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# EQUALITY DEFERRED

WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR THE NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY  
1920-1993



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AND  
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## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

**W**e welcome this opportunity to express our gratitude to those who aided and encouraged us as we prepared this study. Ruth B. Mandel, Susan J. Carroll, and Deborah L. Walsh of the Center for the American Woman and Politics provided inspiration, essential data, and heartening support. We received informed insights from former assemblywomen Jane Burgio, Barbara McConnell, and Joan Wright and from Maureen Ogden, now serving her seventh term. We are also indebted to those present and former assemblywomen who responded to our questionnaire. Roberta W. Francis and Elizabeth Cox of the New Jersey Division on Women gave us helpful comments on an early draft. Frederick M. Herrmann and Jeffrey M. Brindle of the Election Law Enforcement Commission supplied updated information on campaign finance. Karl J. Niederer, Chief of Archives, facilitated our investigations with marked courtesies. As always, the staff of the Alexander Library at Rutgers, The State University, responded ably to our innumerable requests for assistance. Claire Sommer of the Office of University Publications at Rutgers has been a cheerful and valued co-worker in putting our manuscript into print.

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## FOREWORD

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has a national reputation for distinguished scholarship and innovative educational programs about women and gender. Now two of Rutgers' most esteemed and beloved figures have contributed to that tradition, and it is a source of great pride for the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP) that we have been able to work with them in this effort.

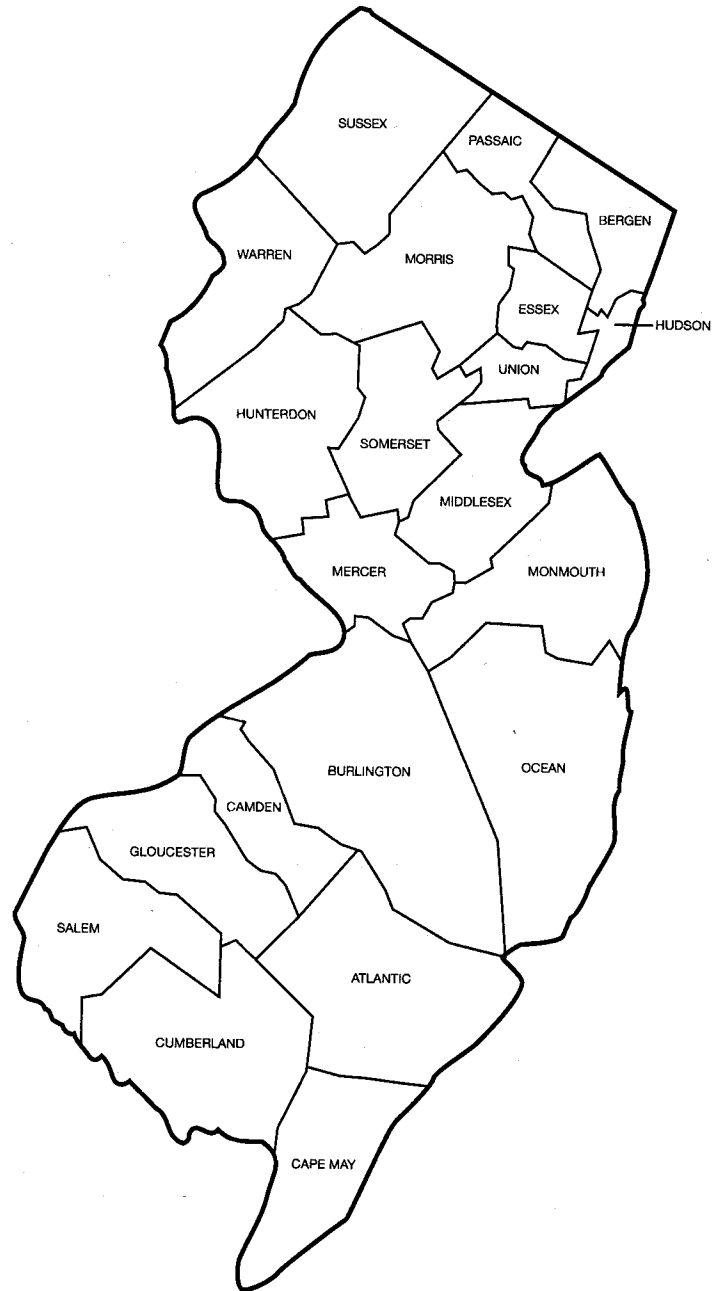
Richard P. McCormick, a renowned historian, and Katheryne C. McCormick, a long-time Rutgers administrator and community volunteer, have turned their collective attention to a little-studied but important subject—women as candidates for the state legislature in New Jersey. Noting the paucity of women legislators in the Garden State, they decided to explore the history of women's candidacies and analyze some of the reasons for the past and current status of women as office-seekers in the state. In *Equality Deferred*, they provide a thorough record and a valuable appraisal of some possible explanations, and their work points to signs of hope for the future as well as areas ripe for change.

This study is highly specific to New Jersey. The McCormicks have identified distinctive features of the political history and culture of the state that have shaped women's possibilities for political participation. At the same time, their work is a model for the kind of inquiry that might be useful in every state; while there are important generalizations we can make about women candidates across the nation, real progress depends largely on understanding and acting on the unique circumstances in each community, district, and state.

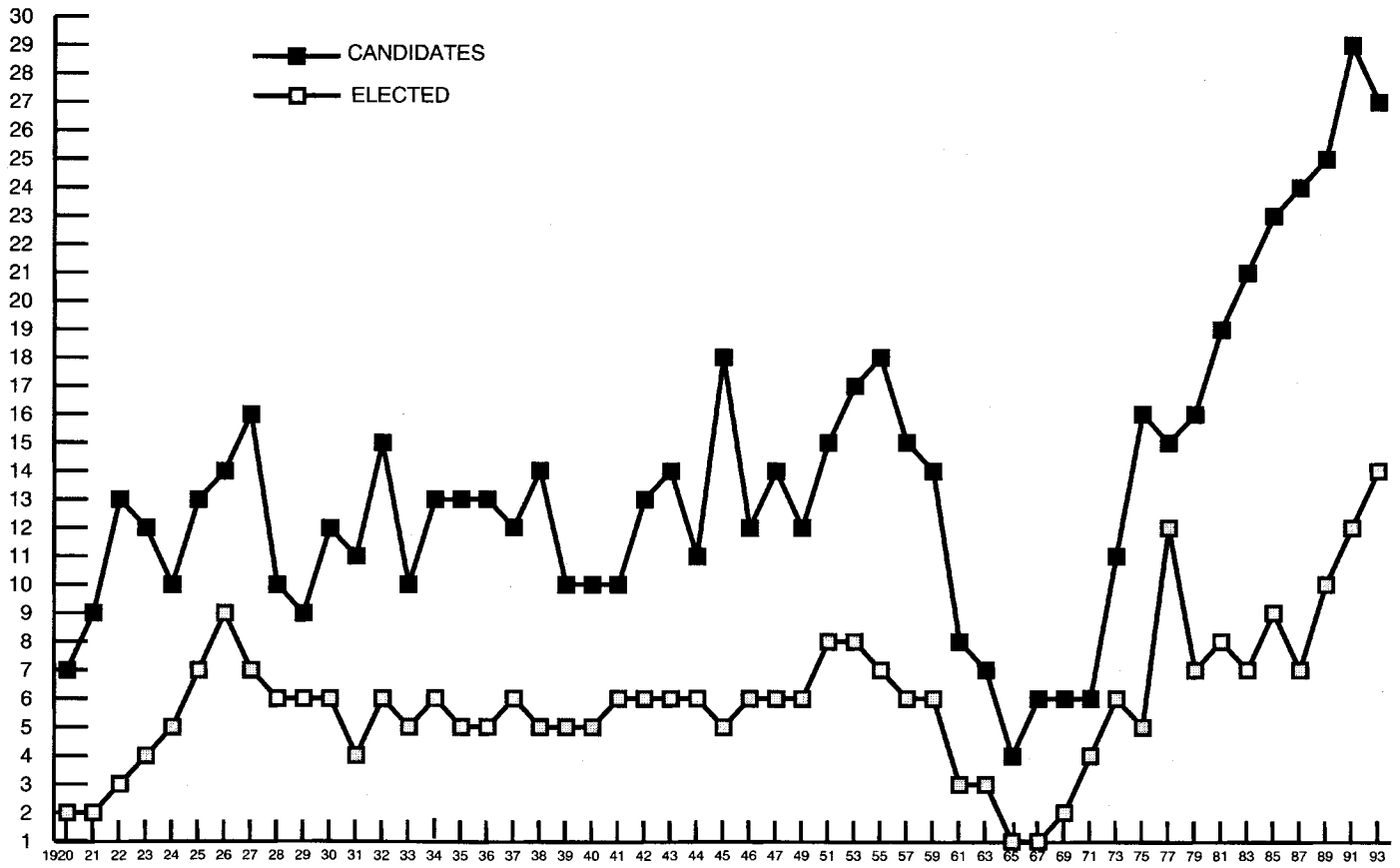
At the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), we have been working since 1971 to understand women's relationship to the political system. Our research tells us that bringing more women into public life matters, not just for reasons of equity but because women change how government works and reshape the public agenda. We have observed with some embarrassment the low rank of our home state in the proportion of women in its legislature (41st in 1994, as the McCormicks note). It is our hope that the findings of this study will provide motivation for increased efforts to enhance the standing of women lawmakers in New Jersey. We also hope that researchers elsewhere will be inspired to undertake similar efforts to understand their own states and make recommendations for progressive change.

RUTH B. MANDEL  
DIRECTOR  
CENTER FOR THE  
AMERICAN WOMAN AND POLITICS

# New Jersey Counties



Major Party Women Candidates for the New Jersey Assembly  
and Those Elected, 1920-1993\*



\*Through 1946 elections were annual for 60 seats. From 1947, elections were biennial. The assembly was enlarged to 80 members in 1966.

## FROM PINNACLE TO PLATEAU, 1920–1946

In 1993 Christine Todd Whitman defeated incumbent Governor Jim Florio to become New Jersey's first woman chief executive. Less noticed at the time was the fact that by winning fourteen seats in the assembly (the lower house of the legislature), women would comprise 17.5% of that body's membership, an all-time high. A generation before—in 1967—there was but one assemblywoman elected. The gender barrier, it seemed, was coming down.

Accurate as these statements are, they fail to convey a correct understanding of the progress of women in electoral politics in New Jersey. Such an insight requires an overview of the whole period since women gained the franchise in 1920. From that enlarged perspective, the story is not one of linear advance over time. Rather, we find intriguing oscillations that can be related to changes in the structural and cultural features that shaped the political environment and to broader influences that redefined the roles of women in American society.

The ascent from a single assemblywoman in 1927 to fourteen in 1993 is indeed impressive. But how we interpret this trend takes on a different aspect when we discover that in 1927, women made up a remarkable 15% of the assembly. New Jersey then led all the states in the proportion of women legislators and remained at or near that rank for two decades. Now it languishes in the forty-first position. Obvious questions come to mind. Why did women fare so well in New Jersey in those early decades, and why, in recent years, have their prospects lagged behind those of women in other states?

Not until the 1970s did the subject of American women in politics begin to engage the attention of large numbers of scholars.<sup>1</sup> Most of their studies have dealt with the experience of the past quarter-century. They have lacked an adequate longitudinal perspective. Some have slighted the intricate context within which politics was conducted.<sup>2</sup> The conditions that maintained in the 1920s, or the 1950s, differed from those of the 1980s. Thus it is important to observe the fortunes of women as they changed over time.

The purpose of this essay is to bring a historical dimension to the ongoing discussion of women's role in politics. Because the first offices to which women could realistically aspire in significant numbers in New Jersey were seats in the assembly, we have chosen to focus on major-party candidacies for those offices from 1920 to 1993. While we have not been unmindful of broad, national influences on women's roles, we have been especially concerned with the singular context within which politics operated in New Jersey. No one state is "typical"; consequently, our findings cannot readily be extrapolated. They can, however, illustrate the complexity of the problem, highlight factors that were either favorable or unfavorable for women, and—perhaps—offer some clues to the future.

The newly enfranchised women of New Jersey confronted a male-dominated, highly structured political system in 1920. In many basic aspects the mechanism was shaped by constitutional and legal mandates. It reflected as well forms of behavior that had evolved into "rules" that, while not immutable, would have to change



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if women were to be fully accommodated. In this regard, much would depend on whether and how women chose to exercise their new prerogative and how resistant the male elite would be to yielding their preeminence in the political process. It is therefore necessary to sketch the context in which women were to play their roles.<sup>3</sup>

The state's archaic constitution, adopted in 1844, had established a frame of government ill suited to modern needs. There was a weak governor, elected for a three-year term and ineligible to succeed himself. He was the only official chosen in a statewide election. He had limited appointive powers, his veto could be overridden by a simple majority, and he lacked effective control over the state's executive agencies. Subject to approval by the senate, he appointed all members of the judiciary.

The legislature, which closely resembled that which had been created in 1776, was simple in design. In the upper house, each of the twenty-one counties was represented by one senator. Senators were elected for three-year terms; one third were chosen each year. Members of the assembly, elected annually, numbered sixty, and they were apportioned among the counties on the basis of population following each decennial census. The smallest counties had a single member; the largest had as many as twelve. All assemblymen were elected from their counties at large; there were no discrete assembly districts. Because the largest county—Essex—had more than twenty times the population of the smallest county—Cape May—the senate did not remotely reflect population and was heavily weighted toward rural interests. The assembly was less malapportioned, and the large delegations from the northeastern counties of Essex, Hudson, Bergen, and Passaic—which constituted about

half of the membership—reflected urban and suburban concerns.

The legislature could best be described as an amateur, weakly institutionalized, part-time body. The compensation of legislators, fixed by the constitution, was a meager \$500 a year. On the other hand, the houses usually met no more than twenty days during each annual session. Especially with the advent of the automobile, the legislators could readily commute to Trenton and return to their homes in the evening. Turnover was high. Most senators were content with a single term; assemblymen rarely served more than three years. Aside from a large array of bill clerks, journal clerks, and similar auxiliaries, there was no legislative staff. There were numerous committees, but except for those that dealt with appropriations and joint conferences, they rarely met. Power within the legislature resided in the caucus of the majority party in the small upper house.

Politics was conducted within an intensely partisan framework. The Republicans had assumed the dominant position in 1893, and except for a brief interlude during the governorship of Woodrow Wilson, they retained the allegiance of a majority of the electorate until the New Deal era. Because of the way the legislature was constituted, the Republicans customarily controlled both houses by margins of more than two-to-one. Down to 1957, the Democrats managed to win majorities in the assembly only in 1931 and 1936, and they never captured the senate. Quite a different manifestation of party supremacy was exhibited in gubernatorial contests, for the Democratic candidates were successful in six of nine elections from 1919 to 1943. Franklin D. Roosevelt carried the state in all four of his triumphs.

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The cause of these seemingly contradictory outcomes was quite simply, Frank Hague, for thirty years the mayor of Jersey City, boss of Hudson County, and commanding figure in state politics. Through the 1920s, Hudson was the only strongly Democratic county in the state. Hague could produce one-third or more of the total Democratic vote in statewide primaries and deliver 100,000-vote majorities in the general election. Thus he could elect six governors. But assembly elections were a very different matter. In addition to a full delegation from Hudson, the Democrats could anticipate no more than a few seats from the rural counties of Warren, Sussex, and Hunterdon. After 1930, as the latter two counties shifted to the Republican column, a Democratic corridor extending from Hudson through Middlesex and Mercer to Camden and Salem emerged. These gains, however, still left the Democrats with fewer than half of the assembly seats and only a handful in the senate.<sup>4</sup>

The outstanding feature of the state's politics was what some have termed its feudal character. State party organizations were weak. Power was concentrated in county machines whose leaders—the bosses—lorded it over their fiefdoms. Because the county was the unit for nominating and electing county officials, assemblymen, and senators, the county organizations had large patronage resources, and their leaders exerted great influence on the state level. Hague was only the most conspicuous of the county bosses. He had his counterparts in both parties in almost every county. In the final analysis, decisions on the makeup of legislative tickets—and whether women would find a place on them—were made by the bosses and their county organizations.<sup>5</sup>

Women, of course, had not been politically inert prior to 1920. They had taken active roles

in the antislavery movement, in support of common schools, in the establishment of state social welfare institutions, and in the founding of the New Jersey College for Women (now Douglass College of Rutgers, The State University), to cite but a few examples. Through their influence, laws had been enacted to eliminate some of the most glaring violations of their civil liberties and to afford them protection in certain types of employment. As early as 1857 they had petitioned the legislature for the right to vote, a privilege they had exercised in New Jersey between 1790 and 1807. The state had produced conspicuous figures like Lucy Stone, founder in 1869 of the American Woman Suffrage Association and Alice Paul, who led the formation of the National Woman's Party in 1916. Through such organizations as the State Federation of Women's Clubs and the Women's Christian Temperance Union they had espoused causes that politicians could not ignore.<sup>6</sup>

Transcending all other "women's issues" in the years after 1912 was the struggle for enfranchisement. Under the zealous leadership of Lillian Ford Feichert, the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association, together with the Women's Political Union, the Equal Franchise Society, and the Men's League for Equal Suffrage, succeeded in persuading the legislature to submit a constitutional amendment to a referendum at a special election in October, 1915. Opposed by traditionalist male voters, the liquor industry, and influential figures in both parties, the suffrage amendment went down to a decisive defeat.<sup>7</sup>

The focus of the campaign then shifted to Washington. The ranks of New Jersey's organized suffragists mounted to over fifty thousand members under Feichert's leadership. The influential Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed the effort.

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In June, 1919, Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment, and the suffragist forces now redirected their efforts to Trenton to secure ratification by the legislature. The desired measure readily passed the state senate, but it stalled in the assembly. At this juncture, Hague decided to deliver the Hudson delegation, and ratification was accomplished by a ten-vote margin.<sup>8</sup> The amendment became effective nationally on August 26, 1920 (now celebrated as Women's Equality Day).

The suffrage campaign in New Jersey, as elsewhere, revealed the widespread opposition that existed to extending the vote to women. It also conjured up the image of a mobilized "women's vote" that could upset the customary rules of politics and pose a threat to many vested interests. Politicians had to calculate what its impact would be and what response they should make. Would women be content merely with casting ballots, or would they aspire to elective offices? As candidates, would they be assets or liabilities on party tickets? Which party would garner the larger share of their support? Would women define and demand their own roles, or would their roles be determined by the male party elites? There were no assured answers to these questions in 1920.

From another perspective, the suffragist leaders—having won a great victory—now had to consider their future direction. In their campaign they had stressed two arguments. (1) Justice required equal rights for women. (2) With their superior moral qualities, women would use their votes to cleanse politics and advance desirable reforms. These postulates soon produced divergent views. Some prominent suffragists decided to enter fully into the political arena by enlisting in political parties and even seeking

public office. Others, no less prominent, preferred to exert their influence through such non-partisan organizations as the newly launched League of Women Voters or the Consumers' League. A small but committed number chose to identify with Alice Paul's National Woman's Party. The unity that had been forged in the suffrage movement dissolved. The overriding objective of the suffragists had been to secure the vote. Their votes could be used to advance worthy causes. They had not elaborated a vision of women contesting for elective offices.<sup>9</sup>

The new era opened amidst these uncertainties with the election of 1920. Although the presidential contest excited the greatest attention, press reports also featured the novel appearance of women as voters.<sup>10</sup> A major event was the first registration day—September 14—when ill-prepared election boards were overwhelmed with women registrants. The *Newark Evening News* on September 15 proclaimed, "Women Prompt to Enroll to Receive Franchise," and estimated that half of the state's eligible women had registered. Registrations were also accepted on later designated days. Ultimately the total registrants in Essex County were double those of 1916. Women's organizations in the county had conducted forty "schools" to explain the election process and encourage voting, and they contributed to the stunning turnout.

The primary election, held on September 28, witnessed the first appearance of women at the polls. There was intense interest in the impact they would have on the result. "Political Workers Unable to Fathom Mystery of Their Party Affiliation," read a typical headline. Shrewd party leaders, even those who had opposed woman suffrage, now went out of their way to court women voters. The state committees of the

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major parties announced that women would be represented on their lists of presidential electors. In Essex County, the rival Republican factions each included a woman on its assembly slate, and because of the closeness of the contest, both women won nomination. Elsewhere only five other women, all of them Democrats in heavily Republican counties, gained the dubious honor of becoming "sacrificial lambs."

The two Essex nominees, Margaret Laird of the "regular" faction and Jennie Van Ness of the reformist Republican League, were both elected as New Jersey's first assemblywomen. They ran tenth and eleventh in the final vote, trailed only by Dr. Walter G. Alexander, the first African-American to win a seat in the legislature. Laird and Van Ness had been conspicuous figures in the suffrage movement. Both were renominated in 1921, but because Van Ness had sponsored a rigorous act for enforcing Prohibition, she was cut by "wet" voters and went down to defeat.<sup>11</sup> Despite this mishap, the Essex Republicans made it a practice to include women on their tickets in subsequent years.<sup>12</sup>

Mayor Hague, shrewdest of political calculators, also courted the new constituency. In 1921 his slate in Hudson included Irene Brown and she was followed two years later by May Carty and Catherine M. Finn. Hague also groomed Mary T. Norton, placing her on the Democratic State Committee and then on the county governing board before sending her to Congress in 1924. As in Essex, the eleven-member Hudson assembly delegation thereafter included at least one woman and in some years as many as three.<sup>13</sup>

Electoral victories did not constitute the only signs that women were now being recognized by the political establishment. In response to demands from suffragist leaders, both parties in

1920 endorsed amending the election laws to provide that their county committees should include a woman as well as a man from each election district and that women should also be represented equally on their state committees. Thus, women would be incorporated into the basic party structure. The platforms also promised that women would be appointed to the State Board of Education and the State Board of Health. Remarkably enough, these pledges were promptly acted upon.<sup>14</sup> Under pressure from the League of Women Voters, the Consumers' League, the New Jersey Woman's Party and from women in the assembly and their allies, the legislature over the next decade enacted over a dozen laws that reduced discrimination on the basis of sex and enhanced the legal status of women. According to Felice Gordon, by 1930 New Jersey had advanced to "a leading position among the states" in the field of equal-rights legislation.<sup>15</sup>

The two major parties adopted different strategies for mobilizing their female adherents. Lillian Ford Feichert, who had become the first vice-chair of the Republican State Committee, conceived a plan to organize a Women's Republican Club on the model of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association that she had led so ably. By 1922 these clubs had sixty thousand members with local branches, county councils, and a state-level organization. Because the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association had enlisted women who were predominantly Republican, a large number of them followed Feichert into the Women's Republican Clubs.<sup>16</sup>

Feichert's battalions were associated with, but independent of, the official party organization, a relationship that soon produced problems. When the strong-minded Feichert sought to shape the party's platform and excoriated the

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behavior of the Republican-controlled legislature, the “regulars” were, to put it mildly, dismayed. She was, they concluded, too inflexible. She did not understand that in politics, “compromise” was not an epithet. She was “disloyal,” which was the worst of all transgressions. Accordingly, she was ousted from the state committee in 1925. When she resigned as president of the New Jersey Women’s Republican Club in 1930, party loyalists assumed control, and the network of clubs was incorporated into the “official” party apparatus. The clubs were formidable auxiliaries, especially in such important counties as Essex, Bergen, and Passaic, and they influenced the selection of women for both elective and appointive offices. But many women deplored this shift from an independent to a subordinate status.<sup>17</sup>

The Democratic state leadership, which meant Frank Hague, took a different course. A small “executive committee” of socially prominent women was created as an adjunct to the state committee, but it had no defined functions.<sup>18</sup> Hague believed that the proper place for women was within the regular party organization. Therefore, no attempt was made to replicate clubs on the Feichert model. Quite the contrary. When Sara T. Pollock, vice-chair of the Mercer County Democratic Committee sought to form such a statewide women’s organization in 1924 in order to obtain equal recognition for women in the party, she was promptly squelched. Through the state party chairman, and even more directly through the vice-chair—Mary T. Norton—Hague made it plain that he would not countenance such a move. There the matter ended. According to the embittered Pollock, Hague and his minions did not “want women to obtain any such organization strength as the Republican women

possess. They want just enough votes to keep Hudson County a centralized power.”<sup>19</sup>

Despite these signs of tension within both parties, and the ambivalent attitudes of women leaders toward electoral politics, the number of women in the assembly mounted in the early 1920s. The pinnacle was reached in 1926, when nine of fourteen major-party candidates won seats. Of the six Republican victors, three were from Essex; the others represented Bergen, Passaic, and Mercer. Hudson accounted for all three Democratic women. In what was to be a familiar pattern, Essex had two Democratic losers and Hudson two Republican losers; the fifth defeated candidate was a Mercer Democrat. Also typical was the presence of women on the ballot in only five of New Jersey’s twenty-one counties. Nevertheless, New Jersey now led all states in the proportion of women—15%—in its lower house.<sup>20</sup> Even more striking is the fact that not until fifty-one years later was the proportion equaled.

This early surge of electoral successes was not sustained. From the peak attained in 1926, the number of assemblywomen fell to six elected in 1929 and remained on a plateau at or near that level for the next two decades. Except for one year, there were never more than fifteen candidates or fewer than ten. Again, with but one exception, the number of those elected varied only between five and six over the course of seventeen annual elections. These data are not a statistical artifact; they reflect accurately a pattern that had become fixed by 1930 and persisted thereafter.<sup>21</sup>

Altogether there were 324 major-party candidacies by women between 1920 and 1946 (177 Republicans, 147 Democrats).<sup>22</sup> The Republican candidates won 108 victories (61.0%), the

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Democrats only 36 (24.1%). The comparable success rates for male Republican candidates was 71.6%; for male Democrats, 29.8% Women candidates in both parties had lower success rates than their male counterparts. They tended to run at or near the bottom of their respective party tickets and to be the nominees of the minority party in a county.<sup>23</sup> Far more Democrats than Republicans ran in such hopeless races, seventy of them in the Republican strongholds of Essex, Passaic, and Bergen. Democratic Hudson supplied four-fifths of the losing Republican candidates. Eleven counties never elected an assemblywoman; in three of them—Monmouth, Somerset, and Warren—there were no women candidates. The average tenure for assemblywomen was 2.8 terms, which was slightly above that for men.

The arrested progress of New Jersey women reflected a national phenomenon. The number of women legislators nationwide increased only slightly after 1925, declined in the 1930s, and did not rebound until the 1940s.<sup>24</sup> When Sophonisba Breckinridge surveyed the editors of leading women's magazines in 1932, they reported that women's interest in politics had reached a peak in 1925 and then faded. A poignant example of that diminished enthusiasm was the demise of *The Woman's Journal* in June, 1931. Long the organ of Carrie Chapman Catt—leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which became the League of Women Voters in 1920—*The Woman's Journal* had been the foremost political magazine for women. With no cause comparable to the suffrage issue to mobilize and unify women activists, according to William H. Chafe, "the mass of female citizens failed to act in the cohesive and committed manner which the suffragists had predicted."<sup>25</sup>

Also operative was the resistance of the masculine political establishment to the intrusion of women. When it became apparent that they need not be apprehensive about a "women's vote," that women were, in fact, not at all united in their attitudes toward politics, and that they could perform useful but humble tasks as party loyalists, the men had little to fear. One woman legislator summarized the bitter conclusion reached by many: "It is my opinion that men do not want women in office, they only put them in for expediency;—to keep the women voting and working for them politically." When New Jersey Republican women confronted the party establishment in April, 1931, to demand greater recognition, they were politely ignored, but they remained loyal. Thereafter they were "reduced to supplicants who hoped that their wishes would be granted. They were not." Conditions were no better on the Democratic side, where even Mary T. Norton was moved to express her discouragement.

In 1932 present and former members of the assembly formed the Organized Women Legislators of New Jersey, which subsequently became the Order of Women Legislators (OWLS), a national organization. The New Jersey OWLS mounted a campaign to persuade county party leaders to place women on the ballot, but their effort was fruitless. They were no more successful in obtaining additional appointive offices for women, another of their objectives. "Even if all the women united for a woman, she could not get elected or appointed unless the men said so," former Hudson assemblywoman May Carty told the OWLS in 1939. "Perhaps we have been too lenient. Perhaps we have demanded too little, and now the men have ceased to be afraid of the woman voter and have ceased to consider us."

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This was an accurate diagnosis. The male party leaders had discovered that they did not have to go beyond the modest concessions they had made in the 1920s. Still in control of the party machinery, and determined to maintain it, they were not disposed to share their power with women.<sup>26</sup>

New Jersey's assemblywomen were not randomly distributed throughout the state; neither were they equally divided between the major parties. They were drawn largely from a few counties, and they were predominantly Republican. These two pronounced tendencies require explanation. We are interested as well in identifying the conditions that were favorable—and unfavorable—for women candidates and in accounting for the *relatively* high proportion of women in the assembly as late as the 1940s.

During the 1920s, the populous contiguous counties of Bergen, Essex, Passaic, and Hudson accounted for 81.4% of women assembly candidates and 90.2% of those who were elected. Over the whole period from 1920 through 1946, the comparable figures were 79.0% and 84.0%. Collectively these counties were allotted 32 of the 60 assembly seats in the 1920s and 31 seats thereafter. Bergen's seats increased from four to six during these years. Essex remained at twelve, Hudson dropped from eleven to nine, and Passaic went from five to four. These were the four counties with the largest assembly delegations. They can be termed the "long-ticket counties." Bergen, Essex, and Passaic were all safely Republican; Hudson was impregnably Democratic.

The Essex Republicans established what was to be a precedent for including women on the assembly slate. There was a reform tradition in the local party dating back to the Progressive Era. It was especially vigorous in the affluent

suburban communities, where women had enlisted in large numbers in the suffrage movement. In 1919 the reform elements in the party formed the Republican League, committed to "clean government," and for nearly three decades, it was led by the astute lawyer, law professor, and county counsel, Arthur T. Vanderbilt. The League, which had strong support among suburban women, was effective in naming Republican candidates for county and legislative offices and prompt in recognizing the aspirations of women. After 1920, women's Republican clubs proliferated throughout the county, bolstering League candidates and demonstrating their usefulness to the cause of clean government.<sup>27</sup>

With a twelve-member delegation—and for some years the ground rule that members of the assembly should be limited to two terms—the Essex Republicans could readily allot two places to women. (The Democrats, whose prospects were meager, were equally generous.) Although the women invariably ran at or near the bottom of the ticket, the margin between the two parties was sufficiently large to minimize the risk that they might be defeated. Only in 1931 and 1936, when unusual circumstances favored the Democrats and carried their entire slate to victory, was a Republican woman assembly candidate defeated in Essex, except for the unfortunate Jennie Van Ness in 1921.

The success of women candidates in Hudson was hardly in response to reformist influences; it was due to Frank Hague. It was Hague's prerogative to name five of the eleven Democratic assembly candidates. He placed one woman on the ticket in 1921; by 1925 he increased the number to three. However, after 1930, when Hudson lost two seats in the decennial reapportionment, there was but one woman nominee.

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Needless to say, no Democratic candidate, man or woman, failed of election in Hudson. But as the size of the county's assembly delegation shrank, women became the casualties.

In Bergen, a rapidly growing suburban county with a large Republican majority, it was party practice, starting in 1926, to have a woman assembly candidate. Influential in securing this recognition was the formidable Edna B. Conklin, described in the press as the "Republican woman boss" of the county. She was president of the Bergen County Women's Republican Club and a member of both the state and national party committees. Pamela Francisco, Bergen's first assemblywoman, was Conklin's chief lieutenant. She was succeeded by a long line of nominees, broken only in 1933, and all of them were elected.<sup>28</sup>

Passaic, the fourth of the large counties, exhibited many of the characteristics of Essex and Bergen. In the early 1920s an insurgent faction, the John J. McCutcheon League, contested with the "regulars" for control of the party. Isabelle Summers led the women members of the League. When the McCutcheon forces prevailed in the 1926 spring primary, Summers became the vice-chair of the county Republican organization. At the same time she was nominated as one of the five members of the party's assembly slate. She went on to victory in the November election to become the first in a long series of Passaic assemblywomen.<sup>29</sup>

These four counties shared important attributes. They had large assembly delegations, which meant that one or more women could be included without arousing too great a sense of deprivation on the part of male aspirants. They were noncompetitive, safely under the control of

the majority party. Therefore that party incurred no serious risk of losing a seat if women candidates garnered fewer votes than their male running mates. At relatively little cost, then, women in these counties could have their service and loyalty to the party recognized and rewarded. When a county lost seats in the assembly or became intensely competitive between the parties, as was later to occur, women would encounter a far less favorable environment.<sup>30</sup>

If the "long-ticket" rule governed in a general way the election of women to the assembly, there were conspicuous exceptions. Eight of the forty-four assemblywomen elected between 1920 and 1946 came from six smaller counties—Camden (1), Hunterdon (1), Mercer (1), Morris (2), Ocean (2), and Union (1). Obviously, there were instances where special circumstances, or extraordinary qualities associated with the candidates, produced successes. Some of these cases merit brief attention.

The only Democrat in this small group was Mildred Preen of Hunterdon, after 1930 a firmly Republican county with a single assembly seat. Preen was a twenty-two year old unmarried woman with no known family political connections. She had a degree in engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology (then the Newark College of Engineering), did graduate work in government at Columbia University, and held an airplane pilot's license. Later in her career she obtained a law degree and was admitted to the bar. With the support of the local newspaper, she won elections in 1941, 1942, and 1943, each time leading the Democratic ticket. During her third term, she resigned from the assembly to join the WAVES. When she reemerged in 1948 as a senate candidate she was made the object of a vicious campaign and went down to defeat.<sup>31</sup>



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Ocean, which like Hunterdon was strongly Republican and had a single assembly seat, produced another remarkable woman, Lettie Savage. The wife of a former freeholder, Savage was a friend and political protege of Thomas A. Mathis, the long-time county Republican leader. In 1940, at the age of sixty-six, she was elected to the assembly, where she served continuously until 1959! In most of the elections in which she participated, she was the top vote-getter for her party.<sup>32</sup>

No less notable was May Ashmore Thropp. She was only twenty-five when she was elected to the assembly as a Republican from Mercer in 1924. Thropp was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Cornell University, where she also took her law degree, and a member of the bar in New York and New Jersey. The lone woman on the Republican primary ballot, Thropp attracted considerable public attention by her vigorous campaign. "I am in no sense a crusader," she announced. "I desire to be only one of the real Republican active workers for legislation the whole people want..." In winning the nomination, Thropp outpolled five male opponents. She was reelected for two additional terms. Perhaps her early rise to political prominence was related to the fact that both her father and maternal grandfather had served as Mercer sheriffs and were experienced Republican politicians. What makes Thropp's record so striking is that no other woman was elected from Mercer until 1975.<sup>33</sup>

These three "exceptional" cases, and others that could be cited, illustrate the difficulties involved in propounding general rules governing the electability of women. Preen, Savage, and Thropp were all unlikely candidates. The context within which they forged their political careers was very different from that which characterized

the four large counties. Yet they were successful. But the small number of exceptions reinforces the rule that women fared best in the long-ticket, noncompetitive counties.<sup>34</sup>

The paucity of assemblywomen from the seventeen smaller counties requires emphasis. During a twenty-seven year period those counties contributed only one-fifth of all women candidates and one-sixth of winning candidates. Eleven counties never elected a woman, eight offered three or fewer women candidates, and in three counties none were ever nominated. Counties like Cape May, Burlington, and Somerset that were safely Republican were no more favorable to women than the lesser number of Democratic counties. Even when, on rare occasions, a woman was sent to Trenton, her victory did not establish a precedent that others would follow. The conclusion is all but inescapable that the party organizations with small assembly delegations were averse to placing women on their assembly tickets. Men had priority.

Any composite profile of the forty-four women who served in the assembly down to 1947 must necessarily be sketchy and lack the vibrancy of individual portraits.<sup>35</sup> From the information supplied by those who were candid enough to report their ages, we learn that nine were under forty, nine were between forty and fifty, and five were over fifty when they were first elected. About one-quarter were unmarried. Most had no more than a high-school education, although eight were college graduates and ten others had attended normal schools, business colleges, or law schools. Ten were, or had been, teachers, three were lawyers, one a physician, one an engineer, and a few had business or clerical experience.

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What these women shared in common was their activism. They were joiners. They belonged to a wide array of suffragist, social, charitable, fraternal, professional, religious, and—above all—party organizations. Six had been identified with the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association. More cited membership in the Order of the Eastern Star than in the League of Women Voters. Other of their organizational ties included the Federation of Women's Clubs, Parent-Teachers Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Red Cross, Catholic Daughters of America, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Virtually all of the women had records of party service. Most had been local party committeewomen and twenty had been vice-chairs of their municipal or county committees. Among the Republicans, leadership in the Republican Women's Clubs was all but universal. Only one had been elected to a local governing body; few had served in appointive positions. Consequently, it was their party activities, in many instances coupled with conspicuous community roles, that gave them viability as candidates.

After the lapse of more than half a century, it is difficult to describe with confidence the attitudes of these women toward politics. In the early years, there were signs of ambivalence with respect to the virtues of party regularity. Jennie Van Ness proudly described herself not as a politician but as an "old-time suffrage worker with a keen desire to serve her community, her state and her nation." Lillian Ford Feichert placed her commitment to women above her loyalty to a male-dominated party, and was taught a bitter lesson. Such was also the story of Sara T. Pollack. Many able women became disillusioned and dropped out of the hurly-burly of partisan

politics. But most of the women who went to the assembly accepted the discipline of "regularity" and were willing to play the game according to its time-honored rules. Typifying the loyalist position was Mrs. W. B. Tompkins, holder of a patronage appointment in Newark. Women, she lectured, must learn "the vital importance of party regularity." She scorned the tendency to "vote for the best man," which, in a two-party system, would get women nowhere. Mayor Hague could not have put it more succinctly.<sup>36</sup>

Regularity had its rewards, as well as its frustrations. It brought women into the assembly where thirteen of them had tenures of five or more terms. A few achieved leadership positions; three chaired the influential appropriations committee, one became minority leader, others headed the education committee. Poorly compensated service in the assembly was for many a gateway to better paid positions. Three were elected to boards of freeholders (the county governing boards), five secured appointments to election boards, and several others were given lucrative positions with state and county agencies with salaries as high as \$6,000. Six were elevated to membership on their state party committees, and one was appointed to the State Board of Education. For many of these women, politics became a vocation; they were no longer amateurs. They served their parties and they sought their share of patronage jobs.

One case must serve to illustrate how the system operated. After leaving the assembly, Pamela Francisco became a member of the Bergen County board of elections at a salary of \$2,500. In 1930 she was elevated to the post of undersheriff, which paid \$6,000. When a new sheriff was installed in 1939, Francisco was ousted. The New Jersey OWLS adopted a resolution

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protesting this action and deplored as well the earlier removal of former Bergen assemblywoman Emma Peters from the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission (which paid \$6,000) to make way for a male appointee. These were the perils of patronage politics.<sup>37</sup>

Writing in *The Woman's Journal* in January, 1931, Emily Newell Blair—who had been vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee for seven years—rendered a harsh judgment on women in politics. Initially, she observed, the parties had placed “high minded women” on their committees, but these paragons were soon replaced by “loyalists,” who were willing to follow male leaders. “Such women never bother with so-called women’s measures or movements. They have no use for feminism.... Small wonder that politicians think woman suffrage a success. The bogey of feminine influence, of the woman vote, has been laid.” This appraisal was probably too severe, but it reflected the disillusionment that had set in after a decade of woman suffrage.<sup>38</sup>

There is little question that women’s interest in electoral politics sagged when the realities of the partisan struggles became apparent to them. Many found the man-made rules of the game of politics repulsive. Yet thousands of New Jersey women served on the party committees and enrolled in party clubs, even when they had to tolerate their subordinate positions. Scores of them were willing to act as “sacrificial lambs” by running as minority party candidates in counties where they had no hope of being elected.

A host of women in such organizations as the League of Women Voters, the Consumers’ League, the Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, and the Woman’s Party—deliberately, and not irrationally—chose to exert their influence

outside the realm of partisan politics. And they were not ineffective. The women’s movement, so militant before 1920, was not moribund, but it was muted and divided.<sup>39</sup>

Women, long socialized to an inferior status as citizens, were partly responsible for their inadequate representation in public offices, but except for the first few years after they were granted the suffrage, they received little encouragement or support from the male establishment. In many counties in New Jersey they were virtually ignored. Rarely were they elected to local offices. In the few long-ticket counties, they were regularly allotted places on the assembly slate, but only in exceptional circumstances did they meet with success elsewhere. The price they paid for such recognition was unflinching loyalty and conspicuous service to their parties. Higher elective offices were all but closed to them. Mary T. Norton alone went to Congress. The state senate, where real power resided, remained an exclusive male bastion, as did the judiciary. It was on these terms that women constituted around 10% of the membership of the assembly, a proportion that was high compared to other states and that was maintained only because of the peculiarities of the long-ticket counties.<sup>40</sup>

TABLE I  
WOMEN MAJOR PARTY ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES, 1920-1946

R - republicans elected    r - republicans defeated  
D - democrats elected    d - democrats defeated

|        | Atlantic | Bergen | Burlington | Camden | Cape May | Cumberland | Essex | Hudson | Hunterdon | Mercer | Middlesex | Morris | Ocean | Passaic | Sussex | Union | Total | R   | r  | D  | d   | Elected |
|--------|----------|--------|------------|--------|----------|------------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-------|---------|--------|-------|-------|-----|----|----|-----|---------|
| 1920   |          | ld     | ld         | ld     |          | 2R         |       |        |           |        |           |        | ld    |         |        | ld    | 7     | 2   | 0  | 0  | 5   | 2       |
| 1921   |          |        |            |        |          | 1R         | 3r    |        |           |        |           |        |       |         |        |       | 9*    | 1   | 4  | 1  | 3*  | 2       |
| 1922   |          |        | ld         |        |          | 1r         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        |       |         |        |       |       |     |    |    |     |         |
| 1923   | ld       |        |            |        |          | 2R         | 4r    |        | ld        |        | ld        |        | ld    |         |        |       | 13    | 2   | 4  | 1  | 6   | 3       |
| 1924   |          |        |            |        |          | 2d         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        |       |         |        |       | 12*   | 2   | 3  | 2  | 5*  | 4       |
| 1925   |          |        |            | ld     |          | 1R         | 3r    |        | 1R        |        |           | 1R     |       |         | ld     |       | 10    | 3   | 1  | 2  | 4   | 5       |
| 1926   |          | ld     |            |        |          | 1d         | 2D    |        |           |        |           |        | ld    |         |        | ld    | 13    | 4   | 2  | 3  | 4   | 7       |
| 1927   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 3R         | 2r    |        | 1R        |        |           |        | ld    |         |        | ld    | 14    | 6   | 2  | 3  | 3   | 9       |
| 1928   | ld       |        | ld         |        |          | 2d         | 3D    |        | ld        |        |           |        |       | 1R      |        |       | 16    | 4   | 2  | 3  | 7   | 7       |
| 1929   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 3R         | 2r    |        |           |        |           |        | 2d    |         |        |       | 10    | 5   | 2  | 1  | 2   | 6       |
| 1930   |          |        |            |        |          | ld         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        | 1R    |         |        | ld    | 9     | 5   | 0  | 1  | 3   | 6       |
| 1931   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 3R         | 2r    |        |           |        |           | ld     |       |         |        |       | 12    | 5   | 2  | 1  | 4   | 6       |
| 1932   |          | ld     |            |        |          | 1D         | 1D    |        |           |        | 1R        |        | ld    |         |        |       | 11    | 2   | 6  | 2  | 1   | 4       |
| 1933   |          | 1R     |            | 1R     |          | 2R         | 2r    |        |           |        |           |        | ld    |         |        |       | 15    | 5   | 3  | 1  | 6   | 6       |
| 1934   |          | ld     |            | 1R     |          | 2d         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        |       |         |        | ld    | 10    | 3   | 3  | 2  | 2   | 5       |
| 1935   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 2R         | 3r    |        |           |        |           |        | 1D    |         |        |       | 13    | 4   | 4  | 2  | 3   | 6       |
| 1936   |          | ld     |            |        |          | 2d         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        | 1R    |         |        |       | 13    | 4   | 3  | 1  | 5   | 5       |
| 1937   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 2d         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        | ld    |         |        | ld    | 13    | 2   | 6  | 3  | 2   | 5       |
| 1938   |          | 1R     |            |        | lr       | 1D         | 1D    |        |           |        | 1R        |        |       |         | ld     |       | 12    | 5   | 2  | 1  | 4   | 6       |
| 1939   |          | ld     |            |        |          | 2R         | 1r    |        |           |        |           |        |       |         |        | ld    | 14    | 4   | 3  | 1  | 6   | 5       |
| 1940   |          | 1R     |            | ld     |          | 2d         | 1D    |        |           |        | ld        |        |       |         |        | ld    | 10    | 4   | 1  | 1  | 4   | 5       |
| 1941   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 2R         | 2r    |        |           |        |           |        | 1R    | 1R      |        |       | 10    | 5   | 2  | 0  | 3   | 5       |
| 1942   |          | ld     |            |        |          | 2d         | 1D    | 1D     |           |        |           |        | ld    | ld      |        | ld    | 10    | 5   | 1  | 1  | 3   | 6       |
| 1943   | ld       | 1R     |            |        |          | 2R         | 2r    |        |           |        |           |        | 1R    | 1R      |        |       | 13    | 5   | 2  | 1  | 5   | 6       |
| 1944   |          | ld     |            |        |          | 2d         | 1D    | 1D     |           |        | ld        |        | ld    | ld      |        | ld    | 14    | 5   | 2  | 1  | 6   | 6       |
| 1945   |          | 1R     |            |        | ld       | 2R         | 1d    |        |           |        |           |        | 1R    | 1R      |        | 1R    | 11    | 6   | 0  | 0  | 5   | 6       |
| 1946   |          | 1R     |            | ld     | ld       | 2R         | 4r    |        |           | 2r     |           |        | ld    | ld      |        |       | 18    | 5   | 6  | 0  | 7   | 5       |
| 1946   |          | 1R     |            |        |          | 3d         | 3r    |        |           |        |           |        | 1R    | 1R      |        |       | 12    | 5   | 3  | 1  | 3   | 6       |
| TOTAL  |          |        |            | ld     |          | ld         | 1D    |        |           |        |           |        | ld    |         |        |       | 324   | 108 | 69 | 36 | 111 | 144     |
| R win  |          | 19     |            | 3      |          | 52         |       |        | 3         |        | 4         |        | 9     | 17      |        | 1     | 108   |     |    |    |     |         |
| r lose |          |        |            |        | 1        | 6          | 55    |        |           | 2      |           |        | 4     | 1       |        |       | 69    |     |    |    |     |         |
| D win  |          |        |            |        |          | 2          | 28    | 3      |           |        |           |        | 3     |         |        |       | 36    |     |    |    |     |         |
| d lose | 3        | 12     | 2          | 4      | 3        | 2          | 38    |        | 3         |        | 3         | 5      | 20    | 1       | 13     | 111   |       |     |    |    |     |         |
| TOTAL  | 3        | 31     | 2          | 7      | 3        | 3          | 98    | 83     | 3         | 6      | 2         | 7      | 14    | 44      | 2      | 14    | 324   |     |    |    |     |         |

\* In 1921 there was one Democratic loser on the ballot in Gloucester County; in 1923 one Democratic loser in Salem County.

## ENDNOTES

1. The literature on women in American politics before 1970 is not extensive. Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933) contains the best survey of women in public office in the 1920s. There is also useful information in Louise M. Young, *Understanding Politics: A Practical Guide for Women* (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1950), and William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). There is a wealth of miscellaneous information in Martin Gruber, *Women in American Politics: An Assessment and Sourcebook* (Oshkosh, WI: Academia Press, 1968). Brief contemporary accounts that are of exceptional value are Dorothy A. Moncure, "Women in Political Life," *Current History* (January 1929): 639-643, Emily Newell Blair, "Women in the Political Parties," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 143 (1929): 217-229, and Oliver McKee, Jr., "Ten Years of Woman Suffrage," *The Commonweal*, 12 (July 16, 1930): 298-300. Among the small number of longitudinal studies of women legislative candidates in individual states, the most comprehensive is Emily Steir Adler and J. Stanley Lemons, *The Elect: Rhode Island Women Legislators, 1922-1990*, (Providence: League of Rhode Island Historical Societies, 1990). Also relevant are Joanne Varner Hawks, "A Select Few: Alabama's Women Legislators, 1922-1983," *The Alabama Review*, 38 (1985): 175-201; Mary Caroline Ellis and Joanne V. Hawks, "Creating a Different Pattern: Florida's Women Legislators, 1928-1986," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 66 (1987): 68-83; Joanne V. Hawks, Mary C. Ellis, and J. Byron Morris, "Women in the Mississippi Legislature, 1924-1981," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 43 (1981): 266-293; and Carole Nichols, *Votes and More for Women: Suffrage and After in Connecticut* (New York: Institute for Research in History: Haworth Press, 1983).
2. A seminal work was Maurice Duverger, *The Political Role of Women* (Paris: UNESCO, 1955). In this study, a project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Duverger concluded that: "The small part played by women in politics merely reflects and results from the secondary place to which they are still assigned by the customs and attitudes of our society and which their education and training tend to make them accept as the natural order of things." *ibid.*, 130. Representative critiques of the scholarship of the 1970s are Carol Nechemias, "Changes in the Election of Women to United States State Legislative Seats," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 12 (1927): 125-141; Marianne Githens, "Women and State Politics: An Assessment," *Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government*, edited by Janet A. Flammang (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1984), 41-63; Berenice A. Carroll, "Review Essay: Political Science, Part I: American Politics and Political Behavior," *Signs*, 5 (1979): 289-306; and R. Darcy, Susan Welch, and Janet Clark, *Women, Elections, and Representation*, chapter IV (New York: Longman, 1987).
3. The political background is sketched in Richard P. McCormick, "An Historical Overview," in *Politics in New Jersey*, edited by Alan Rosenthal and John Blydenburgh (New Brunswick, NJ: Eagleton Institute of Politics, 1975), 1-30. On legislative apportionment, see Carl R. Erdman, *The New Jersey Constitution: Barrier to Governmental Efficiency and Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1934).
4. Richard J. Connors, *A Cycle of Power: The Career of Jersey City Mayor Frank Hague* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971); Dayton D. McKean, *The Boss: The Hague Machine in Action* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940).
5. John Blydenburgh, "Party Organization," in Rosenthal and Blydenburgh, *Politics in New Jersey*, 110-137, is a superb analysis.
6. The political role of women before 1920 is described in an influential article by Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (1984): 620-647. *New Jersey Women, 1770-1970: A Bibliography*, compiled by Elizabeth Steiner-Scott and Elizabeth Pearce Wagle (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1978) is a standard guide to the subject. *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women*, edited by Joan M. Burstyn (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990) presents biographies of women identified with New Jersey.

7. Felice D. Gordon, *After Winning: The Legacy of the New Jersey Suffragists, 1920-1947* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986) is admirable on the suffrage movement in New Jersey and the divergent courses followed by the suffragists after 1919. We are greatly indebted to her work, which provides an essential background for our own study. The vote on the referendum is analyzed in Joseph F. Mahoney, "Woman Suffrage and the Urban Masses," *New Jersey History*, 88 (1969): 151-172, and John F. Reynolds, *Testing Democracy: Electoral Behavior and Progressive Reform in New Jersey, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
8. Gordon, *After Winning*, 29.
9. *Ibid.*, passim.
10. The *Newark Evening News*, September 14–November 8, 1920, provided excellent coverage of the role of women in the 1920 election. There is no assured way to determine how many women voted. Reynolds, who assumes that the same proportion of men voted in 1912, 1916, and 1920 (about two-thirds), estimates that half of the women citizens went to the polls. *Testing Democracy*, 165. Sara Alpern and Dale Baum concluded that for the mid-Atlantic states, 46% of the eligible women and 60% of the men voted in 1920. "Female Ballots: the Impact of the Nineteenth Amendment," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18 (1985): 56. Many opponents of woman suffrage had argued that women did not want to be enfranchised. That they turned out in such relatively large numbers in 1920, when even male voters were apathetic, impugns the validity of that contention.
11. *Trenton Evening Times*, November 9, 1921; *Newark Evening News*, November 30, 1968; Burstyn, ed., *Past and Promise*, 202-203.
12. We have investigated the election returns for each county in every annual election from 1920 to 1947 to identify female major party candidates for the assembly and their party affiliation. Most of the data were obtained from the *Manual of the Legislature of New Jersey* (cited as *Legislative Manual*) published annually in Trenton. In a few instances where first names were not given, making it impossible to determine gender, we consulted the official returns that were made to the Secretary of State. These documents are now located in the New Jersey State Archives in Trenton. All subsequent references to women's candidacies are based on our compilation, derived from these sources. See Table I for a summary of our data.
13. Hague practiced the art of ethnic—and gender—politics in forming his slate of legislative candidates, but the county governing board reflected his strong preference for Irish-Americans. Connors, *Cycle of Power*, 86-95. On Norton, see Burstyn, ed., *Past and Promise*, 368-370.
14. For the state party platforms, see *Legislative Manual*, 1920, 135-136, 145. Legislation enacted February 21, 1921, required that equal numbers of men and women be chosen at the annual primary election for membership on municipal and county party committees. In the primaries prior to gubernatorial elections, voters in each county elected one woman and one man to the state party committees. *Laws of New Jersey*, 1921, chapter IV. New Jersey was among the first states to adopt this so-called "fifty-fifty" plan. For a very astute and informative analysis of the unequal role of women in party affairs despite this fifty-fifty arrangement, see Blair, "Women in Political Parties."
15. Gordon, *After Winning*, 109.
16. *Ibid.*, 78-80.
17. *Ibid.*, 85-97. By 1923 the New Jersey Women's Republican Club was complaining vehemently about broken platform promises and affronts "toward their splendid leader, Mrs. Lillian Feichert." See *The New Jersey Republican*, April, 1923, the club's organ, which reports several resolutions of protest.
18. *Legislative Manual*, 1921, 148-149.
19. *Trenton Evening Times*, May 23, 24, June 18, 1924.
20. There are three main sources for data on the number of women in state legislatures prior to 1947. Breckinridge presents the number serving in each house at two-year intervals from 1921 through 1932. *Women in the Twentieth Century*, 323-324. Emmy E. Werner, using different sources

from those of Breckinridge, lists women in state legislatures by party affiliation in the same intervals from 1921-1963/4. "Women in State Legislatures," *Western Political Quarterly*, 21 (1968), 41-42. The two accounts are not in agreement. The discrepancies are all but unavoidable because states did not hold elections in the same years. Neither Breckinridge nor Werner presents state-by-state figures. Such data (not always complete) can be obtained from the annual reports on election results in *The Woman Citizen* (in 1928 became *The Woman's Journal*). This influential magazine, founded in 1870 by Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, published its final issue in June, 1931. According to the results reported in the issue of December, 1926, only Connecticut and New Hampshire, with their huge legislatures, had more women members than New Jersey. In fifteen states no women won legislative seats.

<sup>21</sup> See Table I.

<sup>22</sup> There were, of course, fewer than 324 candidates, because many women ran more than once. It was not feasible to make a full investigation of how women fared in primary elections because the results of such contests were not reported to the Secretary of State or published in the *Legislative Manual*. It is evident, however, that women often ran in primaries in opposition to candidates endorsed by county organizations. Pamela Francisco, for example, failed of renomination in the 1927 Bergen primary; women on the Republican League slate in Essex lost to candidates backed by the regular organization in Essex in 1924; Lila W. Thompson of Ocean, after losing in the 1922 primary, defeated three men in 1924; and Isabelle Summers was victorious in the Passaic Republican primary in 1925 after suffering defeat a year earlier. Especially in gubernatorial years, intra-party factionalism occasioned numerous primary contests. More women were involved in primary contests between 1920 and 1940 than has been the case in the past two decades, where serious primary competition has been rare.

<sup>23</sup> A political columnist in the *Newark Evening News*, February 24, 1930, observed: "New Jersey election returns over the ten years of suffrage show that

even the most popular feminine candidate always runs a little lower on the ticket than her male colleagues." Our own examination of the returns confirms this statement.

<sup>24</sup> Werner, "Women in State Legislatures," 41-42.

<sup>25</sup> Breckinridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century*, 336; Chafe, *American Woman*, 30. For an extended discussion of the question, "Is Woman Suffrage Failing?" see *The Woman Citizen*, 8, March 22, April 5, 19, May 3, 1924. Most respondents acknowledged that the high expectations of the suffragists had not been realized and many were critical of the continued male domination of the political parties.

<sup>26</sup> Breckinridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century*, 331; Gordon, *After Winning*, 165-167. There is a wealth of information in the "morgue" of the *Newark Evening News*, the state's leading newspaper until its demise in 1972. This resource is now in the Newark Public Library. Clippings are arranged alphabetically by names of subjects, but unfortunately many of them are undated. We cite them as NEN:NPL, the name entry under which the clippings may be found, and an approximate date. On the origins and activities of the OWLS, see NEN:NPL, F. L. Haines, 1932, and Francisco, December, 1939, and Burstyn, ed., *Past and Promise*, 308-309. The New Jersey chapter is no longer active.

<sup>27</sup> The distinctive conditions within the Republican party in Essex are described in Thomas H. Reed, *Twenty Years of Government in Essex County*, New Jersey (New York: D. Appleton Century, 1938) and Arthur T. Vanderbilt II, *Changing Law: A Biography of Arthur T. Vanderbilt* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976). Down to 1935 there were frequent primary contests between League candidates and those sponsored by the regular organization, headed by Jesse Salmon. The League was reorganized in 1934 and changed its name to "Clean Government." A year later this faction gained full control of the county organization and ousted Salmon.

<sup>28</sup> NEN:NPL, Francisco, November 5, 1936, August 31, 1937, December, 1939.

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- <sup>29</sup> *New Jersey Republican*, April, 1923, 5; NEN:NPL, Summers, August 1, 1926, January 14, 1927.
- <sup>30</sup> The women who were allotted places on party slates in the "long ticket" counties should not be regarded as mere tokens, or "hacks." On the contrary, they were people of marked ability and were distinguished by more than their service to their parties. Most of them had acquired visibility through active roles in their communities and many subsequently held other appointive or elective offices. These characteristics were no less evident in the Democratic assemblywomen from Hudson than in their Republican counterparts from Essex, Bergen, and Passaic.
- <sup>31</sup> (Flemington) *Hunterdon County Democrat*, October 18, 30, November 6, 1941; September 17, November 5, 1942; September 23, October 21, November 4, 1943; July 29, October 14, 21, 28, November 4, 1948. Preen later married Austin J. Mortimer. She returned to public life in the 1970s and held local and county offices until her death in 1979. *ibid.*, February 2, 1979. The only other woman elected from Hunterdon was Barbara McConnell (D) in 1977 and 1979.
- <sup>32</sup> *Asbury Park Press*, September 17, 1961.
- <sup>33</sup> *Trenton Evening Times*, September 22, 24, November 3, 5, 1924.
- <sup>34</sup> The other exceptions were Isabella C. Reinert (R), elected from Camden in 1932, 1933, and 1934; Dr. Judith C. Mutchler (R) elected in 1931 and 1932 and Jennie W. Pilch (R) elected in 1936 and 1937 from Morris; and Irene T. Griffin (R) elected from Union in 1944. Like Preen and Savage, Reinert and Mutchler had the distinction of being the leading vote-getters on their party tickets, defying the rule that women ran poorly. The most popular of all women candidates was Mattie S. Doremus, Passaic assemblywoman from 1939 to 1947. Born in 1882, she was a Paterson High School principal. In almost every campaign, she led all the Republican candidates. After leaving the assembly, she served nine years on the county governing board.
- <sup>35</sup> This portrayal of the characteristics of assemblywomen is based mainly on the biographical material they provided for publication in the *Legislative Manual*. In many instances, this information has been supplemented by additional data obtained from NEN:NPL, other newspaper sources, Gordon, *After Winning*, and Burstyn, ed., *Past and Promise*.
- <sup>36</sup> *The Woman Citizen*, March 25, 1921; NEN:NPL, Summers, August 1, 1926.
- <sup>37</sup> NEN:NPL, Francisco, March, 1928, August 31, 1937, December, 1939.
- <sup>38</sup> Mary L. Yuell, former Essex assemblywoman sounded a plaintiff note: "What the woman in politics needs more than anything else is the friendship of women.... Filling a public office does not argue neglect of the home. I am a mother and a grandmother and have never neglected domestic obligations." NEN:NPL, Yuell, January 12, 1934.
- <sup>39</sup> This theme is ably developed in Gordon, *After Winning*.
- <sup>40</sup> As late as 1949, women did not constitute 15% of assembly members in any state. Connecticut led with 13.6%, followed by Vermont (10.6%), New Mexico (10.2%) and New Jersey (10.0%). Young, *Understanding Politics*, 281-3



## EXPENDABLE WOMEN, 1947–1965

Women's political fortunes followed an odd course in the two decades after World War II. The proportion of women in the assembly remained fairly constant down to 1960, then it plunged sharply. In a broad sense this startling setback was related to important changes that were under way in New Jersey politics. A new constitution, a major redistribution of population, heightened volatility within the electorate, and the downfall of Hague altered the political environment. In quite a different context, there were as yet no clear signs of a revival of a women's movement. The "feminine mystique," to use Betty Friedan's brilliantly conceived term, prevailed.

The constitution that was adopted in 1947 modernized the executive and judicial branches but did not proceed very far in reforming the legislature. The terms of assemblymen were increased to two years and those of senators to four. Their salaries were no longer fixed by the constitution; they could be determined by the legislature. Initially the amount was set at \$3,000, which was raised to \$7,500 by 1966. State elections were scheduled for the odd-numbered years in order to insulate them from the effect of national politics. No change was made in the old system of representation. Each county continued to have one senator; assemblymen were apportioned among the counties on a population basis (with each county having at least one assemblyman).<sup>1</sup>

The provisions for greatly enhanced salaries, together with lengthened terms, presumably made service in the legislature more attractive.

According to one theory, the new conditions—by stimulating more men to compete for seats—should have operated to the disadvantage of women candidates.<sup>2</sup> This does not seem to have been the case. The number of women candidates, and of those elected, did not decline until after 1960, when other causal factors became operative.

More influential on the political scene were population declines experienced by the largest cities along with a spectacular growth in new suburban regions. While the population of the state grew by nearly fifty percent between 1940 and 1960, Hudson actually showed a decline and Essex barely moved ahead. Seven other counties doubled in size. There was a massive shift in voting strength from urban to suburban areas, which was partially moderated by the retention of the unrepresentative structure of the legislature. Following the census of 1960 and the attendant reapportionment of assembly seats among the counties, Hudson and Essex both suffered pronounced losses.

The growth and redistribution of population contributed to altering the political map of the state. Former Republican counties like Essex, Passaic, and Union, moved into the Democratic column, and other counties now became competitive. Electoral politics became more volatile as traditional partisan loyalties weakened or dissolved under influences that were national in scope. Thus Republican victories in the presidential elections of 1952 and 1956 could be succeeded by Democratic triumphs in gubernatorial elections in 1953 and 1957. Hague's belated retirement from politics in 1949 freed

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the state Democratic party from the burden of his restrictive leadership and deprived the Republicans of a favorite target. These developments did not end the potency of county party organizations and their leaders in state elections. Because the county continued to be the unit for electing senators, assemblymen, and all county officials, the bosses retained their resources and their influence.<sup>3</sup>

The Republicans held on to their customary two-to-one dominance of the assembly until 1957. Then the Democrats, with Robert B. Meyner as their victorious gubernatorial candidate, gained control for the first time in twenty years. They retained their majority until 1964, when the Republicans recaptured the lower house. The senate remained an impregnable Republican bastion until 1966. Democrats occupied the governorship from 1954 to 1970 and celebrated success in the presidential elections of 1960 and 1964. The election of 1957, then, was a critical election. It signaled the end of six decades of Republican predominance in the legislature, brought the two parties into competition throughout the state, and foretold difficulties for women candidates in counties where conditions had formerly been favorable for them.

Over the course of the ten elections from 1947 to 1965, the summary record of major-party women assembly candidates looks strikingly similar to that of the previous period.<sup>4</sup> The average number of candidates was 12.4 and the average number of those elected was 5.4. Most of the candidates (72.6%) still came from the four large counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic), as did most of those who were elected (74.1%). The only other successful candidates were from Ocean—where Lettie Savage continued her extraordinary career—and Union,

where Florence P. Dwyer was elected for the first of her four terms in 1949 and was succeeded by Mildred Barry Hughes in 1957. Fifteen counties elected no women; in eight there was never a woman candidate. As in the past, Republican winners outnumbered Democrats, although by a reduced margin (37 to 17).

As in the previous era, women fared less well than men at the polls. Whereas 55.0% of male Republicans won election, that party's women candidates had a success rate of only 46.7%. Among Democrats, the comparable scores were 46.7% for the men and 36.9% for the women. The disparities are readily explainable; high proportions of women candidates in both parties were "sacrificial lambs," running in hopeless districts. Now the Republicans indulged more than the Democrats in this practice, but they also nominated more women for safe seats.<sup>5</sup>

These bare factual statements hide drastic changes after 1960 that disrupted forever the pattern that had maintained for forty years. The number of women candidates dropped from fourteen in 1959 to but four in 1965. Concurrently, the number of those elected plummeted from six to one. No assemblywomen were elected from Essex or Hudson after 1959. The plateau had become an abyss. To identify why women suddenly became expendable is to bring to light the tenuous basis of their previous success.<sup>6</sup>

What happened in Essex is especially instructive. In the 1950s the comfortable majority that the Republicans had so long maintained began to shrink. In essence, demographic changes—a rapidly increasing African-American population and middle-class removal to suburbia—altered the balance of parties. In 1957, the Democrats carried the county, including all twelve assembly seats. In each of the four

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previous elections, Essex had sent three Republican assemblywomen to Trenton; now it sent none. In 1959, 1961, and 1963, inter-party competition was so close that the assembly delegations were split between the parties. But because the Republican women candidates ran near the bottom of the ticket, they were not among those elected.<sup>7</sup> Not until 1975, and then under a very different electoral system, did a Republican assemblywoman next represent Essex.

The Democratic sweep in Essex in 1957 carried one Democratic assemblywoman into office—Madeline A. Williams, the first African-American woman to sit in the legislature. She was reelected in 1959, but she resigned a year later when she was elected to a county office.<sup>8</sup> There were no women on the Democratic assembly ticket in the ensuing three elections. Thus, after 1959, no assemblywomen were elected from Essex as long as that county remained a unit of representation.

Two structural factors made women expendable in Essex. When party competition intensified, women candidates were in a precarious position because they tended to run behind their male colleagues. Their vulnerability in turn weakened their claims for places on the party ticket. Secondly, Essex lost three of its twelve assembly seats after the 1960 reapportionment. Not coincidentally, the number of women candidates promptly declined. The Democrats named none; the Republicans by 1963 had cut their usual quota of three down to one.

The 1960 reapportionment had a similar effect in Hudson. That county was deprived of three of its nine seats. It remained a Democratic stronghold, but whereas it had commonly nominated and elected one assemblywoman, no women graced the party's assembly slate after

1959. Only the Republicans, whose cause was utterly hopeless, continued to offer women candidates. In 1953 Essex and Hudson together had furnished nine of the statewide total of seventeen women candidates and four of the seven who were elected; by 1963 there were but two candidates, neither of whom won.

In Bergen and Passaic the situation was not quite so bleak. Bergen continued to elect a Republican assemblywoman through 1963. But in 1965, with no woman assembly candidate for the first time since 1928, the Republicans suffered an astonishing defeat. For several years thereafter, they offered no women candidates.<sup>9</sup> In Passaic, which had customarily chosen one Republican assemblywoman, the Democrats established themselves as the majority party in 1957 and elected Betty Kordja to the first of five terms in the assembly.

Union had an unusual history with respect to women candidates. The Democrats had frequently run a woman for the assembly against hopeless odds, but not until 1944 did the Republicans nominate a woman—Irene Griffin—who was elected for one term but was denied renomination. Then in 1949 Florence P. Dwyer, a woman with extraordinary political talents, won a place on the Republican ballot in a contested primary and led her three male running mates to victory in the general election. When she left her seat in the assembly in 1956 to become the second woman to represent New Jersey in Congress, she was succeeded by an equally popular Democratic woman, Mildred Barry Hughes, who also led her ticket. Contradicting the aphorism that “lightning does not strike twice in the same place,” Union produced the two most conspicuously successful women politicians of their generation in New Jersey.<sup>10</sup>

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Except for the singular case of Ocean, no county with fewer than four assembly seats elected a woman between 1947 and 1965. Indeed, the modest number of women (sixteen) who were nominated in those fifteen counties suggests that they were rarely considered even for hopeless candidacies. The sharp decline of women's candidacies in Essex and Hudson can be related to the reduction in the number of assembly seats allotted to those counties, and in the case of Essex—and possibly Bergen—to intense inter-party competition. But what is significant is not only the retrograde movement in those counties but the continued failure of women to make any political gains in the smaller counties. Women needed the endorsement of the majority party's organization to secure their nominations. Such endorsements dwindled in the large counties and were seldom forthcoming elsewhere.

A composite portrait of the twenty-two assemblywomen who served between 1947 and 1965 resembles that of their predecessors. Seventeen were Republicans (nine of them from Essex); five were Democrats (three from Hudson). Two were under forty; seven were over fifty. Only two were unmarried. Four were college graduates and two others had law degrees. Most described themselves as "housewives." Of the small number who were employed, three were real estate or insurance brokers and two were lawyers. Four were former teachers. None had previously held any elective office.

Many years of activity in party organizations was still the commonest route to preferment. Some reported that they had been Republican committeewomen for over twenty years, along with their memberships in Republican women's clubs. At least five had held the post of vice-chair of the county committee, an almost certain

guarantee of selection for appointive or elective offices. Two had been alternate delegates to national conventions. Eight had served useful apprenticeships as legislative aides in Trenton, in one case for thirteen years. These were patronage appointments that carried modest stipends but rewarded incumbents with invaluable experience.

Like their earlier sisters, they were joiners. Among the associations they cited most frequently were the Business and Professional Women's Club, Eastern Star, Women's Clubs, League of Women Voters, Parent Teachers Association, and Catholic service agencies. Outside their home, they were heavily involved in women's organizations, including the still vigorous Republican women's clubs. Such "networking," to use the current terminology, no doubt both reflected and shaped their public attitude and enhanced their visibility.

Even a superficial comparison reveals striking differences between the profiles of men and women legislators. Almost half of the men were lawyers; about one-third were businessmen. More than half were college and/or law school graduates. Two of five had held previous public offices. The brief biographical sketches that the men prepared for the *Legislative Manual* rarely mentioned memberships on party committees, and the social and fraternal organizations to which they belonged were decidedly masculine. It was as though assemblymen and assemblywomen came from two different worlds. In actuality, they did.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, for most women, election to the assembly was still a token in recognition of their diligent and loyal service to their party. But, again, it is important to point out that some women did not conform to this stereotype. What

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most distinguished them from their sisters were those indefinable qualities that gave them a special appeal to the electorate coupled with a rare capacity for dealing effectively with their male counterparts in politics and in the legislature.

Florence P. Dwyer epitomized these attributes. After taking up residence in Elizabeth in 1927, she was active in the Republican party. She became vice-chair of the party's county committee, was chosen as an alternate delegate to the 1944 national convention, and in 1947 served as legislative aide to the majority leader (later Speaker) of the assembly. She was also prominent as a spokesperson for the New Jersey Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and for the State Nurses Association. In 1949, with support from county Republican leaders, she won a primary contest for the assembly nomination and led the ticket in the general election. She was again the leading vote-getter in 1951, 1953, and 1955.

Dwyer never stopped campaigning. Freed of domestic responsibilities by a supportive husband, a helpful mother, and adoring volunteers, she devoted all of her time to her political career. She was especially effective in courting the support of women while always depicting herself as gender neutral. In 1956 she defeated a popular Democratic incumbent—Harrison Williams—to win a seat in Congress, where she served eight terms. She was the first New Jersey woman to move upward from the legislature to Congress. In both legislative bodies she mastered the art of negotiating approval for measures in which she was interested. She demonstrated that politics was not exclusively a man's game. Women with the necessary talents and commitment could play it too.<sup>12</sup>

Mildred Barry Hughes' route to political distinction was unlike that of Dwyer's. The wife of a successful lawyer and the mother of three sons, her main interest outside the home was the Catholic Youth Organization. In 1952 she joined the League of Women Voters in Elizabeth and attracted attention as the editor of the League's handbook on that city. As a result, she was recruited to run on the Democratic assembly slate in 1955. Union county was Republican territory and, as expected, Hughes lost. But she led her three male running mates after conducting an intensive personal campaign.

Her strong showing earned her renomination in 1957 and the Democratic tide that year carried her to victory. She was fifty-five years old. In the three elections that followed she headed the assembly ticket on each occasion in a county that was now closely contested by the major parties. When the size of the state senate was enlarged in 1965 and Union was allotted two seats, she entered the lists and became the first woman ever elected to the upper house. Diminutive in stature—under five feet—she was bright, articulate, and indefatigable. As a legislator she was cited by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University for having in one term sponsored the most bills that had been enacted into laws. After leaving the senate in 1967, she retired from politics. She became active in the Organization of Women Legislators and served as national president in 1982 at the age of eighty. Hughes, like Dwyer, broke through old barriers.<sup>13</sup>

Marian West Higgins took a more conventional road to distinction. A graduate of Mt. Holyoke and an associate of her husband's in his real estate and insurance agency, she became active in the Republican party in Bergen county

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as a committeewoman in 1954. She was also a member of the local and county women's Republican clubs, three Women's Clubs, and the Bergen County Park Commission. With the endorsement of the county Republican organization, she was elected to the assembly in 1959 and was twice re-elected. During her fifth year, she became majority leader, a post never before held by a woman. In 1965, when she was one of only three women in the assembly—the lowest number since 1924—she advanced to the speakership. There she again set a precedent that has not yet been followed. Unlike Dwyer and Hughes, Higgins never led her party's ticket. She owed much of her success to the fact that she was a thoroughgoing organization woman. She had the confidence of the county party leader and the judgment to make the most of her political opportunities. It was her misfortune to run for the senate in 1965, when even Bergen county fell to the Democrats, and her bright political career ended.<sup>14</sup>

Few of the women went on to other elective offices after leaving the assembly. Dwyer and Hughes were the most notable among them. Wilma Marggraff of Bergen resigned her seat in the legislature in 1954 when she was elected to the county Board of Freeholders. She later became the first woman to head the board. Similarly Madeline A. Williams also resigned when she was elected Essex County Register of Deeds and Mortgages. Both offices were more remunerative than the assembly posts. Two other Essex women secured appointments to county boards of elections, which paid \$6,500. On the whole, the women of the post-World War II cohort do not seem to have reaped as many rewards as those of the previous generation.

By 1965, on the eve of the launching of a new women's movement, the prospect for New Jersey women in politics was bleak indeed. In that year only one woman was elected to the assembly, where for over thirty years women had made up around ten percent of the membership. While there were notable breakthroughs by such women as Dwyer, Hughes, and Higgins, they cannot obscure the fact that women lacked a secure status in electoral politics.

With the conspicuous exceptions that have been detailed, whether women were nominated and elected rested largely in the hands of the leaders of the majority party in each county. Running against the machines in primary elections was all but hopeless. In the largest, multi-member counties, places could be allotted to women on the long assembly ticket, where they usually trailed in the vote. But when one of those counties lost seats after a decennial census or when neither party had a comfortable majority, women were no longer recruited because they were deemed to be weak candidates. In the smaller counties, those with three or fewer candidates, women rarely appeared on the ballot of the majority party. How many women aspired to elective offices and how vigorously they pressed their claims cannot be determined. Men were preferred; their claims had precedence. That some women—like Dwyer, Hughes, and Savage, or earlier, Thropp and Preen—could establish themselves as proven vote-getters was not sufficient to undermine the conviction that women were marginal, and therefore expendable.

TABLE II  
WOMEN MAJOR PARTY ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES, 1947-1965

R - republicans elected    r - republicans defeated  
D - democrats elected    d - democrats defeated

|              | Atlantic | Bergen    | Essex     | Hudson    | Mercer   | Middlesex | Ocean    | Passaic   | Union     | Warren   | Total      | R         | r         | D         | d         | Elected   |
|--------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1947         |          | 1R        | 2R        | 2r        |          |           | 1R       | 1R        |           |          | 14         | 5         | 2         | 1         | 6         | 6         |
|              |          | 1d        | 2d        | 1D        |          |           |          | 1d        | 1d        |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1949         |          | 1R        | 3R        | 2r        |          | 1r        | 1R       | 1r        | 1R        |          | 12         | 6         | 4         | 0         | 2         | 6         |
|              |          |           | 1d        |           |          |           |          | 1d        |           |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1951         |          | 1R        | 3R        | 1r        |          | 1r        | 1R       | 1R        | 1R        |          | 15         | 7         | 2         | 1         | 5         | 8         |
|              |          | 1d        | 2d        | 1D        |          |           | 1d       | 1d        |           |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1953         |          | 1R        | 3R        | 3r        |          | 1r        | 1R       | 1R        | 1R        | 1r       | 17         | 7         | 5         | 1         | 4         | 8         |
|              | 1d       |           | 2d        | 1D        |          |           | 1d       | 1d        |           |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1955         |          |           | 3R        | 2r        | 1r       |           | 1R       | 1R        | 1R        | 1r       | 18*        | 6         | 5*        | 1         | 6*        | 7         |
|              | 1d       | 1d        | 1d        | 1D        |          |           | 1d       | 1d        |           |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1957         |          | 1R        | 3r        | 2r        |          |           | 1R       | 1r        | 1r        |          | 15         | 2         | 7         | 4         | 2         | 6         |
|              | 1d       | 1d        | 1D        | 1D        |          |           | 1D       | 1D        |           |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1959         |          | 1R        | 1R        | 2r        | 1r       | 1r        |          | 1r        |           |          | 14         | 2         | 6         | 4         | 2         | 6         |
|              |          | 2d        | 1D        | 1D        |          |           |          | 1D        | 1D        |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1961         |          | 1R        | 2r        | 2r        |          |           |          |           |           |          | 8†         | 1         | 4         | 2         | 1†        | 3         |
| 1963         |          | 1R        | 1r        | 1r        |          | 1r        |          | 1D        | 1D        |          | 7          | 1         | 3         | 2         | 1         | 3         |
|              |          | 1d        |           |           |          |           |          | 1D        | 1D        |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| 1965         |          |           | 2r        | 1r        |          |           |          |           |           |          | 4          | 0         | 3         | 1         | 0         | 1         |
|              |          |           |           |           |          |           |          | 1D        |           |          |            |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |          |           |           |           |          |           |          |           |           |          | <b>124</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>54</b> |
| R win        | 0        | 8         | 15        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 6        | 4         | 4         | 0        | 37         |           |           |           |           |           |
| r lose       | 0        | 0         | 9         | 18        | 2        | 5         | 0        | 3         | 1         | 2        | 41†        |           |           |           |           |           |
| D win        | 0        | 0         | 2         | 6         | 0        | 0         | 0        | 5         | 4         | 0        | 17         |           |           |           |           |           |
| d lose       | 3        | 7         | 8         | 0         | 0        | 0         | 1        | 5         | 2         | 0        | 29*†       |           |           |           |           |           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>5</b>  | <b>7</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>124</b> |           |           |           |           |           |

\* Includes 1 Republican loser from Camden and 1 Democratic loser from Cumberland County.

† Includes 1 Democratic loser from Morris County.

There were no women candidates in this period from Burlington, Cape May, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Monmouth, Salem, Somerset, or Sussex counties.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Richard N. Baisden, *Charter for New Jersey: The New Jersey Constitutional Convention of 1947* (Trenton, NJ: Division of State Library, Archives and History, 1952); Richard J. Connors, *The Process of Constitutional Revision in New Jersey* (New York: National Municipal League, 1970). Seven of the 82 delegates were women.
- <sup>2</sup> This is the central thesis of Irene Diamond, *Sex Roles in the State House* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 3. Diamond's study was heavily skewed toward four New England States—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Connecticut—whose large-size legislatures were atypical.
- <sup>3</sup> McCormick, "An Historical Overview" and Gerald Pomper, "Electoral Trends," in Rosenthal and Blydenburgh, eds., *Politics in New Jersey*.
- <sup>4</sup> See Table II.
- <sup>5</sup> Eighteen of the forty-one Republican losers came from Hudson alone; Bergen and Essex accounted for more than half of the Democratic losers. In heavily Democratic Middlesex, Mercer, and Camden, there were eight Republican nominees but no Democrats.
- <sup>6</sup> By way of comparison, in 1964 4.5% of all state legislators were women. The leading states were Vermont (17.8%), New Hampshire (14.6%), Connecticut (14.6%), and Oregon (10.0). Almost half of the 351 women legislators were from the three New England states cited. Werner, "Women in State Legislatures," 44.
- <sup>7</sup> In 1961, the two women on the nine-member Republican assembly ticket ran eighth and ninth and lost. The lone woman in 1963 ranked seventh and also lost.
- <sup>8</sup> Williams was in fifth place in 1957; in 1959 she was second.
- <sup>9</sup> The powerful Bergen Republican organization led by Walter H. Jones collapsed after the 1965 defeat, and it was not reconstituted. Jones had always included a woman among the party's assembly nominees.
- <sup>10</sup> There are biographies of Dwyer and Hughes in Burstyn, ed., *Past and Promise*, 274-275, 323-325.
- <sup>11</sup> For the profile of male legislators, see Alan Rosenthal, "The New Jersey Legislature: The Contemporary Shape of An Historical Institution," in William C. Wright, ed., *The Development of the New Jersey Legislature from Colonial Times to the Present* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1976).
- <sup>12</sup> Barbara Tomlinson, "Lessons From The Fifties For The Year of The Woman: A Study of the Career of Florence P. Dwyer" (Seminar paper, 1992).
- <sup>13</sup> Burstyn, ed., *Past and Promise*, 323-325.
- <sup>14</sup> (Hackensack) *The Record*, December 27, 1991; *New York Times*, December 26, 1991; NEN:NPL, Higgins, January, 1960, December 1, 1964, January 10, 1965.



## NEW RULES, NEW WOMEN, 1965 – 1993

The modest and insecure place of women in electoral politics in New Jersey had diminished to insignificance by the mid-1960s. The decline went unnoticed; it provoked no viewing with alarm, no public outcries. But within a few years, the climate was transformed. Reflective of their growing numbers in the work force and in higher education, women assumed new roles and thereby reshaped American society. Soon there was a recognizable women's movement with an impressive agenda and articulate leaders. With regard to our focus on assemblywomen, judicial decisions that mandated the reconstitution of the legislature had a distinct impact. At the same time that women were liberating themselves from traditional constraints, and men were slowly adjusting to a changing order, the rules governing the game of politics were also being revised.

The "one man, one vote" decision by the United States Supreme Court in 1964 required radical alterations in the system of representation in New Jersey. A constitutional convention in 1966 (with but three women among the one hundred twenty members) sought to address the new requirements while salvaging as much as possible of the old county-unit system. It brought forth amendments, subsequently ratified, that enlarged the senate from twenty-one to forty seats and the assembly from sixty to eighty. One or more senators would be elected from districts made up of a single county, or two or more counties. In what was irreverently termed the "buddy system," two assemblymen would be chosen for each senator assigned to the district.<sup>1</sup>

Confusion ensued as different districting schemes were employed in 1965, 1967, and 1971. In 1972 the state Supreme Court intervened. In a momentous decision, it ordered that county lines be disregarded in drawing district boundaries. Thereafter each of forty districts would elect one senator and two assemblymen.

It was this decision that gave the final blow to the old "federal" system of representation which, especially with regard to the upper house, was so notoriously violative of the principle of "one man, one vote." It spelled the end of Republican dominance of the senate. The marked differences that had distinguished the "long-ticket" counties disappeared. Now there could be more than one district in a single county, or—more likely—a district could be made up of parts of two or more counties.<sup>2</sup>

The district system reduced but did not eliminate the influence wielded by county party organizations over the nomination and election of legislative candidates. Various *ad hoc* arrangements were made to secure agreement on nominees when a district included parts of two or more counties. Commonly county committee persons from the district met in caucus or convention to make the choices, but practices varied. By the 1980s, state party agencies, which had been of negligible importance while the county machines flourished, took increasingly large roles in legislative campaigns. The state committees, abetted by separate legislative campaign committees, raised huge sums to aid individual candidates, provide consultants, conduct registration drives, and get out the vote. The average assembly candidate spent \$13,600 in 1973;

that amount soared to \$48,700 by 1991. For challengers facing incumbents in targeted districts, expenditures in excess of \$100,000 were not uncommon. Legislative elections now took place within a rapidly changing context.<sup>3</sup>

How the new rules would affect women's candidacies was problematic. The enlargement of the assembly from sixty to eighty members might be expected to operate in their favor. Similarly, the allocation of two assembly seats to each district could be regarded as preferable to a single-seat plan.<sup>4</sup> With the number of constituencies increased from twenty-one to forty, there was the possibility that women could now secure nominations traditionally denied to them by certain county machines. In any case, women's prospects could scarcely be worse than they had become under the old rules.<sup>5</sup>

It has been hypothesized that women's chances for electoral success are inversely related to the attractiveness of the office.<sup>6</sup> There is little doubt that assembly seats became more desirable after 1965. For one thing, salaries rose incrementally to reach \$18,000 in 1984 and \$35,000 by 1990. In addition, there were generous allowances for staff, a district office, and participation in the state pension system. Ordinarily the assembly convened only on Mondays and met no more than thirty days during the year. It could no longer be regarded as a body of amateurs, for it rapidly acquired expert personnel to aid it in collecting information on governmental operations and drafting legislation, and it strengthened its committee system. Overall it became better equipped to play an effective role in shaping public policies.<sup>7</sup>

Turnover was related less to voluntary decisions to retire and more to the vicissitudes of politics. For most of the period the assembly had

a Democratic majority, but in six elections between 1965 and 1993 control passed from one major party to the other with resultant casualties. Especially in years when the governorship was at stake, large numbers of seats changed hands. Decennial redistricting posed hazards. It was no longer a simple matter of reallocating a few seats among the counties; rather it involved the complete redrawing of district boundaries. The majority party, of course, was not innocent of gerrymandering. By the 1980s, however, as PACS became important sources of campaign funds, incumbents enjoyed decided advantages when they sought reelection.<sup>8</sup>

These major structural changes took effect at the same time that the new women's movement made its appearance. This is not the place to explore all the causes, dimensions, and consequences of this remarkable upheaval. We associate its origins with such landmarks as the publication of Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* in 1963, the adoption of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, the founding of the National Organization for Women in 1966, and the emergence of the equal rights amendment as a major issue in 1968. The massive entry of women into the work force, the professions, the military, and higher education were among the conspicuous indicators of their new roles in society. No less significant, if more difficult to quantify, was their sense of liberation from imposed gender stereotypes and their discovery of new identities.

There was also a quest for empowerment, which included among other objectives political power. Soon there were agencies like the National Women's Political Caucus with numerous state branches, the National Women's Education Fund, the Center for the American Woman and Politics, the Women's Campaign Fund, and

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several political action committees to aid women candidates. A woman, Geraldine Ferraro, attracted intensive media coverage as a major party candidate for the vice-presidency in 1984. Again, success in the political arena was not immediately spectacular, and many women with political ambitions shunned the "feminist" label even while they supported feminist causes. But there was the expectation that over time women would overcome the obstacles that had inhibited their political careers and that men would be induced to recognize them as equal citizens.<sup>9</sup>

The political status of women in New Jersey in 1965 was dismal. Only one woman won an assembly seat. After forty-five years, the first woman had just gained election to the state senate. No woman had yet attained full cabinet rank.<sup>10</sup> None sat on the Supreme Court or the Superior Court, and only one on the county courts. On the local level, only three of the state's 555 municipalities were headed by women. All of the party county committees were chaired by men, and Mary T. Norton was the lone woman ever to have chaired a state party committee.

The new era did not get off to a promising start. The arrangement of assembly districts for the elections of 1967, 1969, and 1971 basically reflected county boundaries. The obvious purpose of this plan was to insure that the county party organizations would continue to control the selection of candidates. That women derived no benefit from this scheme is apparent from the fact that in each of the three elections, only six women were among the major party nominees. Those eighteen candidacies produced seven winners (six Republicans, one Democrat), five of whom led their male running mates. None of the victors came from Bergen, Essex, Hudson, or

Passaic, which prior to 1960 had been most congenial to women.<sup>11</sup>

Prospects brightened markedly after 1973, when, in obedience to judicial decisions, new districts were drawn without regard for county lines. The number of women candidates jumped to eleven and rose over a decade to reach twenty-one in 1983, the highest number yet attained. By 1991, that figure mounted to twenty-nine. For the eleven elections from 1973 through 1993, the average number of women candidates was 21.5; the average number elected was 9.4. From the perspective of the mid-1960s, this was a gratifying advance. But in the longer view, it signified only that women had regained the proportion of assembly seats they had held before 1960. The proportion of women elected to the assembly in 1993—17.5%—narrowly exceeded that achieved in 1926.<sup>12</sup>

There was a decided difference in the success rates of the major party candidates. They were almost equally divided between Republicans (118) and Democrats (119). While over 50% of male Democratic candidates were elected, only 34% of the Democratic women were winners. This disparity is especially glaring when it is compared with the Republican record. Republican male candidates had a success rate of 51%; Republican women scored 54%. Districts that were largely drawn within such Democratic counties as Camden, Hudson, Mercer, and Middlesex sent only five Democratic assemblywomen to Trenton, and collectively they served but eight terms. Despite the emergence of a "gender gap" in the 1980s, which disclosed that women were more likely to vote for Democratic than for Republican candidates, the Democratic party in New Jersey obviously nominated far

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more women for “hopeless” seats than did the Republicans.<sup>13</sup>

Democratic women incumbents were more vulnerable than Republicans to powerful statewide surges of the electorate from one party to the other. Four new Democratic women were elected in 1973 when Brendan Byrne scored a huge victory in the gubernatorial contest; only one survived a severe decline in the party's fortunes in 1975. Similarly, Byrne's reelection in 1977 carried six new women candidates to victory; only two were reelected in 1979. On the Republican side, incumbent women were less likely to be unseated because more of them represented “safe” districts. Of the four new women elected in 1985, when the Republicans won the assembly for the first time since 1971, none went down to defeat when the Democrats returned to control in 1989. The fact that nine Republican assemblywomen served more than two terms, while only four Democrats achieved that distinction, is further evidence that party was a significant variable influencing the success rate of women candidates. The Democrats were less apt to run women in “safe” districts than were their opponents.<sup>14</sup>

Formerly, the paucity of women candidates was attributed to their poor showing at the polls. That explanation was no longer credible. Over 40% of women candidates led their male running mates; another 30% trailed by less than 3%. More strikingly, in 1993 ten of the fourteen women who were elected had more votes than the male running mate with whom they were bracketed. So, too, did eleven of the losing women candidates. The days when women were carried into office on long tickets in the large multi-member counties were over; women were now demonstrating their

ability to wage successful campaigns in the new two-member districts.

The most conspicuous effect of the district system was to demolish the old pattern of female representation. Between 1920 and 1965 over four-fifths of the women assembly candidates and an even higher proportion of winners had come from the five northern counties. Although the configuration of districts makes precise comparison impossible, it can be reliably estimated that between 1973 and 1993 only 42% of the candidates, and 39% of those elected, came from those counties. This pronounced shift retrospectively illuminates the distinctive behavior of the long-ticket counties before 1965. It suggests as well that districting opened new opportunities for women.<sup>15</sup>

Women were now elected from districts in counties that had not previously been hospitable to them. In this category were Atlantic (1981), Burlington (1977), Gloucester (1989), Middlesex (1985), Monmouth (1973), and Somerset (1969). Mercer in 1975 chose an assemblywoman for the first time since 1926. Camden in 1973 returned its first woman in forty years; the interval in Morris (1967) was thirty years. Some counties still hung back. No woman from Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, Sussex, or Warren has yet entered the assembly.<sup>16</sup>

The increase in the number of assemblywomen and their redistribution throughout the state cannot be explained solely in terms of such structural changes as the enlargement of the legislature and the adoption of the district system. Involved were not only “new rules,” but also “new women.” The forty-eight women (25 Republicans; 23 Democrats) who were elected after 1965 collectively differed in important respects from the two cohorts that had preceded them.

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They reflected the changes that were taking place in the economic and educational status of women throughout the country and, in a subtle way, the impact of the women's movement.<sup>17</sup>

In a gratifying departure from their earlier reticence, the assemblywomen now disclosed their ages in their official biographies. Nine were under forty when they were first elected, twenty were between forty and fifty, and fifteen were over fifty. (A far higher proportion of men—over 40%—were under forty when they were first elected.) The women's educational qualifications were approaching those of the men. More than half had college degrees and fourteen had gone on to graduate or professional schools. It may be regarded as a sign of the times that five reported that they were divorced; three were unmarried, four were widows.<sup>18</sup>

Even more impressive was the rise in the number of women who had gainful occupations. Few now described themselves as "housewives." Twenty-four were employed when they were elected. Eight were essentially self-employed; three worked for the state government; two were educators; others were involved in banking, farming, and health services. Seven were lawyers. Eleven who listed no occupation held elective or appointive offices at the municipal or county level, and two were legislative aides.

Active involvement in their respective party organizations were among the qualifications cited by half of the assemblywomen, and in this category there was little to distinguish Republicans from Democrats. Five had been delegates to national party conventions, four had served on their state party committees, three had been vice-chairs of county committees, and four had headed municipal party organizations. One had been the first woman to hold the position of

executive director of the state Republican party. It may be equally significant that half the women listed no prior party activity; they presented other acceptable qualifications.

What most distinguished the "new women" from their predecessors was their experience in elective office. Prior to 1965, few women had served on local governing bodies; in that year there were but three women mayors, all in tiny rural communities. By 1975 there were over two hundred women on municipal boards, fifteen of which were headed by women. Those figures soared to sixty-six mayors and over five hundred board members by 1991. In that year women made up 13.3% of county governing boards and comprised 22.1% of elected county constitutional officers (county clerk, surrogate, register).<sup>19</sup>

The results of these achievements at the local level are readily apparent in the collective profile of the assemblywomen. Whereas before 1965 only one assemblywoman had previously held an elective or appointive office, more than half of the new cohort could include that important ingredient in their resumes. Sixteen had served on local governing bodies; ten had attained the mayoralty. Six were former members of county governing boards; three had headed such boards. Three others had been on boards of education. In almost half of these cases, the women proudly claimed that they were the first of their gender to hold these local and county offices.

In terms of such measurable criteria as occupational status, educational attainments, and political experience, the post-1965 women could demonstrate far stronger qualifications for office than those of the previous generation. As assembly candidates they could also derive encouragement from the breakthroughs that women were making not only in gaining local

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offices but in achieving recognition at higher levels of government. Florence Dwyer, Millicent Fenwick, Helen Stevenson Meyner, and Marge Roukema won seats in Congress. Seven (following Mildred Barry Hughes) were elected to the state senate. Ann Klein was a strong contender in the Democratic gubernatorial primary in 1973, and Millicent Fenwick, Mary Mohary, and Christine Todd Whitman were Republican nominees for the United States Senate. By defeating incumbent Jim Florio in 1993, Whitman became New Jersey's first woman governor. The long-impermeable "glass ceiling" has been shattered; the horizon of women's aspirations has widened to include the highest state elective offices.

Encouraging, too were the opportunities for women to attain appointive state positions. Prior to 1975 only one woman had achieved cabinet rank. Since then women have served as Secretary of State, Banking Commissioner, and Public Advocate and headed the departments of Community Affairs, Commerce, Education, Environmental Protection, Health, Human Services, Insurance, Transportation, and Treasury.<sup>20</sup> Even more dazzling were the prospects for women in the judiciary. Down to 1975 only five women had been appointed to the state bench. By 1992 there were forty-seven female judges, including the first to sit on the Supreme Court and three members of the appellate division of the Superior Court.<sup>21</sup> The point of this catalogue is not to argue that women had achieved equality in the public arena, for they had not. Rather it is to suggest that women could feel they were functioning in a less hostile, less restrictive environment than had formerly prevailed. They could look to numerous female role models who had pierced long-standing barriers.

They could also derive stimulation and support from newly created agencies that owed their origins to the women's movement. The Center for the American Woman and Politics (1971) at Rutgers, The State University, was one such resource. Others included the Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey (1972), the New Jersey Association for Elected Women Officials (1979), and the Bipartisan Coalition for Women's Appointments (1981). These organizations sought to encourage women to seek political office, offered advice and information to candidates, and provided networks to foster communication among women in politics.

For several women, service in the assembly proved to be a stepping stone to higher office. Millicent Fenwick vaulted to the House of Representatives. Catherine A. Costa advanced to the state senate and then to the directorship of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control. Leanna Brown also achieved a seat in the senate. Jane Burgio, Barbara Curran, Hazel Gluck, Ann Klein, Barbara W. McConnell, Stephanie Bush, and Harriet Derman all obtained cabinet posts, while Joan Wright became director of the Division on Women and Marie Muhler joined the Department of Community Affairs as Public Guardian. Several former assemblywomen went on to such well paid county positions as freeholder, surrogate, county clerk, register of deeds, superintendent of elections, and county counsel. Service in the assembly did not lead to a dead end.

With occupational and educational profiles that were moving toward convergence with the male model, with prior experience in elective office, and—not least of all—with new conceptions of themselves, women sought election to the assembly with more obvious qualifications

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than had previously been in evidence. Their candidacies became more acceptable to the electorate and to party organizations. They won elections in constituencies that had never before sent a woman to Trenton, and with growing frequency they were getting more votes than their male running mates. As assemblywomen, they could realistically aspire to higher elective and appointive offices.<sup>22</sup>

The phenomenon that is called the women's movement was undoubtedly an important influence locally, as it was nationally, but its effect is difficult to assess. Few women in the assembly acknowledged membership in such activist organizations as the National Organization for Women (NOW) or the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). As candidates they avoided the "feminist" label and did not focus on feminist issues—like abortion rights—that were controversial within both parties. Nevertheless the very fact that they were competing for office with the credentials that they offered stamped most of them as "new women." Whether or not they overtly claimed that designation, as a group they exemplified the altered status—and consciousness—of women in American society.<sup>23</sup>

With some diffidence, we can attempt to describe how the assemblywomen viewed themselves as candidates.<sup>24</sup> Few of them were recruited to run by party leaders. Rather, with the support of family and friends, they actively sought the nomination when an assembly seat became open. Usually they had to win contests against other aspirants in district caucuses or conventions or pass the scrutiny of screening committees. Some detected reluctance on the part of the leadership to accept women as candidates. They regarded prior experience in elective office and either active participation in party

affairs or public visibility acquired through community service as their most relevant qualifications. Support by women's groups was a negligible consideration.<sup>25</sup>

Most felt that their gender gave them some particular advantages as candidates. They cited their special appeal to women voters and the public perception that women were more honest and caring than male politicians. Although they presented themselves as gender neutral, they belonged to such organizations as the League of Women Voters, the New Jersey Association for Elected Women Officials, and the Women's Political Caucus (but not the National Organization for Women) in substantial numbers. They saw the absence of women from powerful party positions as the major factor inhibiting access to elective office, along with the high cost of conducting campaigns.<sup>26</sup> But there were those who deplored the reluctance of more women to enter politics while observing that ambitious women now had other more attractive careers open to them.

Equality was a distant vision, but women had made substantial progress in politics since the dismal reverses of the 1960s. Not only had they steadily increased in numbers in the assembly, they had also established their electability on much firmer grounds than those that had prevailed earlier. Rather than having to rely on the indulgence of party leaders in a few long-ticket counties, they won office in districts dispersed throughout the state. Because they had surged into local and county elective offices, they could capitalize on prior experience when they sought seats in the assembly. They were fortified as well with strong occupational and educational credentials. No longer did the assembly constitute the ultimate boundary for their ambitions. They could identify with those women who served

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in Congress and the state senate and who were credible candidates for even higher offices. Cabinet positions and judgeships, formerly unthinkable, were realistic goals. Old barriers had been breached. Future advances would be related to the zeal with which women chose to pursue political careers.

One nagging question remains. New Jersey, as it entered the final decade of the century, ranked forty-first among the states in the proportion of women in the legislature. Can this low rating be attributed to any special characteristics of the state? It is doubtful whether any methodology can assure a definitive answer to this query. So many variables can enter into the equation (some of which may not be evident) that any generalizations must be tentative.

For one thing, the *relatively* good showing of women in the assembly during the first forty years can be deceptive, for it rested on an insecure foundation, which collapsed in the 1960s. This marginal status of women was underscored by their insignificant numbers in other elective or appointive positions. To the degree that the state's political culture was defined by the powerful, male dominated county party machines, the arrested progress of women in politics can be attributed to that culture. Thus, it is only a slight exaggeration to say that women had to start anew after 1965 to climb the political ladder. In the meantime, in other states—as diverse as Vermont and Arizona, or Kansas and Oregon—a stronger tradition of female office-holding had become established. They forged ahead while New Jersey lagged.<sup>27</sup>

We are on firmer ground in identifying the Democratic party as a culprit. Nationally about three-fifths of female legislators are Democrats, and the gender gap favors that party. But in New

Jersey Democratic women assembly candidates fared poorly because so many of them were nominated only in hopeless or marginal districts. Consequently only 35% were elected, as compared with 54% of Republican women. If more Democratic women had been nominated in safe districts, the proportion of women in the legislature would have increased markedly. Possibly inherited attitudes among Democratic party leaders militated against the recruitment of women candidates. Historically, Democratic women never were encouraged to organize, as were Republican women.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the underlying causes may be, the Democratic party was not congenial to women candidates.

There may be some relationship between female representation and such combined factors as the size of districts, amount of compensation, and the degree of professionalization of the legislature. An examination of the ten states that led in the proportion of women legislators in 1992 is suggestive of such a relationship. When compared with New Jersey, their districts were much smaller, compensation was lower, and—in general—their legislatures were less professional. Conversely, other large states—California, Michigan, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania—that rank high with respect to the three criteria, were all in the lower half of the states in their proportion of women legislators.<sup>29</sup> If the cited combination of characteristics is indeed influential, or merely indicative of related inimical conditions, it could account in part for the small number of women in the New Jersey assembly.

Whatever the impediments, women now have a secure—if unequal—place in the political life of New Jersey. They can realistically aspire to any elective or appointive office. Such was not the case for a half-century after the adoption of



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the Nineteenth Amendment, when gender so largely determined status and inhibited opportunities. Still there are restraints on the further advancement of women in politics. One is the incumbency factor. Most incumbents are males, and because incumbents usually run and win, the number of open seats is limited. But even the advantages of incumbency can be reduced by official or unofficial changes in the rules. Another barrier is the continued predominance of men among party leaders and their tendency to recruit males as candidates. This predisposition may weaken as women demonstrate their strength at the polls. Finally, the question remains as to whether women are as socialized as men to seek elective office. Given the entry of women into roles formerly reserved for men, time will no doubt provide the answer. As these restraints are overcome, the formula will be simple: "If more women run, more women will be elected."<sup>30</sup> Then equality will no longer be deferred.

TABLE III  
WOMEN MAJOR PARTY ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES, 1967-1993

R - republicans  
D - democrats

| Year          | Total<br>Candidates | Total<br>Elected | Candidates in<br>5 NE Counties | Elected from<br>5 NE Counties |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1967          | 3R 3D<br>(6)        | 1R<br>(1)        | 1R 2D<br>(3)                   | 0<br>(0)                      |
| 1969          | 3R 3D<br>(6)        | 2R<br>(2)        | 1R 2D<br>(3)                   | 0<br>(0)                      |
| 1971          | 4R 2D<br>(6)        | 3R 1D<br>(4)     | 2R 1D<br>(3)                   | 1R<br>(1)                     |
| 1973          | 6R 5D<br>(11)       | 2R 4D<br>(6)     | 3R 1D<br>(4)                   | 1R 1D<br>(2)                  |
| 1975          | 7R 9D<br>(16)       | 3R 2D<br>(5)     | 4R 3D<br>(7)                   | 1D<br>(1)                     |
| 1977          | 4R 11D<br>(15)      | 3R 9D<br>(12)    | 1R 4D<br>(5)                   | 1R 3D<br>(4)                  |
| 1979          | 6R 10D<br>(16)      | 4R 3D<br>(7)     | 3R 5D<br>(8)                   | 1R 1D<br>(2)                  |
| 1981          | 11R 8D<br>(19)      | 4R 4D<br>(8)     | 5R 2D<br>(7)                   | 2R 1D<br>(3)                  |
| 1983          | 8R 13D<br>(21)      | 3R 4D<br>(7)     | 3R 6D<br>(9)                   | 1R 1D<br>(2)                  |
| 1985          | 14R 9D<br>(23)      | 7R 2D<br>(9)     | 6R 4D<br>(10)                  | 4R 1D<br>(5)                  |
| 1987          | 10R 7D<br>(17)      | 5R 2D<br>(7)     | 3R 2D<br>(5)                   | 3R 1D<br>(4)                  |
| 1989          | 12R 13D<br>(25)     | 6R 4D<br>(10)    | 5R 5D<br>(10)                  | 3R 1D<br>(4)                  |
| 1991          | 16R 13D<br>(29)     | 11R 1D<br>(12)   | 8R 3D<br>(11)                  | 4R 1D<br>(5)                  |
| 1993          | 14R 13D<br>(27)     | 10R 4D<br>(14)   | 8R 7D<br>(15)                  | 5R 3D<br>(8)                  |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>118R 119D</b>    | <b>64R 40D</b>   | <b>53R 47D</b>                 | <b>26R 15D</b>                |

*Note:* Because of the several changes in district boundaries between 1967 and 1993, it is not feasible to assign candidates to counties, especially after 1973. The five northeastern counties (Bergen Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union) comprised districts 20-22 and 25-40 under the 1973 plan, districts 20-22 and 26-40 for 1981-1989, and districts 20-22, 26-29, and 31-40 for 1991-1999.

## ENDNOTES

1. Stanley H. Friedelbaum, "Constitutional Law and Judicial Policy Making," in Rosenthal and Blydenburgh, eds., *Politics in New Jersey*, 222-225, presents a concise discussion of the impact of Reynolds v Carr (1964). Also relevant is Timothy G. O'Rourke, *The Impact of Reapportionment* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1980) which includes New Jersey among the six states singled out for study. Unfortunately, the narrative does not extend beyond 1973, when the effects of reapportionment were only beginning to become evident.
2. Each of the forty districts had a population of approximately 180,000. Only California had larger legislative districts.
3. The political context is sketched in Maureen W. Moakley, "Political Parties," 45-65, and Stephen A. Salmore, "Voting, Elections, and Campaigns," 67-90, *The Political State of New Jersey* edited by Gerald M. Pomper (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986). There is excellent information on campaign costs in two reports of the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission: *Trends in Legislative Campaign Financing, 1977-1987* (Trenton, NJ: White Paper number two, Election Law Enforcement Commission, 1989) and *Is There a PAC Plague in New Jersey?* (Trenton, NJ: White Paper number seven, Election Law Enforcement Commission, 1991). We are indebted to Jeffrey M. Brindle of the Commission for providing data on the 1991 election. We can not, at this point, estimate the effects of the new role assumed by the state parties and the escalation of campaign costs on women's candidacies, but it is an appropriate topic for investigation.
4. R. Darcy, Susan Welch, and Janet Clark, "Women Candidates in Single- and Multi-Member Districts: American State Legislative Races," *Social Science Quarterly* 66 (1985): 945-953. The authors found that more women ran in and were elected by multi-member districts than by single-member districts.
5. Despite the weakening of their county organizations, party endorsements determined the outcome of primary elections. An examination of the 1975, 1977, 1985, 1987, and 1989 primary elections for nominations as assembly candidates discloses no instance where a woman running without party endorsement won. In short, women (and men as well) faced hopeless odds in attempting to secure a nomination without the support of the party organization. *Results of Primary Elections* (published by the Department of State for the years indicated).
6. Diamond, *Sex Roles in the State House*, 3. This relationship is questioned by Carol Nechemias, "Changes in the Election of Women to U.S. State Legislative Seats," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 12 (1987): 135.
7. Alan Rosenthal, "The New Jersey Legislature: The Contemporary Shape of an Historical Institution," 72-119, and Rosenthal, "The Legislature," in Pomper, ed., *Political State of New Jersey*, 118-138.
8. Salmore, "Voting, Elections, and Campaigns." Incumbents received much greater financial support than challengers and were rarely defeated. In 1983, 96% of incumbent legislators were reelected; in 1987, 98%. Thus "incumbency and money constitute a very powerful force in Legislative campaigns." *Trends in Legislative Campaign Financing, 1977-1987*, 11, 13.
9. The new importance attaching to gender in politics inspired by the feminist movement produced an explosion of publications on this previously neglected subject. Much of this literature combined scholarship with advocacy as the authors sought to identify factors that inhibited women's progress in electoral politics and to propose ways to overcome perceived obstacles. Representative studies, in addition to those previously cited, are Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, *Political Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); Marilyn Johnson and Kathy Stanwick, *Profile of Women Holding Office*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), 1976); Ruth Mandel, *In the Running: The New Woman Candidate* (New Haven: Ticknor and Fields, 1981); Susan J. Carroll and Wendy S. Strimling, *Women's Routes to Elective Office: A Comparison With Men's* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics, 1983); Susan J. Carroll, *Women as Candidates in American Politics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985); William H. Chafe, *Paradox of Change: Women in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); *Women, Politics, and Change*

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edited by Louise Tilly and Patricia Gurin (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990); and *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, edited by Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsack (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993). An important document, which was the starting point for Kirkpatrick's influential volume, is *Women State Legislators: Report from a Conference for Women in Public Life, May 18-21, 1972* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for the American Woman and Politics, 1972).

- <sup>10</sup> Katherine Elkus White served briefly as acting Treasurer in 1962.
- <sup>11</sup> See Table III.
- <sup>12</sup> The rise in the 1970s paralleled a national trend. The number of women legislators declined after reaching a peak of 351 in 1963/4 and did not surpass that figure until 1973, when the new high was 424. From there it rose to 770 in 1979 and 1270 in 1989. Expressed another way, women legislators more than doubled in numbers (124%) between 1971 and 1979 and increased by 65% in the 1980s. *CAWP Fact Sheet*, April, 1992; Nehemias, "Changes in the Election of Women to U.S. Legislative Seats," 130. Efforts to account both for the decline in the 1960s and the rapid rise in the 1970s have not resulted in agreement among scholars, nor has a consensus been reached on what characteristics best explain differences in the proportions of women legislators from state to state. See, for example, Nehemias, cited above, and Darcy et. al., *Women, Elections, and Representation*, especially chapter III.
- <sup>13</sup> The "gender gap" became apparent in the 1980s when polling techniques revealed that party preferences were gender related; women were more inclined than men to vote for Democratic candidates. As measured by the Eagleton Poll in August, 1984, New Jersey women preferred the Democratic party by a margin of 56% to 44% over the Republican party; these proportions were reversed for men. Pomper, ed., *Political State of New Jersey*, 54.
- <sup>14</sup> On the basis of votes for assembly from 1979 to 1985, Moakley classified fifteen districts as Democratic, fifteen as Republican, and ten as competitive.

Thus there was reason to anticipate that there were as many "safe" seats for Democratic women candidates as for Republicans. Moakley, "Political Parties," 66.

- <sup>15</sup> The northern counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union) included districts 20-22, and 25-40 in 1973-1980, districts 20-22 and 26-40 in 1981-1989, and districts 20-22, 26-29, and 31-40 in 1991-1999. Between 1973 and 1993, districts in these counties had 95 of the 200 women candidates and 40 of the 97 who were elected.
- <sup>16</sup> These are all rural counties and, except for Salem, they have been predominantly Republican.
- <sup>17</sup> That the issue of women's rights was still divisive was shown by the defeat of an "equal rights" amendment to the state constitution by a very narrow margin in November, 1975. This measure had easily passed through the legislature. It was endorsed by Governor Brendan Byrne and a coalition of twenty organizations. The legislature had ratified the federal equal rights amendment in April, 1972.
- <sup>18</sup> The four women who were newly elected in 1993 could not be included in this analysis because the biographical data were not yet available. Therefore, it included forty-four, rather than forty-eight individuals. The characteristics of these forty-four assemblywomen can be compared with those described in Carroll and Strimling, *Women's Routes to Elective Office*. This excellent study, based on a sampling of men and women state legislators, county officials, and local office holders, is remarkably searching and comprehensive. In some important respects the New Jersey assemblywomen differed from the sample, perhaps because they reflected changing conditions in the 1980s. More of them were gainfully employed, more had held prior elective office, fewer of them had been actively recruited by party leaders, and smaller numbers belonged to such women's organizations as the League of Women Voters and the National Organization for Women.
- <sup>19</sup> For early data, see *New Jersey County and Municipal Officials*, published annually by the State Service Bureau (Maplewood, N.J., 1945-1967), and

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the "Official Directory and Membership Roster" published annually by the Association of Chosen Freeholders. For the 1975-1991 comparison, see *CAWP Fact Sheet*, April 1992, "Women in New Jersey Government, 1992."

20. The breakthrough at the cabinet level occurred during the administration of Democratic Governor Brendan Byrne (1974-1982), who appointed six women. His successor, Republican Governor Thomas Kean (1982-1990), made eight such appointments.
21. *Legislative Manual*, 1992.
22. By the 1980s hostility toward women as candidates was not significant. Susan J. Carroll summarized a general observation: "Overall, gender-related variables appear to have little explanatory power in accounting for women's rate of electoral success." *Women as Candidates*, 106. On this point, see also Janet Clark, R. Darcy, Susan Welch, and Margery Ambrosius, "Women as Legislative Candidates in Six States," in Flammang, ed., *Political Women*, 145, 147, 148; Barbara Burrell, "The Presence of Women Candidates and the Role of Gender in Campaigns for the State Legislature in an Urban Setting: The Case of Massachusetts," *Women and Politics*, 10 (1990), 85-102; and Darcy et. al., *Women, Elections, and Representation*, 55, 57, 59. But information is lacking on whether gender discrimination operates when party influentials recruit candidates.
23. Susan J. Carroll characterized many women candidates as "closet feminists," who were fearful of being stereotyped as being concerned with a narrow range of women's issues. *Women as Candidates in American Politics*, 155.
24. This depiction is based on interviews with assemblywomen and questionnaires returned by a sample of those elected in recent years.
25. Here it is relevant to note that the Women's Political Caucus of New Jersey (1972) has fewer than 250 members (1993), the Bipartisan Coalition for Women's Appointments is currently inactive, the OWLS chapter no longer exists, and there is no women's caucus in the legislature. The New Jersey Association for Elected Women Officials remains active, but it is oriented mainly toward local office holders. On similar organizations, see the CAWP report by Wendy S. Strimling, *Elected Women Organize: Statewide Associations* (mimeo., 1986).
26. In the 1970s, for inexplicable reasons, women suddenly emerged as chairs of county party organizations. Between 1973 and 1982, six Democratic and four Republican women held such positions in nine counties. Five were in office for four or more years. There is no evidence that they were more aggressive than their male counterparts in recruiting women candidates. Former assemblywoman Betty Kordja chaired the Passaic Democratic organization from 1974 to 1980. During that period there were no Democratic women assembly candidates from districts in that county. The record was almost equally bleak elsewhere, except in Bergen, where Barbara Werber chaired the Democratic organization from 1974 to 1978. Since 1982, there have been only two women county chairs for a combined total of three years. Data from *Legislative Manual*, 1972-1992.
27. The four states cited were among the top ten in their proportion of women legislators. *CAWP Fact Sheet*, April 1992, "Women in State Legislatures 1992."
28. The New Jersey Federation of Democratic Women was formed in 1977 on the initiative of Rosemarie Totaro, assemblywoman from Morris, but it was described two years later as being "at a standstill." *Newark Star Ledger*, February 25, 1979. The Federation of Republican Women, which dates back to 1920, remains active.
29. These observations are based on a compilation of data from *CAWP Fact Sheets* on women in state legislatures from 1975 to 1992, with supplementary information on district size and legislative compensation from *The Book of the States*. Of the top ten states, only Arizona and Washington had districts with populations above 50,000, and the others were well below that level. Except for Hawaii (\$27,000), salaries were below \$20,000. In the six large states, all districts exceeded 50,000 and in four were more than 100,00. In New Jersey, the districts were over 180,000 in the 1980s, second in size only to those in California (250,000). Salaries in these six states ranged from \$35,000 in New

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Jersey up to \$57,000 in New York. In proportion of women legislators, California stood highest among the six, in 25th place; Pennsylvania trailed (44th). R. Darcy, et. al., *Women, Elections, and Representation* concluded that attempts to account for interstate differences have “failed to provide any clear guide either as to the reason female representation varies among the states or why it is generally low.” (53) In our view, the problem remains open for further investigation. Quite possibly, different combinations of factors—cultural and structural—are operative in the several states.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 62, and ch. VI. In the most comprehensive study to date, the National Women's Political Caucus analysed the success rates of men and women candidates in contests for legislative seats in 1986, 1988, 1990, and 1992. In races for open seats (no incumbent candidates), 53% of women candidates won, as did 53% of males. In contests against incumbents, 11% of women challengers won; the success rate for male challengers was 9%. The study concluded that “electoral success has nothing to do with sex and everything to do with incumbency.” Because the vast majority of incumbents were men, and incumbents who sought reelection had a 94% success rate, women properly regard incumbency as a major barrier to their advancement in politics. *Women's Political Times*, XIX (Fall, 1994).

APPENDIX  
NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLYWOMEN, 1921 – 1947

| County <sup>1</sup> | Party                | Assemblywoman                            | Years <sup>2</sup>   |
|---------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------|
| Bergen              | R                    | Pamela J. Francisco                      | 1927                 |
|                     | R                    | Emma Peters                              | 1929–1933            |
|                     | R                    | Mary P. Shelton                          | 1935                 |
|                     | R                    | Mary MacG. Smith                         | 1936–1941            |
|                     | R                    | Lillian C. Mathis                        | 1942–1947            |
| Camden              | R                    | Isabella C. Reinert                      | 1933–1935            |
| Essex               | R                    | Margaret B. Laird                        | 1921–1922            |
|                     | R                    | Jennie C. Van Ness                       | 1921                 |
|                     | R                    | Mabel B. North                           | 1923                 |
|                     | R                    | Agnes A. Schermerhorn                    | 1923                 |
|                     | R                    | Margaret Fort                            | 1924                 |
|                     | R                    | Madge Irene Ebert                        | 1925–1926            |
|                     | R                    | Agnes C. Jones                           | 1926–1931            |
|                     | R                    | Florence Haines                          | 1927–1931            |
|                     | R                    | Ida M. Stelle                            | 1927–1931            |
|                     | D                    | Rosemary Carroll                         | 1932                 |
|                     | R                    | Myrtle M. Trube                          | 1933–1934            |
|                     | R                    | Mary L. Yuell                            | 1933–1934            |
|                     | R                    | Constance W. Hand                        | 1935–1936, 1938–1941 |
|                     | R                    | Olive C. Sanford                         | 1935–1936, 1938–1942 |
|                     | D                    | Eileen Brady                             | 1937                 |
|                     | R                    | Gloanna Mac Carthy                       | 1942–1944            |
| R                   | Mildred V. Hardester | 1943–1946                                |                      |
| R                   | Minna P. Greenbaum   | 1945–1947 *                              |                      |
| R                   | Grace M. Freeman     | 1947 *                                   |                      |
| Hudson              | D                    | Katherine W. Brown                       | 1922–1923            |
|                     | D                    | May M. Carty                             | 1924–1930            |
|                     | D                    | Catherine M. Finn                        | 1924–1928            |
|                     | D                    | Marian Urbanski                          | 1926–1928            |
|                     | D                    | Teresa A. Maloney                        | 1931–1940            |
|                     | D                    | Eugenia M. V. Urbanski-Courtney          | 1947 *               |
| Hunterdon           | D                    | Mildred A. Preen (Mortimer) <sup>3</sup> | 1942–1944            |
| Mercer              | R                    | May A. Thropp (Hill)                     | 1925–1927            |
| Morri               | R                    | Julia C. Mutchler                        | 1932–1933            |
|                     | R                    | Jennie W. Pilch                          | 1937–1938            |
| Ocean               | R                    | Lila W. Thompson                         | 1924–1925            |
|                     | R                    | Lettie E. Savage                         | 1941–1947 *          |
| Passaic             | R                    | Isabelle M. Summers                      | 1926–1929            |
|                     | R                    | Florence A. Barlow                       | 1930–1931            |
|                     | D                    | Anna Gilmore                             | 1934–1935            |
|                     | R                    | Elizabeth Van D. Smith                   | 1936, 1938           |
|                     | D                    | Nan V. Donohue                           | 1937                 |
| R                   | Mattie S. Doremus    | 1939–1947                                |                      |
| Union               | R                    | Irene T. Griffin                         | 1945                 |

\*See list for New Jersey Assemblywomen, 1948–1995.

## NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLYWOMEN, 1948 – 1995

| County <sup>4</sup> | Party              | Assemblywoman                   | Years <sup>5</sup>      |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Atlantic            | R                  | Dolores C. Cooper               | 1982–1991 <sup>6</sup>  |
| Bergen              | R                  | Wilma Marggraff                 | 1948–1954 <sup>7</sup>  |
|                     | R                  | Clara K. Bivona                 | 1956–1959               |
|                     | R                  | Marion West Higgins             | 1960–1965               |
|                     | D                  | Greta Kiernan                   | 1978–1979               |
|                     | R                  | Joan Wright                     | 1980–1983 <sup>8</sup>  |
|                     | R                  | Elizabeth Randall               | 1985–1991 <sup>9</sup>  |
|                     | R                  | Rose Heck                       | 1991— <sup>10</sup>     |
|                     | R                  | Charlotte Vandervalk            | 1991— <sup>11</sup>     |
| Burlington          | R                  | Loretta Weinberg                | 1992—                   |
|                     | D                  | Barbara F. Kalik                | 1978–1983               |
|                     | D                  | Catherine A. Costa              | 1982–1991               |
| Camden              | R                  | Pricilla B. Anderson            | 1992–1993               |
|                     | D                  | Mary Keating Croce              | 1974–1979               |
| Essex               | D                  | Barbara Berman                  | 1978–1979               |
|                     | R                  | Grace M. Freeman                | 1948–1951 *             |
|                     | R                  | Minna P. Greenbaum              | 1948–1950 *             |
|                     | R                  | Margaret Haines                 | 1950–1953               |
|                     | R                  | Ruth Pilger                     | 1950–1953               |
|                     | R                  | Ellen M. Berger                 | 1954–1955               |
|                     | R                  | Marie F. Macbert                | 1954–1957               |
|                     | R                  | Ruby W. Perfette                | 1954–1957               |
|                     | R                  | Esther B. Bush                  | 1956–1957               |
|                     | D                  | Madeline W. Williams            | 1958–1960 <sup>12</sup> |
|                     | R                  | Beatrice M. Stiles              | 1960–1961               |
|                     | R                  | Jane Burgio                     | 1974–1981               |
|                     | D                  | Mildred B. Garvin               | 1978–1987               |
|                     | D                  | Mary Scanlon                    | 1978–1979               |
|                     | D                  | Mrs. Remay Pearce               | 1979–1987 <sup>13</sup> |
|                     | R                  | Maureen Ogden                   | 1982—                   |
|                     | R                  | Marion Crecco                   | 1986—                   |
|                     | D                  | Stephanie R. Bush               | 1988–1992 <sup>14</sup> |
| D                   | Quilla E. Talmadge | 1992–1993 <sup>15</sup>         |                         |
| D                   | Nia Gill           | 1994—                           |                         |
| Gloucester          | D                  | Ann A. Mullen                   | 1990–1991               |
|                     | R                  | Mary V. Weber                   | 1992–1993               |
| Hudson              | D                  | Eugenia M. V. Urbanski-Courtney | 1948–1949*              |
|                     | D                  | Jessie Murphy                   | 1952–1955               |
|                     | D                  | Irene Brown                     | 1956–1961               |
|                     | D                  | Alina Miszkiewicz               | 1976–1977               |
|                     | D                  | Joan Quigley                    | 1994—                   |
| Hunterdon           | D                  | Barbara W. McConnell            | 1978–1981               |
| Mercer              | D                  | Helen Chiarella Szabo           | 1976–1978 <sup>16</sup> |
|                     | D                  | Shirley Turner                  | 1994—                   |
| Middlesex           | R                  | Harriet Derman                  | 1992–1994 <sup>17</sup> |
|                     | R                  | Barbara Wright                  | 1992—                   |
|                     | R                  | Joann Smith                     | 1986—                   |
| Monmouth            | D                  | Gertrude Berman                 | 1974–1975               |
|                     | R                  | Marie S. Muhler                 | 1976–1986 <sup>18</sup> |
|                     | D                  | Jacqueline Walker               | 1984–1985               |
|                     | R                  | Clare M. Farragher              | 1987— <sup>19</sup>     |



|          |   |                       |                         |
|----------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Morris   | R | Josephine S. Margetts | 1968–1973               |
|          | D | Anne Klein            | 1972–1973               |
|          | D | Rosemarie Totaro      | 1974–1975, 1978–1979    |
|          | R | Leanne Brown          | 1980–1983 <sup>20</sup> |
| Ocean    | R | Lettie Savage         | 1948–1959 *             |
|          | R | Hazel Gluck           | 1980–1981               |
|          | D | Marlene Lynch Ford    | 1984–1985, 1990–1991    |
|          | R | Virginia Haines       | 1992—                   |
| Passaic  | R | Esther N. Dilger      | 1948–1949               |
|          | R | Emma Newton           | 1952–1957               |
|          | D | Betty McNamara Kordja | 1958–1967               |
| Somerset | R | Milicent H. Fenwick   | 1970–1972 <sup>21</sup> |
| Union    | R | Florence P. Dwyer     | 1950–1956 <sup>22</sup> |
|          | D | Mildred Barry Hughes  | 1958–1965 <sup>23</sup> |
|          | R | Elizabeth Cox         | 1971 <sup>24</sup>      |
|          | R | Barbara Curran        | 1974–1980 <sup>25</sup> |
|          | R | Betty Wilson          | 1974–1975               |
|          | D | Angela L. Perun       | 1982–1985               |

\*See list for New Jersey Assemblywomen, 1921–1947.

<sup>1</sup> Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Middlesex, Monmouth, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren counties had no assemblywomen during this period.

<sup>2</sup> Members of the Assembly were elected for one-year terms until the November 1947 election. A legislative term began at noon on the 2nd Tuesday in January and ended at noon on the second Tuesday in January the next year. A term shown as 1927 actually began the 2nd Tuesday in January 1927, and ended the 2nd Tuesday in 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Resigned during 1944 to enter the W.A.V.E.S.

<sup>4</sup> Counties were no longer units of representation after 1965, but we have listed assemblywomen under their county of residence. Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, Sussex, and Warren had no assemblywomen during this period nor during the 1921–1947 period.

<sup>5</sup> Members of the Assembly were elected for two-year terms beginning in November 1947. A legislative term begins at noon on the 2nd Tuesday in January and ends at noon on the 2nd Tuesday in January two years later. A term shown as 1948–1949 actually began the 2nd Tuesday in January 1948, and ended the 2nd Tuesday in January 1950. Effective December 12, 1988, vacancies occurring in the legislature are filled within 35 days by the county committee members of the incumbent's political party. Prior to that date, vacancies were filled at special elections.

<sup>6</sup> Elected November 2, 1982, to fill the unexpired term of William L. Gormley.

<sup>7</sup> Resigned to become a Bergen County Freeholder.

<sup>8</sup> Resigned to become director of the Division on Women.

<sup>9</sup> Elected March 25, 1985. Resigned January 31, 1991, to become Bergen County Counsel.

<sup>10</sup> Chosen by Republican County Committee January 5, 1991. Elected to a full term November 5, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Chosen by Republican County Committee February 9, 1991. Elected to full term November 5, 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Resigned in November 1960 when elected as Essex County Registrar of Deeds and Mortgages.

<sup>13</sup> Elected November 6, 1979, to fill unexpired term of Peter Shapiro, who resigned January 9, 1979.

<sup>14</sup> Resigned September 21, 1992, to become Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.

<sup>15</sup> Chosen by Democratic County Committee to replace Stephanie R. Bush. Sworn in October 15, 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Elected at a special election November 2, 1976; reelected to a full term in November 1977. Resigned in 1978 to become Mercer County Superintendent of Elections.

<sup>17</sup> Resigned in January 1994 to become Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.

<sup>18</sup> Resigned October 20, 1986, to join Community Affairs Department.

<sup>19</sup> Elected February 3, 1987, to unexpired term of Marie S. Muhler; reelected to a full term November 3, 1987.

<sup>20</sup> Elected at special election November 1980 to fill unexpired term of Barbara A. Curran. Sworn in November 24, 1980.

<sup>21</sup> Resigned December 14, 1972, to become Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs.

<sup>22</sup> Resigned after her election to Congress on November 6, 1956.

<sup>23</sup> First woman elected to the New Jersey Senate, November 1965.

<sup>24</sup> Elected in November 1971 to fill the unexpired term of Herbert J. Heilmann.

<sup>25</sup> Resigned June 23, 1980, to become Public Utilities Commissioner.