears up. Well it didn't clear up for awhile. So I knew I had lost some votes due to the weather. But I remember a little bit later that day, it dawned on me that—and I knew this but I just hadn't focused on it in a while—but because when the Governor had announced what day the election was going to be held on, shortly after Keith passed away, that was the exact day we had met in 1980—December 9th.

It was meant to be then, huh?

It was just almost like a little sign or something, if you believe in those things. But to me that was just so symbolic too that I was elected on the same day we had met years earlier.

Chronological Chart

CHART GIVING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT LEGISLATORS DISCUSSED IN THIS LESSON

Name	Years Served	Membership	District	Party
Hannah Atkins	1968-1980	House of Representatives	97	D
Rebecca Hamilton	1980-1986 2002-	House of Representatives	89	D
Wanda Jo Peltier	1986-1996	House of Representatives	93	D
Trish Weedn	1988-2000	Senate	15	D
Odilia Dank	1994-2006	House of Representatives	85	R
Debbe Leftwich	2003-	Senate	44	D
Sally Kern	2004-	House of Representatives	84	R

*Listed chronologically by years served