



Photo: The Strangest Names in American Political History (website)

Arcada Stark Balz

Bloomington, Monroe County

December 31, 1879 – August 18, 1973

Born on a farm near Bloomington, Indiana, Arcada Stark traveled with her family to Colorado and Kansas before settling in Indianapolis. She attended Manual High School in Indianapolis. She later became an educator in Indianapolis, teaching history, literature, and art classes. She married Frederick Balz. She became a prominent figure in numerous women's clubs in the city, including serving as president of the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs.

In November 1942, Mrs. Balz became the first woman elected to the Indiana State Senate where she represented the counties of Marion and Johnson. Originally becoming politically active when she suggested the establishment of a New Harmony Memorial and then serving as the president of that state commission, she took her seat at the start of the 1943-45 legislative session. She was re-elected in 1944, serving another four-year term. During the 1947 session, she served as chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Public Health and held a seat on the Committee on Benevolent Institutions. Her government service was praised in her 1973 *Kokomo Tribune* death notice which noted that she:

...pioneered in the campaign for legislation to license nursing homes and to regulate women's working hours and wages. She was also amongst the first to push for improving school attendance requirements and establishing a merit system for state employees. (20 August 1973)

After leaving the Indiana Senate in 1950, Mrs. Balz stayed in Indianapolis until a few years before her death. Shortly after her 90th birthday in 1969, she moved to Orlando, Florida where she died at the age of 93. She is interred with her husband at Crown Hill Cemetery.

- For more information about Arcada Stark Balz, go to: <http://politicalstrangenames.blogspot.com/2014/10/arcada-stark-balz-1879-1973.html/>.
- For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to: <http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

Additional and more detailed references available at the end of Women's History Month

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