

Knox County Commission



PRESS RELEASE

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Commissioner Amy Broyles will be attending the unveiling of the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument today, August 26th, at Centennial Park in Nashville. "I am very grateful for the opportunities I have had over the past eight years to highlight the achievements of Tennessee women and to raise awareness about the contributions and concerns of the women in Knox County," stated Commissioner Broyles. "I am delighted to wrap up my final term by participating in such a meaningful event on National Women's Equality Day."

This historic commemoration will honor the suffragists in Nashville and across the state who fought diligently for Tennessee to become the 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment, which resulted in all American women gaining the right to vote, and was signed into law on August 26th, 1920. The monument will feature five women who were actually involved in the final ratification battle in Nashville: Anne Dallas Dudley of Nashville; J. Frankie Pierce of Nashville; Sue Shelton White of Jackson; Abby Crawford Milton of Chattanooga; and national suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt who came to Tennessee to direct the pro-suffrage forces. Catt worked closely with Representative Joe Hanover of Memphis to achieve victory in the House.

It will also include plaques honoring three women who were significant in Tennessee's political history. These three Tennessee Trailblazers are the late Representative Lois M. DeBerry, first woman elected speaker pro tempore in the State House and the longest serving member of the House at her death in 2013; the late Jane G. Eskind, first woman to win a statewide race in 1980, which was 60 years after the 19th Amendment's ratification; and Representative Beth Halteman Harwell, the first woman to be elected Speaker of the State House in 2011. Their careers were made possible by the suffragists' victory.

"It is amazing to me that women have had the vote in the US for less than 100 years," remarked Commissioner Broyles. "Women are still under-represented in all levels and all branches of government. There is still much to be done before women can claim full equality."

The monument was commissioned and funded by the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument, Inc., a statewide grassroots organization that seeks to memorialize the work done by Tennessee suffragists when they fought to secure ratification of the 19th Amendment. It was sculpted by Alan LeQuire, who also created the bas relief plaque, unveiled in February 1998 that hangs inside the state Capitol Building about the 19th Amendment. He also created the woman suffrage monument in Knoxville that was dedicated in 2006.

Until today, there were no monuments outside the Capitol Building that reflect women's contributions to our state's history. Thousands of people visit Centennial Park every year, so this story will be preserved for future generations with fabulous public art. Nationally, only around 8% of historical statues feature women. "I believe it is tremendously important to recognize women's contributions to our nation's history," stated Commissioner Broyles. For almost all of her two terms on Knox County Commission, Commissioner Broyles has been the only woman serving on the eleven member body.

Commissioner Broyles' two youngest daughters, Aidyn Parkey, age 15, and Avery Parkey, age 10, will be joining her on this trip. "It has always been important to our family to allow our girls to participate with us in political events, and to 'see what Mom does.' We have excused them from school in the past to attend major speeches by Mayors Rogero, Haslam, Burchett, and Ragsdale. I am excited that today they will be hearing from Mayors Megan Barry of Nashville, Kim McMillan of Clarksville, and Jim Strickland of Memphis, and meeting other women leaders with whom I've had the privilege of working. I'm very excited to share this experience with them."

"My husband and I are proud of the young women our daughters are growing into, and to be able to take them along with me today makes it very special indeed."

For more information, Commissioner Broyles can be reached at 965-237-6538.

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