

March 17, 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](http://www.in.gov/icw) to learn more about the Indiana Commission for Women and their current initiatives.

#### Sources:

- Logsdon, Andrew (02 September 2013), "Caucus Planned to Pick Pond's GOP Successor," WFFT Fort Wayne News (<http://www.fortwaynehomepage.net/story/caucus-planned-to-pick-ponds-gop-successor/d/story/gZmCqYRi9kytWV1096PMGw>)
- Phyllis Pond (<http://www.legacy.com/ns/phyllis-pond-obituary/167122589>)
- Rosswurm, Viv (28 February 2006), "Pond becomes first woman in front row at Indiana House," KPC News ([http://www.kpcnews.com/article\\_f959290a-200a-5812-afb0-bc48f936d948.html?TNNNoMobile](http://www.kpcnews.com/article_f959290a-200a-5812-afb0-bc48f936d948.html?TNNNoMobile))

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## Women's History Month 2015

*Telling 31 stories in 31 days this March.*

### Phyllis Pond (1930-2013)

Phyllis Pond spent thirty-six years in the Indiana House of Representatives, serving from 1979 until her death in 2013. The longest serving woman in Indiana's history, she broke barriers when she became the first woman to sit in the front row at the Indiana House Chamber in 2005, a spot reserved for those with seniority.

Phyllis Pond's career is a testament of her ability to help others. Initially, she wanted to be a doctor; but, she knew that, at the time, women were discouraged from pursuing professions like that. So, instead, she became a teacher – and then a politician, representing Indiana citizens in northeast Indiana.

However, she lost her first election in 1976. According to a newspaper interview, she had no knowledge of how to run from public office. Instead of giving up, she returned in two years and spent her next campaign contacting all of the precinct chairmen and vice chairmen in the district. She took the time to get to know them and answer their questions. She even left them boxes of scratch pads and pencils with her name and photo on them. As a kindergarten teacher, she taught half the day and then spent the other half and weekends campaigning. Because of her efforts, Pond won that election, and won every election afterwards.

During her tenure, Pond served on several key committees, including the Ways and Means Committee and the Committee on the Judiciary Committee. Many key pieces of legislation she worked on focused on improving Hoosiers livelihood and education. She was the original author of the Primetime educational bill to lower class sizes to 18 in kindergarten through third grade. If the class size is larger than 18, the class is to be provided a part or full time teacher's aide. She also authored the CLEO law which developed a plan to assist minority students to attend law school and become lawyers.

Throughout her public service, Pond always took the time to visit her district to find out what people were concerned about. She also took the opportunity to meet once a month with the other female legislators – Republican and Democrat – to discuss upcoming issues and bills of concern. She told a reporter in a newspaper interview,

*Women bring a much-needed perspective to the Legislature... It's not really about the philosophy of the two parties; it's more about family issues that affect everyone. About 80 percent of what we do involve good-citizen issues that everyone is interested in.*

Looking forward to sitting in the front row, Pond said that one of her roles was to help the other legislators, especially freshman legislators.

*From there I will be responsible to help out someone at the microphone. Sometimes the freshmen have a hard time and I feel I have an obligation to help, regardless of whether they are Democrat or Republican. It's scary up there.*