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<http://muskogee phoenix.com/opinion/x1243782361/Election-shows-how-far-state-has-come-must-go>

Election shows how far state has come, must go

Oklahoma will have its first female governor next year.

The outcome of the Nov. 2 general election will place either Mary Fallin or Jari Askins in the governor's mansion.

Either candidate will make history in the office.

It is especially gratifying to see two highly qualified candidates competing. This allows the political debate to focus on issues and not on the fact that both are women.

While it is important to note the event is a milestone in our state's history, we must also remember that women politicians have served key roles in state and federal government throughout the years.

In 1920, Oklahoma Republican Alice Mary Robertson became just the second woman in the country elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Robertson also was postmaster here.

Fallin was the first woman elected to be the state's lieutenant governor, a post she held for 12 years.

Wilma Mankiller was the first woman to be elected chief of the Cherokee tribe.

While this election is historic, remember Oklahoma is not the most progressive state in electing women to high office.

Oklahoma ranks 49th among the 50 states for its percentage of women in the Legislature, according to the Center for American Women and Politics.

Only South Carolina is ranked below us.

That is a sobering thought.

Hopefully, this election and our next governor will give even more women and girls the inspiration to seek to serve their city, state and country.

Hopefully this general election will continue to open doors and minds as women see the possibility exists to be elected here.

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