



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager
From: Chris Hendrickson, Web and Multimedia Content Specialist
Date: March 9, 2021
Subject: Women's History Month Proclamation

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayor proclaim March 2021 as Women's History Month in the City of Kirkland.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The origins of Women's History Month date back to 1909 with "National Women's Day," which took place in New York City in late February. In 1911 this important commemoration of women's rights was recognized globally through "International Women's Day," which is celebrated on March 8 around the world. In 1981 a national effort to expand the recognition was ratified when the United States Congress passed a joint resolution designating the week beginning on March 7, 1982 as "Women's History Week."

In the resolution, dated August 4, 1981, Congress asked the President to issue a proclamation "calling on the people of the United States to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

In 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to designate the month of March 1987 as "Women's History Month." The National Women's History Project is a nonprofit organization founded in 1980 to "promote multicultural women's history awareness." The project's work to facilitate the passage of a congressional resolution to establish the month of March as "Women's History Month" was its first formal act as an organized nonprofit entity. To learn more about the National Women's History Project, now known as the National Women's History Alliance, visit the [website](#).

In March 2020, the United States celebrated 100 years of Women's suffrage. We, in Kirkland, echoed the phrase "deeds, not words," remembering the bold anthem of relentless suffragists who sought to ensure women the right to vote. Washington state's history with women's suffrage reflects the movement itself; tireless and devoted to its cause. In 1883, Washington state became one of the first places in the world where women could vote. Although the right was eventually overturned, Washington suffragists were undaunted as they continued to strive for the right to vote, taking to heart the words of Susan B. Anthony who said, "Failure is impossible!"

Women earned the right to vote in Washington state by way of a permanent amendment to the Washington State Constitution in 1910, a full decade before the rest of the country's women could vote. Learn more about the details of women's suffrage in Washington state on the Washington Secretary of State's [website](#) and [here](#).

Washington state continues to make great strides as we position women in key roles customarily held by men. In January 2020, Washington State Representative Laurie Jinkins made history as Washington state's first female and first lesbian Speaker of the House. Through deeds, not words, Representative Jinkins has stood as an advocate for women, families, and the underrepresented.

The number of women in state legislatures continues to rise steadily. Washington state is one of the top 10 states in terms of its percentage of women in the legislature, with 41.5 percent of its legislative body being women.

Kirkland's own journey with women in leadership began decades ago with Houghton resident and notable bellwether Doris Munz Cooper, who served on the Houghton City Council prior to the City's 1968 merger with the City of Kirkland. Former Mayor Cooper was elected to the Kirkland City Council in 1973, elected Kirkland mayor by her male peers in 1984, and served as mayor until 1990.

This trailblazing Kirkland icon was the only woman on the Kirkland City Council for 16 years. In 2012, the City honored her tremendous work to preserve Kirkland's lush shorelines for parklands by renaming Houghton Beach as "Doris Cooper Houghton Beach Park."

Former Mayor Cooper set the bar high, but fortunately, service-minded, passionate, and courageous Kirkland women have answered the call to serve. This year, the City celebrates its 11th consecutive year with a woman as Mayor. In the words of Mayor Penny Sweet during her 2020 State of the City address, "By deeds, not words, the votes of women have transformed America and the world. By deeds, not words, women have also transformed Kirkland."

As stated in the 2021 White House Proclamation of Women's History Month:

"Throughout American history, women and girls have made vital contributions, often in the face of discrimination and undue hardship. Courageous women marched for and won the right to vote, campaigned against injustice, shattered countless barriers, and expanded the possibilities of American life. Our history is also replete with examples of the unfailing bravery and grit of women in America, particularly in times of crisis and emergency. Women served our Nation during World War II, led organizing and litigation efforts during the Civil Rights movement, and represented the United States on the global stage in the fight for human rights, peace, and security. Far too often, their heroic efforts and their stories have gone untold — especially the millions of Black women, immigrant women, and others from diverse communities who have strengthened America across every generation."

To learn more about Women's History Month, please visit the [website](#).

By proclaiming the month of March 2021 as Women's History Month in Kirkland, all community members are invited to celebrate and reflect on the countless contributions of women to our region, our nation and the world and to learn more through the weblinks provided in this memo.



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Recognizing March 2021 as Women's History Month in the City of Kirkland

WHEREAS, March had been federally recognized as Women's History Month, expanding from March 8 as International Women's Day, and is a global celebration of the social, economic, military, cultural and political achievements of women, and a month that invites inspired action to accelerate women's equality; and

WHEREAS, 2020 marked the 100 year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, earning women the right to vote, thanks to suffragists who tirelessly and relentlessly pursued this basic human right through activism, heightened public awareness and transformation of government institutions, thereby exemplifying their motto of "deeds, not words;" and

WHEREAS, the state of Washington was the 35th state to ratify the 19th Amendment in 1920, but thanks to the devoted efforts of Washington suffragists our state had won statewide suffrage ten years prior, with the right for women to vote earned in 1910 and the state swearing in its first female legislators in 1913; and

WHEREAS, the Women's History Consortium, created by state statute (RCW 27.34.360) in 2005 as a Washington State Historical Society-led initiative, is dedicated to preserving Washington women's history and all residents of Kirkland are encouraged to visit the website at www.washingtonhistory.org/research/whc/ to learn more about Washington's extraordinary women; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland recognizes and celebrates the Kirkland Woman's Club, a nonprofit organization and part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), for its efforts to bring together likeminded women from Kirkland and surrounding areas who strive to have a positive impact on the community and beyond through charitable works, volunteerism, community service and political advocacy; and

WHEREAS, women have been at the forefront of standing against injustice such as Princess Angeline, the oldest daughter of Chief Seattle who remained in her home after the Duwamish Tribe was forced off their land, and;

WHEREAS, women have played a vital role in Washington government including women like Bertha Knight Landes who was one of the first women elected to the Seattle City Council in 1922 and the first female mayor of Seattle, elected in 1926, making her the first female mayor of a major U.S. city; and

WHEREAS, Washington Governor Dixy Lee Ray, elected in 1976, was the first female governor in Washington state and the fifth female governor in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the State of Washington is represented by women serving in the United States Congress, including United States Senator Patty Murray, elected in 1993 and Washington State's first female U.S. Senator, and United States Senator Maria Cantwell, elected in 2000 and the State's second female U.S. Senator, along with the six women representing the State of Washington in the U.S. House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Nancy Pelosi became the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives, a position for which she was re-elected to her fourth term in 2021; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, Kamala D. Harris was elected Vice President of the United States and is the first female Vice President in United States history, the first Asian American, and the first African American Vice President in United States history; and

WHEREAS, the State of Washington currently ranks ninth in the nation in gender equity in the state legislature, in 2019 celebrating a landmark year that welcomed a female majority in the House Democratic Caucus and the State's first ever elected female House Speaker, Representative Laurie Jinkins; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland is proud of the influential woman within its elected body, with three women Councilmembers including Mayor Penny Sweet, Kelli Curtis and Amy Falcone, and with the Kirkland City Council selecting a woman as Mayor for 11 consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland is a champion for women in leadership, with women holding cornerstone positions within the Kirkland City government, including Police Chief Cherie Harris, Deputy City Manager Tracey Dunlap, Public Works Director Julie Underwood, Chief Information Officer Smitha Krishnan, Human Resources Director Anh Hoang and Parks and Community Services Director Lynn Zwaagstra;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Penny Sweet, on behalf of the Kirkland City Council, proclaim Monday, March 8 as International Women's Day, and the month of March as Women's History Month in the City of Kirkland. I call on all residents to celebrate the historic and current achievements of Kirkland women in the arts, culture, business, non-profit, religious and civic institutions in our City. Through the courageous "deeds, not words" of these remarkable women, Kirkland is one of the best cities in America to live, work and play.

Signed this 16th day of March 2021

Penny Sweet, Mayor