



### Family Members: Wives Who Filled Their Husbands' Seats

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives has had 199 female Members since women won the right to vote in 1920. Out of that number, 11 of those women had been elected to fill a seat in the House following the death of their husbands. Widows stepping into the political fray has been common not only in the PA House, but the practice of a “widow’s succession” has also frequently occurred when members of Congress have passed away. According to Smithsonian Magazine, party leaders have often recruited widows in hopes of avoiding internal party disputes and capitalizing on public sympathy in special elections. While some party leaders may have seen the ladies as temporary replacements for their husbands’ seats, many of these women had long and distinguished political careers in their own right.



**Marion Munley**  
**Lackawanna County**  
**1947-1964**

Prior to her House service, Marion Munley was an organizer and president of the 20th Ward Democratic Women’s Club, as well as a member of the Young Democrats of Lackawanna County and the Women’s Democratic Club of Mayfield. She was also active in working on

political campaigns, including ones for Lackawanna Judge T. Linus Hoban and Congressman Patrick J. Boland.

Munley’s husband, Robert W. Munley, was a House Member from 1939 until his death on January 25, 1947. Marion Munley was elected in a special election on September 9, 1947.

While in office Munley championed legislation related to labor, welfare, and equality for women. She was elected as the Democratic Caucus Secretary for the 1963-1964 session — making her the second woman elected to a leadership position in the House.

**Frances R. Jones**  
**Philadelphia County**  
**1959-1966**

Frances Jones was elected to the House in a special election held on May 19, 1959, following the death of her husband, Granville E. Jones, who served from 1949 until his death in 1959.

While in office, Jones had several legislative successes. She sponsored the legislation that led to Act 455 of 1965, which increased allotted funds for counties to bury indigent persons. She also continually focused on issues related to healthcare.

Following her time in the House, Jones worked at Philadelphia City Hall in the tax office.



*Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 9, 1959*

# Family Members Continued

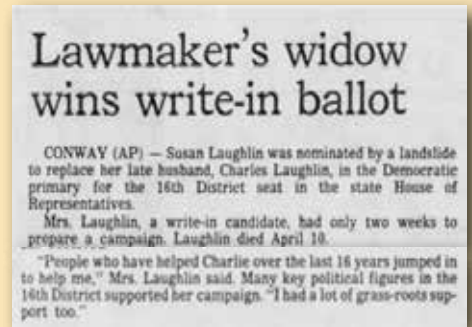


## **Susan Laughlin, Allegheny and Beaver Counties, 1989-2004**

Prior to her election to the House, Laughlin was a homemaker. Following the death of her husband, Charles P. Laughlin, just weeks before the primary election, Susan Laughlin won the Democratic nomination by way of a write-in campaign, securing over 10,000 votes.

While in office, Laughlin worked on several successful pieces of legislation. She was an advocate for issues pertaining to organized labor, funding for education, and meeting the demands of her constituency.

Laughlin said she would like to be remembered as after “having taken office under difficult circumstances, I was able to maintain the quality level of service established by my husband for the residents of the 16th Legislative District.”



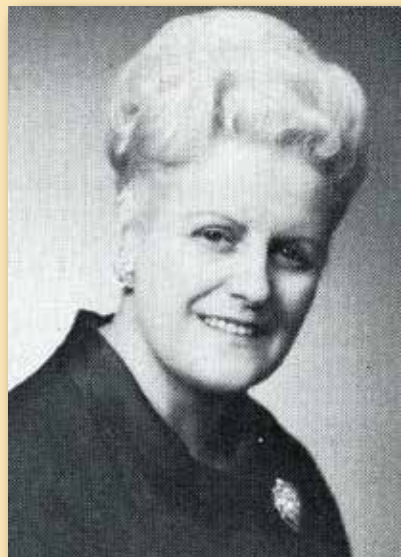
*Above excerpts from: The Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 7, 1988*

## **Elizabeth S. Wynd, Wyoming County, 1961-1966**

Following her studies at the Dean School of Business (Wyoming Seminary), Wynd worked in the law office of Attorney Robert W. Trembath. She was also employed as a county reporter.

Wynd's husband, James Wynd, Jr., served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from 1957 until his death on March 28, 1961. Wynd was elected to his former seat in a special election held on May 16, 1961, and was reelected to two subsequent sessions. While in office, Wynd sponsored several successful pieces of legislation, including the bill that led to Act 210 of 1965, which amended the Game Law to simplify replacing lost hunting licenses and tags.

Following her time in the House, the Tunkhannock New Age newspaper lamented, “Another void in the life of Wyoming County will be felt as Rep. Elizabeth Wynd Wallace ends her current term in the General Assembly” and that “She has given to Wyoming County excellent representation and to its citizens the full benefit of personal services of her office.”



## **Anita Palermo Kelly, Philadelphia County, 1963-1978**

Following her studies, Kelly was employed as a currency counter for the Federal Reserve Bank for 13 years. During this time, she became involved in Philadelphia politics and was a member of the 34th Ward Democratic Executive Committee for 26 years. She was also a member and chair of the Credentials Committee of the Women's Democratic Club of Philadelphia.

Kelly was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in a special election on November 5, 1963, following the death of her husband, William J. Kelly. She was reelected for seven subsequent sessions. During Kelly's tenure in the House, Pennsylvania ratified the proposed amendment to the United States Constitution which provided for equal rights for men and women. When speaking on the bill, Kelly said, “In short, Mr. Speaker, the 27th Amendment will not result in any immediate sweeping changes in our society, but will provide a legal framework through which social change can take place, so that women can have the same freedom of choice and opportunity that men do in education, employment, housing, earning capacity, and justice, in all facets of life.”

**Fun Fact: Three additional women have held seats in the House after their husband retired or left office following election to another office. Martha G. Speiser, Rose Toll, and Ruth S. Donahue served in the House a decade or more after their husbands' time in office.**

# House Archives Digital Collections Now Accessible!

The House Archives is excited to announce our newly launched digital collections database. The Archives has been working to digitize photographs and documents from our collections so researchers can access them from their home computer. Digitized materials are from personal papers of former Members, committee records, and other collections. This is an ongoing project as photographs and document collections are being added all the time. If you are searching for something that does not appear, be sure to contact us at [records@pabmc.net](mailto:records@pabmc.net) and we would be happy to assist!

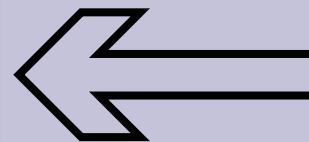
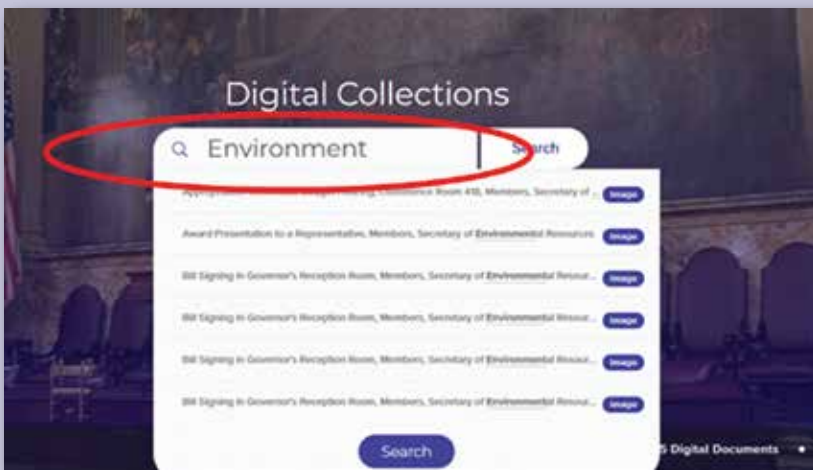
## Step 1:

Visit our website at: <https://archives.house.state.pa.us/> and click on “Collections” under the “Collections and Research” tab. From here, access links to the digital collections for Standing Committees, Select/Special Committees & Task Forces, Personal Papers, Institutional Office Records, and Photograph Collections.



## Step 2:

Once clicking the link “Access Digital Collections,” type your search term in the box and select one of the drop down suggestions or simply click “search.” Researchers can search using the names of House Members, Committees, or even a keyword. (This page can also be directly accessed at: <https://digitalcollections.pabmc.net>).

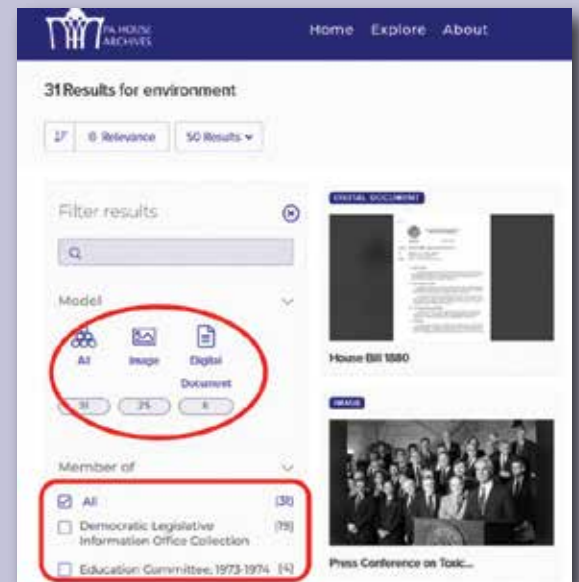
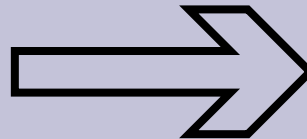


Example with keyword “Environment.”

## Step 3:

Explore search results. Results can include photographs and documents such as House bill analyses, correspondence, memos, committee votes, reports, and much more. Results can be sorted by images, documents, or by a specific collection.

Click one of these to sort by “Image,” “Digital Document,” or choose a collection such as “Education Committee, 1973-1974.”



## Step 4:

Select photograph or document. Each file will include relevant information including the collection the item is from, date, persons who created or are depicted, and links to related materials.

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# Do I Have Your Vote? — New House Archives Exhibit Now Open

The PA House Archives is proud to announce the opening of the new exhibit “Do I Have Your Vote?” This exhibit highlights unique House campaign memorabilia, never before seen documents, and campaign trail photographs! Everything from pins and hats to frisbees and sewing kits are featured. This exhibit will be on display until December 15th. For more information, contact the House Archives at 717-783-3866 or records@pabmc.net.



Right photograph: Peter C. Wambach Jr., Dauphin County, 1981-1992

Left photograph: Alice S. Langtry, Allegheny County, 1985-1992

