



League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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Leadership in a Democracy

MARGUERITE MILTON WELLS

Here is for Leadership in a Journey
Margaret in Wells

1/2080



Belle Sherwin

1955

Miss Sherwin, second national President of the League of Women Voters, died at her home in Cleveland on July 9, at the age of 87. It was her superior intellect, plus a warmth of human understanding that guided the League through ten of its most formative years (1924-34). As President, she gave unstintingly of her mental and physical resources, and to the time of her death was one of its greatest financial benefactors.

Her comprehension of government and her vision of how the newly enfranchised woman voter might contribute to its efficiency formed the pattern for all the League work that was to follow. Her firm belief in thorough preparation for any job set the League policy of knowing the facts before taking action. Yet, her oft-quoted phrase "study without action is abortive" stirred League members to *work* at being citizens.

1959 -

Marguerite M. Wells

Miss Wells, third national President of the League of Women Voters (1934-1944), died on August 12, at the age of 87. The destiny of the League was in her hands as clouds of totalitarianism darkened and as we worked through most of the years of World War II. With her rare political acumen, sharp discernment of basic issues, and vision of a perfected government by and for people, she focused the League's resources and energy toward one critical task: strengthening, during the strain of war, the democracy which war threatened to destroy.

Impatient with trivialities which retard the political maturity of women, she was often far ahead on the road she charted. "Women are better fitted than they realize for participation in public affairs," she said. "What they lack they can learn, for what they lack is not essential." She thought of the League as necessary leaven in the body politic. Her leadership lent great power to the leaven.



LEADERSHIP IN A DEMOCRACY

A PORTRAIT IN ACTION

BEING EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS OF
MARGUERITE MILTON WELLS

AS PRESIDENT OF
THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

THE PERIOD COVERED IS FROM
JUNE 1940 TO JANUARY 1944

*PREPARED BY HER FRIENDS
IN TRIBUTE*

PRIVATELY PRINTED

1944

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Memorial Rites Saturday for Marguerite M. Wells

A memorial service for Marguerite Milton Wells, 87, champion of women's suffrage and later national president of the League of Women Voters, will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at 401 Groveland Av.

Miss Wells died there, the home of her sister, Mrs. C. G. Ireys, at midnight Wednesday. She had lived there since early in World War II when the family home at 325 Groveland, now Red Cross headquarters, was sold.

Miss Wells took an early interest in politics. As a girl in Jamestown, N.D., her father, E. P. Wells, a leader in railroading, finance and politics, used to take her to political rallies dressed as a boy.

After graduation from Smith college, she taught school two years "just to see if I could make my own living." Then she joined the women's suffrage movement.

In 1922 she was chosen president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters and served 10 years. In 1932 she

joined the national organization and was its president from 1934 to 1946.

Surviving besides Mrs. Ireys are another sister, Nora Wells Jewett, and a brother, Stuart Wilder Wells. The family prefers no flowers.

Suffrage Leader, Marguerite Wells, Dies at 87

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Marguerite Milton Wells, 87, a leader in the women's suffrage movement, died Wednesday night at the home of a sister.

Miss Wells served as president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters for 10 years after women were given the right to vote, and was president of the national organization from 1934 to 1946.

She was born in Milwaukee and reared in Jamestown, N. D. She used to say Jamestown "was so young it didn't have a name."

After her graduation from Smith college she taught school for two years before becoming active in the suffrage movement.

CLASS OF SERVICE

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WESTERN UNION

TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter

NL=Night Letter

LT=International
Letter Telegram

1201

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

PRE137 MA265

M LLJ133 PD=MINNEAPOLIS MINN 13 1058AMC=

MISSSES RUTH MITCHELL AND HELEN HERR= 1959 AUG 13 AM 10 00

QUEENSBORO 101 OLYMPIC PL SEATTLE WASH=

DARGE DIED TWELVE MIDNIGHT VERY PEACEFULLY MEMORIAL

SERVICES AT FLORENCE 2 SATURDAY LOVE=

NORA==

DARGE 2.

1959 AUG 13 AM 10 04

张姓、李姓、王姓、赵姓、孙姓

Miss Wells, Suffrage Leader, Dies

Memorial services for Marguerite Milton Wells, 87, a leader in the women's suffrage movement, will be held at 2 p. m. Saturday in the home of her sister at 401 Groveland, Minneapolis.

Miss Wells, who died Wednesday, served as president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters for 10 years after women were given the right to vote, and was president of the national organization from 1934 to 1946.

She was born in Milwaukee and brought up in Jamestown, N. D. She attended Smith college, Northampton, Mass., taught for two years, traveled abroad for two years and returned to Minneapolis to live with her parents.

Active in welfare work, she turned to the local League of Women Voters, an outgrowth of the Women's Suffrage association.

Surviving are two sisters, Mrs. C. G. Ireys, with whom she lived, Nora Wells Jewett and a brother, Stuart Wilder Wells.

Rites Slated for Miss Wells, Suffragette

A memorial service for Marguerite Milton Wells, a women's suffrage leader in Minneapolis and former national president of the League of Women Voters, will be held at 2 p. m. Saturday at 401 Groveland Av.



Miss Wells

Miss Wells died there Wednesday night at the age of 87. It is the home of her sister, Mrs. C. G. Ireys.

As a girl in Jamestown, N. D., Miss Wells used to put on a boy's cap and be smuggled into political rallies by her father, E. P. Wells, a leader in railroading, finance and politics.

HER INTEREST in politics and things boyish—she was a strong influence on the neighborhood fire engine company, baseball club and Jamestown militia—led her to join the battle for feminine participation in government.

At the age of 15 she had taken teachers examinations and taught in a country school. She prepared for college by studying German and Latin.

She attended Smith college, Northampton, Mass., taught for two years, traveled abroad two years, then returned to Minneapolis, where she lived with her parents at 325 Groveland, now the American Red Cross office.

ACTIVE in welfare work, she then turned to the local League of Women Voters, an outgrowth of the Women's Suffrage association. She became president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters in 1922 and held the post for 10 years.

In 1932 she joined the staff of the national organization in Washington, serving as legislative chairman and vice president before becoming president in 1934. She headed the organization until 1946.

Miss Wells had also served as a trustee of Smith college from 1914 to 1930 and was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree by the college in 1933.

HER CITATION then said, "She now leads the women of her country in the effort to make their citizenship a force for enlightenment and purity in American political life."

Miss Wells, who never drove a car because she wanted to "feel the public pulse" by talking to cabbies, had lived with her sister since the early war days.

She is survived by Mrs. Ireys, another sister, Nora Wells Jewett, and a brother, Stuart Wilder Wells. The family prefers no flowers.