

THE RIGHT TO VOTE: Celebrating 100 years

2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment, granting women's right to vote. As we celebrate this landmark milestone, we reflect back on the women of Mount Mary exercising their right to vote—from the early years within the School Sisters of Notre Dame to the students of today.

1920-1940

1950-1970

1980-1990

2000-today

2000s to today
HONORING THE PAST,
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

In 2016, Mount Mary students helped to inspire a commitment to voting by staging "pollposals," and formally asking one another to vote. Inspiration for the event came from #CosmosVotes campaign where celebrities asked each other to vote. Shuttles were provided to the local polling places. Their efforts were featured in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

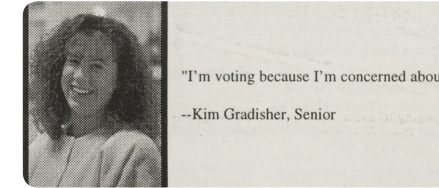
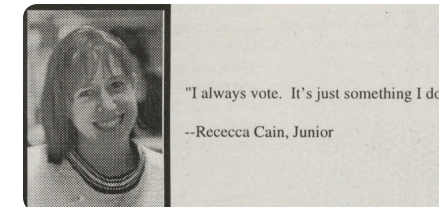
To celebrate and commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the 19th Amendment this year, students are participating in a variety of projects and activities across campus. For example, fashion design students are studying the style of the Suffragettes to create modern looks that are inspired by their history or current women's movements. Other activities planned for the year include an election-themed bingo game, educational presentations on voting, and guest speakers and panel events, such as the Women and Power event that was held in fall 2019.

In September 2020, Nilofer Merchant will provide the keynote for the Women's Leadership Institute's Voices of Leadership event on her message of "Onlyness"—that spot in the world in which only you stand, a function of your distinct history and experiences, visions and hopes. Her message will inspire us to find our purpose, mobilize a community around that purpose and make scalable change not unlike women's suffrage, African American women's suffrage, and the #MeToo movement.

Tickets are available at mtmary.edu/vol.

OCTOBER 2020

We will welcome Eleanor Clift, a political journalist and author of *Founding Sisters* and the Nineteenth Amendment, as part of the Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows program and Women's Leadership Institute to share her experiences and inspire students to vote in the upcoming election.



Ike and Mamie—Joan Berg and Margaret Volpano—campaigning for votes in a mock on-campus motorcade.

1980-90s
DETERMINED TO VOTE

Concerned students continue to exercise their right, decades after women cast their votes for the first time in the United States.

1950s
PARTICIPATING IN POLITICS ON CAMPUS

"College students are no longer standing outside the realm of politics, but are advancing within, so as to prepare themselves for post-college days."

—The Times, Mount Mary's student-run newspaper, 1952

Continuing the efforts from the previous decade, the International Relations Club was a non-partisan group on campus that served as a mediator between political parties and the students. The club provided information to students, secured rides and provided work for members and non-members who wanted to support a candidate. The club also organized speaking events with local, state and national election nominees.



Sparkman and Stevenson portrayed by Marge Whalen and Lou Naponiello during the Democratic Rally held in the gym.

1960-70s
FUTURE LEADERS OF AMERICA

"A frequent comment made by men is that 'women are great wives and mothers but have no interest in civic or political matters.' Will the husbands and relatives of the present student body be able to make similar claims? We are the future rulers and leaders of America."

—The Times, 1968

Mount Mary students actively participated in political campaigns by working for candidates on campus and at local campaign offices. Students participated in a variety of duties such as stuffing envelopes, making phone calls and general office work.

Voters Registered

During voter registration week on campus, Oct. 2-6, 60 Mount Mary girls were registered, and applications were taken for absentee ballots. The service was jointly sponsored by International Relations Club and Phi Alpha Theta.

1919

June 4, 1919
THE RIGHT TO VOTE

After 70 years of dedicated action by the suffragists and their supporters, women were finally granted the right to vote. Though its passing was a momentous cause for celebration, the amendment did not give voting rights to all women. Women of color, immigrants and lower income women were often deterred from voting by laws and social pressure.



Suffragettes hold a jubilee celebrating their victory after the passing of the 19th Amendment. Bettmann Archive/Getty Images

November 2, 1920
THE FIRST VOTE

On November 2, 1920, more than eight million American women, including the School Sisters of Notre Dame, voted for the first time. Sisters made note of the milestone event in various house chronicles. A Sister at St. Michael, Minnesota wrote: "On Poor Soul's Day the six Sisters went to the Town Hall for the first time to cast our votes."



Women casting their votes in New York City, c. 1920s.

1940s
STAYING EDUCATED AND INFORMED

Mount Mary students were actively involved in politics and world affairs. Students in the history fraternity, Phi Alpha Theta and International Relations Club worked to bring political speakers to campus to inform and educate students. Class delegates often attended local political conventions.



January 5, 1919
PERMISSION TO BREAK THE RULES

In the early years of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the sisters were required to follow the rules of enclosure to be secluded from the outside world. Sisters were not permitted to leave the convent except to attend church or school.

On January 5, 1919, Mother Mary Bruno wrote a letter to the Sisters, granting permission to break the rules of enclosure in order to vote. She wrote: "Concerning the election, we are informing you, that for going to the polls, religious are dispensed from the enclosure and may wear secular clothes, if that seems advisable." Mother Mary Bruno also dictated that the Superior of each house "make sure that all Sisters are well informed about the procedure of voting and which ballot to hand in."

June 10, 1919
WISCONSIN RATIFIES 19TH AMENDMENT

Wisconsin and Michigan are the first states to ratify the 19th Amendment.

Governor John J. Blaine (left) shakes the hand of a Mabel Raef Putnam surrounded by other women who have come to see the governor sign the Women's Rights Bill in front of the Wisconsin State Capitol.

