

March 15, 2015

Women quietly do extraordinary things every day. To help shed light on the resilience and strength of Hoosier women and celebrate their accomplishments and contributions to history we are releasing an article every day in the month of March. These articles showcase how women have moved Indiana and our country forward and who inspire others to do great things in their own lives.

Women in Indiana have an important role to play. You can make a difference by:

- Learning more about the issues affecting women in Indiana.
- Voicing your opinion on issues important to you
- Serving as an advocate for women
- Mentoring another woman
- Join ICW's mailing list or social media outlets to be notified of upcoming events, programs and resources available to women

Go to www.in.gov/icw to learn more about the Indiana Commission for Women and their current initiatives.

Sources:

- **Indiana Commission for Women**
(<http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>)
- **Women in the Indiana General Assembly: 2011 Status Report**
(http://www.in.gov/icw/files/2010_Election_Results-ver.2.pdf)
- **Writing Her Story**
(http://www.in.gov/icw/files/Her_Story_-_Vi_Simpson.pdf)

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Women's History Month 2015

Telling 31 stories in 31 days this March.

Former State Senator Vi Simpson

Women have challenged the status quo in the United States for many years and have fought for equal representation in our country, our state, and our communities. The first woman was elected to the Indiana State Senate in 1943 and sixty-eight years later in 2011, only 10 of the 50 seats are filled by women; Senator Vi Simpson is one of them.

Senator Simpson represented District 40 in the State Senate from 1984 to 2012 and worked hard to help move Indiana women forward. She was the first woman to serve on and lead the State Budget Committee and in 2008, she was the first woman elected as the Democrat Leader by the Senate Democrat Caucus. "I am the only woman leader of a caucus in the General Assembly in 200 and some years of history, but that's not the most important thing I do. The most important thing I do is making sure that young women have doors to walk through and that we open opportunity for the next generations of leaders in all realms of life," says Simpson.

Simpson has a long list of accomplishments from her tenure as a State Senator and among them is co-writing the legislation that enacted the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) in 1996 with Lt. Governor Becky Skillman who was a State Senator at the time. Simpson says the reason she carried the legislation for the ICW was because she was hopeful that the commission could help to consolidate all of the things that were going on in the state that impact women, both negatively and positively, in order to help women reach their full potential. Simpson saw that, "In so many ways, income, business ownership, education levels, in so many ways they [women] were not achieving what they could or should achieve."

Simpson attributes her own success to the support and opportunities she was given by other women. "When you achieve a certain level of success it is, I think, very important for people to turn around then and pull the next generation up. What I want to do is do more in the way of pulling, pulling and pushing. I'm not just talking about in politics, but in every area of life." Women have made many gains in the fight for equality, but there is still work to be done.

"To keep moving Indiana women forward we have to work together and we have to persevere." Women face many struggles in their lives both personal and professional. Senator Simpson reminds us, "Keep trying. Even if you don't succeed there is success in the effort, in the journey, even if you don't get there."

In May 2012, former State Senator Vi Simpson left the Indiana General Assembly to become the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, John Gregg's running mate. Still a resident in the Bloomington area, Vi Simpson is now a consultant.

Reprinted from the 2011 Writing Her Story: Inspirational Hoosier Women (Senator Vi Simpson)