

CorrectionHistory.Org is
pleased NYC DOC
'Warden' Mary M. Lilly's
Women's History role is
recognized in Seneca Falls
but dismayed NYC DOC
Commissioner
Katharine Bement Davis'
Women's History role is not!




Visitor Center: Lilly plaque
Hall of Fame: None for Davis

Seneca Falls Visitor Center Bar Assn. Display.

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE LAW

WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

KATE STONEMAN
First Woman Admitted to Practice Law in NY



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

MARY M. LILLY
First Woman Attended Lawyer to New York State Legislature



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

JANE MATILDA BOVIN
First Black Woman to Work as a Lawyer in NY



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

FLORENCE PERLOW SHIENTAG
First Woman to Practice Law in Rochester, NY



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

CHARLOTTE SMALLWOOD-COOK
First Black Woman Attorney in New York State



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

SHIRLEY ADELSON SIEGEL
Chief of NY Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY
First Black Woman Lawyer, First Black Woman Federal Judge



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

MARYANN SACCOMANDO FREEDMAN
First Woman President of New York State Bar Association



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

GERALDINE ANNE FERRARO
U.S. Congresswoman, First Woman Nominated for Vice Presidency by a Major Party



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

JUDITH S. KAYE
First Woman Appointed to the New York Court of Appeals, First Woman Chief Justice of the State of New York



WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

WWW.NYSBA.ORG/TRAILBLAZERS

NYS Bar lists Lilly among Women Attorney Trailblazers.

WOMEN ATTORNEY TRAILBLAZERS IN NEW YORK STATE

New York State has a rich history of amazing trailblazing women attorneys who broke through barriers and blatant discrimination to make major contributions in the legal profession. Their stories are ones of fierce determination, passion for the law, keen intelligence, and inspiring achievement.

From the late 19th Century, when women began gaining admission to state bars, through the 1960s, women attorneys faced widespread discrimination. Women were turned away from law firms, or only offered jobs as librarians or secretaries. Later, women applicants were told that the quota for hiring women was already filled. Or that clients would be uncomfortable with a woman attorney. In the 1970s, women filed complaints alleging discrimination in hiring against 10 major New York law firms. The suits were transformed into a class action under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In a 1977 settlement, the firms agreed to guidelines assuring the hiring of women associates. Through the 1980s, the presence of women attorneys increased greatly in firms, with many electing its first woman partner. Still, in 1986, the New York Task Force on Women in the courts concluded that there was pervasive sex bias in the courts and that female lawyers were "routinely" demeaned and treated patronizingly by male judges and attorneys.

Women have made tremendous strides in the past 40 years — largely due to the efforts of women attorneys who overcame obstacles and blazed paths for others to follow. Today, the roadblocks to the advancement of women in the legal profession are more subtle. But discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes still lead to concrete consequences for women attorneys who, research shows, do not attain the same leadership positions and opportunities for advancement as their numbers would dictate.

The Committee on Women in the Law — whose first chair, Ruth Schapiro, was a trailblazer at the New York State Bar Association — is delighted to spotlight the lives and careers of 10 women lawyers who fought discrimination and gained a foothold in a range of legal careers. These women have paved the way for other women attorneys, serving as role models and, often, as mentors.

We hope that you will draw inspiration from the stories of these 10 remarkable New York attorneys.

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“In 1918 – one year after women gained the right to vote in NYS – Lilly was elected to the State Assembly . . . Lilly proposed 12 bills, four became law . . . Also in 1918, she was appointed Superintendent for female inmates at the Blackwell’s Island workhouse and, over 10 years of service, improved treatment of the prisoners.”

MARY M. LILLY

FIRST WOMAN ATTORNEY ELECTED
TO NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

Ten years after women gained the right to practice law in New York, the New York University School of Law had an unusually large number of women graduates: 10 out of a class of 70. Graduate Mary M. Lilly would go on to become, in 1918, the first woman elected by New York City residents for any legislative position and the first woman attorney elected to the New York State Legislature.

In 1876, after college, Lilly taught in the New York City public schools. While working as a teacher, she attended law school on a scholarship, believed to be the first such scholarship awarded to a woman. She earned her law degree in 1895, at age 35.

Lilly devoted her career to fighting for women's suffrage, prison reform, and children's rights.

In 1918 — one year after women gained the right to vote in New York State — Lilly was elected to the State Assembly. Her first act as legislator was to urge ratification of the federal Women's Suffrage Act.

In her first year, Lilly proposed 12 bills, four became law, including bills to abolish the death penalty for minors, to raise to 18 the age of juvenile delinquency, and one to make it obligatory to have a woman magistrate in the Woman's Court.

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NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN THE LAW

WOMEN ATTORNEY
TRAILBLAZERS
IN NEW YORK STATE

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Mary M. Lilly
Mrs. Mary M. Lilly, Democrat, represents the Seventh Assembly District in the borough of Manhattan, City of New York. Mrs. Lilly has served as her City's Vice President. She is a graduate of Hunter College and of the New York University. She was for a number of years a teacher and a supervising officer in the public schools of the City of New York.

She is a practicing lawyer, having been one of the first women admitted to the practice of law in the State of New York, and received the first scholarship given by the New York University to a woman. She was at the time of her election the Secretary of the City Federation of Women's Clubs. She is President of the "Entomologist" Club, League and Vice-President of the

The Red Book & The Woman Citizen pictured with a clipping below Lilly's photo were from 1919 issues.

The RED BOOK



1st woman elected
official from NYC,
Assemblywoman
Lilly's bio, appears

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Mrs. Mary M. Lilly, Democrat, represents the Seventh Assembly District in the borough of Manhattan, city of New York. Mrs. Lilly has lived all her life in this district. She is a graduate of Hunter College and of the New York University. She was for a number of years a teacher and a supervising officer in the public schools of the city of New York.

She is a practicing lawyer, having been one of the first women admitted to the practice of law in the State of New York, and received the first scholarship given by the New York University to a woman. She was at the time of her election the Recording Secretary of the City Federation of Women's Clubs. She is President of the Knickerbocker Civic League and Vice-President of the Society for the Aid of Mental Defectives. She is a member of the Catholic Big Sisters and of the New Yorkers Club, the Amsterdam Democratic Club, and all of the women's Democratic organizations of New York city.

Her law offices are at 1947 Broadway, New York. She is the first woman elected to an elective office of any kind by the city of New York and is serving her first term in the Legislature.

She is a widow; her son, Major J. Joseph Lilly, was at the time of her election the Trial Judge Advocate of Camp Dix, and had been serving in the United States Army from the beginning of the outbreak in Mexico.

THE

NEW YORK RED BOOK

CONTAINING

Latest Information Relating to the State Government, Including New York's Part in the War; List of State Officers, Heads of Departments, Members of the Legislature, Judges and Other Public Officials, with Portraits and Biographies; Important Laws Passed by Session of 1919; Election and Primary Returns, Party Enrollment

AND

STATEMENT TO THE PEOPLE
OF
GOVERNOR ALFRED E. SMITH
ON
APPROPRIATION BILLS

EDITED BY

JAMES MALCOLM

ALBANY

J. B. LYON COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

1919

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The Woman Citizen

A WEEKLY CHRONICLE OF PROGRESS

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL

FOUNDED 1870

10 Cents a Copy

June 7, 1919



TAKING DOWN THE OLD SIGN.

Assemblywoman Lilly is referenced throughout the June 7, 1919 issue of *The Woman Citizen* including a lengthy article titled "The Log of a Woman Legislator" in which she is so extensively and continuously quoted the editor could have dispensed with the quote marks and given NYS' first lady lawyer lawmaker her own byline.

The Log of a Woman Legislator

THIS title has nothing to do with political log-rolling. It refers to the record of bills in which one of the two Assemblywomen in New York state was interested. And it refers to their fate.

Mrs. Mary M. Lilly, Democratic Assemblywoman, representing the Seventh Manhattan District, and possible minority leader next year, is the first woman who was ever elected by the people of New York City to represent them in any legislative capacity. She, with Mrs. Sammis of Suffolk County, is the first woman to sit in the Albany Legislature.

Mrs. Lilly, who is a lawyer when off stage, a graduate of New York University, frankly likes her job. She says so. "The work to me seems fascinating," she acknowledges. "I love the law whether in the making or in the interpreting. I am deeply indebted to the political party that nominated me and just as grateful to the voters—men and women—who elected me."

Her first year of work bears reviewing, if for no other reason than because it indicates the initial reactions of a woman legislator in her first session, the things she thought she could do and wanted to do, her unexpected rebuffs and amazements. It is fair, therefore, to let Mrs. Lilly tell her own story:

"My very first act, at the very first session of the Legislature," says she, "was to submit the resolution requesting the United States Senators from the state of New York to do all in their power to expedite the adoption of the Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment.

"My first bill abolished the death penalty for minors. This was lost in committee, but Mr. Donelly's bill making the age eighteen was reported out.

"My second bill raised the age of juvenile delinquency to eighteen years of age. This was killed in committee, opposed by those who should support it, but who were against it, so they said, because an amendment was pending that would enlarge the jurisdiction of the Children's Court. This latter also died in Committee.

"**T**HEN I brought a bill which gave political parties the right, if they so desired, to elect one woman and one man from each Assembly District to membership in the State Committee. This was killed in Committee on the ground that if the parties should so elect the State Committee would be too large.

"I brought a bill which would give an illegitimate child the right to bear its father's name, and the right to share in its father's estate. Killed, because the Committee couldn't get a quorum—at least that is what the chairman told me, although the quorum did not seem to fade away for other bills, the Carson-Martin bill for instance. (This is the street-car rate bill.)

"A bill which graded matrons in the Department of Corrections on years of service passed, and is now a law.

"A bill which cleared the title to some property belonging to one of my constituents, is now a law.

Above article appears on Page 9 of June 7, 1919 issue of *The Woman Citizen*, Volume 4. It continues on next slide.

"A bill which compelled insurance companies to adopt a short form of policy, stating what the person is insured for in plain language, died in Committee, but the Superintendent of Insurance assured me that this matter would be taken up at the next convention of insurance men and the short form would in all probability be adopted. He also said he would invite me to attend the convention, for which I am grateful. This short form will correct a nasty evil which exists here in New York at least. People are induced to take out these policies which insure them against sickness and accident—or at least the insured thinks so—only to find out, after one has paid in quite a sum of money, that there are so many exceptions laid down in the policy that even the lawyer cannot dig out just what the insurance covers.

"A law which will be a boon to the people living on Riverside Drive, as it compels small boats to muffle their noises. This bill is now a law.

"A bill throwing open to the school children the use of the armories for physical training, when not in use for military purposes, is now a law—the first one of mine which the Governor signed.

"A bill making it obligatory to have a woman magistrate in the Woman's Court died in Committee.

"A resolution proposing an amendment to Article two of the Constitution, embodying the principles of proportional representation. This never came out of Committee.

"A bill providing that failure to pay alimony in installments may be punished by fine or commitment every time the installment is not paid. This bill is in the hands of the Governor.

"A bill repealing certain laws relative to paving the New York

streets which would enable the city to pave its streets as it pleased, and another prohibiting garbage incinerators in certain localities, went to the Mayor for signature.

"THESE are the bills which I presented; in addition, I did what I could to advance the Teachers' Bill, and the woman's program of legislation.

"My impressions? Many of them have faded from my memory now but two strong ones remain, one, the courteous treatment which I received from the men of both parties, the other the question—why do men like those splendid up-staters, take so much trouble to protect animals, grass and trees, and remain so oblivious to the value of human life. Why do they hold life so cheap? And why are they so deaf to pleas for human betterment? Why do they characterize laws which aim at conserving the race, mere sentimentality? They sure do need the woman's point of view in the Legislature.

"Women are needed in the Legislature at all times—just as they are needed and should be represented in all departments of government, war or no war. The strongest impression remaining with me is the difficulty of getting any legislation for the benefit of women and children passed—few of the women's bills got through. The whole women's program failed and was dubbed sentimentalism by the speaker of the house. The majority, Republicans all, the men and the woman, lined up against the woman's bills.

"The new League of Women Voters is most commendable. In the hands of the women will lie the balance of power; if the vote is used wisely, this woman's league will be able to bring about splendid reforms in both parties."

Lilly: Legislature needs the woman's point of view.

When KBD became the 1st woman to head NYC DOC, she also became 1st woman to head *any* NYC municipal agency. She was national woman suffrage association VP and led the Manhattan Woman Suffrage Party. TR's Progressive Party named her as state delegate candidate



**Commissioner
Katharine
Bement Davis
1914 & 1915**



**Workhouse
Superintendent
Mary M. Lilly
1919 - 1928**

to NYS' constitutional convention, making her 1st woman to run for statewide office on a major ticket before women won right to vote. She helped bring about that victory. For these and her many other achievements, this website seeks her inclusion in the National Women's Hall of Fame. This site has more on Lilly & Davis making Women's History: click [here](#).

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