

## Historic election: Oklahoma governor a race between two women

by: BARBARA HOBEROCK World Capitol Bureau  
Thursday, July 29, 2010  
7/29/2010 8:30:40 AM

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahomans will elect the state's first female governor this fall in only the fourth race in history where two women have faced off to become a state's chief executive.

In Tuesday's party primaries, Democrats nominated Lt. Gov. Jari Askins, while Republicans nominated U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin.

A Nebraska race was the first in which two women were the party nominees, said Kathy Kleeman, senior communications officer with the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers.

In 1986, Kay Orr, a Republican, defeated Democrat Helen Boosalis in the Nebraska gubernatorial race, said Jen Rae Hein, a spokeswoman for Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman.

In 2002, Linda Lingle, a Republican, became Hawaii's governor after defeating Mazie Hirono, a Democrat, Kleeman said.

Two women are also on the Nov. 2 gubernatorial ballot in New Mexico. That race pits Diane Denish, a Democrat, against Susana Martinez, a Republican.

Askins and Fallin on Wednesday made their first joint public appearance since the primaries at the Oklahoma Super Trade Show at the Cox Convention Center.

Askins said that sometimes people ask her if she thinks Oklahoma is ready for a woman to lead the state.

"Yes. Oklahoma is ready," she said.

For 16 years, the state has elected a woman to its second-highest office. Askins has served the last four years as lieutenant governor after Fallin spent 12 years in the post.

"And yesterday you all proved you were willing to elect a woman to the state's chief executive," Askins said. "For that, we are very grateful to you. Thank you very much."

Fallin said she felt "very honored to be a part of this historic time in our state where we do have two women that are running for governor."

"I think it says that Oklahoma has come a long way," she said. "I was the first woman lieutenant governor in Oklahoma. I was the first woman to go to Congress since we elected one in 1920 and she served only two years."

Oklahoma's first female in Congress was Alice Mary Robertson, a Republican who held office from 1921 to 1923.

Both women said they know they are role models.

"The issue is not the (professional) field," Askins said. "It is if you have a dream and work hard, you can succeed."

---

### All-female governor's races

**1986:** Kay Orr, a Republican, defeats Helen Boosalis, a Democrat, in the Nebraska gubernatorial race.

**2002:** Linda Lingle, a Republican, defeats Mazie Hirono, a Democrat, in Hawaii's gubernatorial race.

**Nov. 2:** Diane Denish, a Democrat, faces Susana Martinez, a Republican, in New Mexico's gubernatorial race.

**Nov. 2:** Democratic Lt. Gov. Jari Askins faces Republican U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin in Oklahoma's gubernatorial race.

### Original Print Headline: Historic election

---

**Barbara Hoberock (405) 528-2465**  
barbara.hoberock@tulsaworld.com

**Associate Images:**



**Democratic and Republican gubernatorial primary winners Lt. Gov. Jari Askins and U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin share a laugh while waiting to speak at the Oklahoma Super Trade Show in downtown Oklahoma City on Wednesday. PAUL B. SOUTHERLAND / The Oklahoman**

Copyright © 2010, World Publishing Co. All rights reserved

[Return to Story](#)