As a way of providing CFUW information to Clubs, each month we will be sending copies of articles to the editors of Club newsletters, for their use in their newsletter or website.

These are articles that we hope will be of interest to members and can be used as editors see fit. There is no obligation to use these articles and they will be 'stored' on the CFUW Member Resources website for use at any time.

If you have any questions about this service or suggestions for its content, please contact Doris Mae Oulton, President at cfuwpres@gmail.com.

**Women's History Month**

In the excitement of the election, it's easy to forget that October is Women's History thanks to women being named "persons" on October 18, 1929.

The theme this year is Her Story, Our Story: Celebrating Canadian Women. Information about this and future themes can be found at [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca)

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Prepared by Tara Fischer, Advocacy Coordinator and Teri Shaw, VP Advocacy

**The Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case**

*Suffragettes in Canada were actually Suffrigists*
By: Teri Shaw, VP Advocacy
To mark Women's History Month in Canada, CFUW is honouring some of the trailblazers that were once members of our organization.

Mabel Chown (Mrs. Douglas F. Thom) was 24 when she became President of the first University Women's Club, in Toronto, in 1903. She became President of the National organization in 1931 until 1934. During her tenure, CFUW joined others to fight the dismissal of married women from the staff of the University of Toronto.

Dr. Ann Augusta Stowe-Gullen (1857 - 1943), one of the first members of the University Women's Club Toronto, is known for being the first woman to graduate from a Canadian medical school (Faculty of Medicine at Victoria University, Toronto) in 1883. Her advocacy work led to the establishment of the Ontario Medical College for Women.

Dr. Alice E. Wilson (1881 - 1964) was one of the first recipients of a CFUW scholarship at the age of 44, which opened the door to a long and distinguished career as the first woman to hold a professional position with the Geological Survey of Canada and to be appointed Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1938. Recognizing the importance of the CFUW scholarship/fellowship program, Dr. Wilson left a bequest to the organization in 1964, establishing the Dr. Alice E. Wilson Awards. The awards are given to four women annually.

Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw (1881 - 1982) was one of Canada's first female doctors and the medical director of the first (illegal) birth control clinic in Canada despite intense criticism from the medical and religious communities. She served as the clinic's medical director for over 30 years pioneering areas of family medicine that were not widely practiced at the time. Dr. Bagshaw was a member of the University Women's Club of Hamilton.

Helen Alice Kinnear, Q.C. (1894 - 1970), a former
Dr. Elizabeth Bagshshaw

Charlotte Elizabeth Whitton, O.C., C.B.E. (1896 - 1975) was a member of the University Women's Club in Ottawa, a feminist, and the first woman mayor of Ottawa (and a major city in Canada), serving from 1951 to 1956 and again from 1960 to 1964.

The Honourable Muriel McQueen Fergusson, P.C. O.C. Q.C. (1899 - 1997), a former member of CFUW Ottawa, was the first woman Speaker of the Senate from 1972 to 1974, and the first woman deputy mayor of Ottawa in 1953.

Phyllis Gregory Ross, O.C., C.B.E. (1903 - 1988) was a Canadian economist and the first woman to serve as a Chancellor in the Commonwealth of Nations. She was a member and President of the University Women's Club in Ottawa.

Winona Grace MacInnis, O.C., O.B.C. (1905 - 1991), a former member of University Women's Clubs of Ottawa and Vancouver, was the first woman from British Columbia to be elected to the House of Commons.

Helen Battles Sawyer Hogg, C.C. (1905 - 1993), a former member of the University Women's Club on Toronto, was an astronomer, the first female president of several astronomical organizations, and the first woman to be appointed to the physical sciences division of the Royal Society of Canada.

Dr. Jessie Gray (1910 - 1978) was known as Canada's "first lady of surgery", and one of the four leading cancer surgeons in North America at the time. She was a member of the University Women's Club of Toronto, and earned an impressive succession of firsts: first woman gold medalist in medicine at U of T (1934); first woman to obtain the master of surgery degree (1939); first woman resident surgeon at the Toronto General Hospital; first woman fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (Canada, 1941); first woman member of the Central Surgical Society of North America; and first woman elected to the Science Council of Canada (1966).

The Hon. Pauline Mills McGibbon, C.C., O. Ont, (1910 - 2001) was a member of the University Women's Club of Toronto, and served as
Blanche Margaret Meagher, O.C. (1911 - 1999) was a Canadian diplomat and in 1958 was appointed as Canada's first woman ambassador. She was a member of the University Women's Club of Halifax and served as Ambassador to Israel, Austria and Sweden.

Laura Sabia, O.C. (1916-1996) was President of CFUW when she called together Canadian women's organizations in 1967 to put pressure on the Pearson government to appoint a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. This group became known as the Committee for the Equality of Women (CEW) with Sabia as the chair. After an annoying meeting in Ottawa with no results, and an equally annoying newspaper interview forcing Laura Sabia to threaten a march on Parliament Hill, this resulted in the headline "A Million Women to March on Ottawa", and three days later Pearson appointed the Commission. Sabia became the first President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the successor to CEW.

Marie-Claire Kirkland-Casgrain, C.M., C.Q. is a Quebec lawyer, judge, politician and former member of CFUW Montreal. She was the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of Quebec, the first woman appointed a Cabinet minister in Quebec, the first woman appointed acting premier, and the first woman judge to serve in the Quebec Provincial Court.

As part of CFUW's celebration of its 100th Anniversary in 2019, the History Committee has writers preparing extensive biographies of all CFUW Past Presidents who have served at the national level since 1919. Watch for an announcement at AGM 2016.

The Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case

In 1929, five women from Alberta, Henrietta Edwards, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, and Louise McKinney won the right to be recognized as persons by the Privy Council of Great Britain. The Privy Council ruled "that the exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours". The Lord Chancellor wrote "to those who ask why the word ["person"]
should include females, the obvious answer is why should it not."

This ruling made women eligible for appointment to the Senate, and in the following year, Cairine Wilson was sworn in as a Senator.

The Governor General’s Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case were established in 1979, by the Government of Canada, with the support of then-Governor General the Right Honourable Edward Schreyer, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this historic decision.

At time of writing the 2015 honourees had not been announced - see http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/commemoration/gg/index-en.html for more information.

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**Suffragettes in Canada were actually Suffrigists**

Teri Shaw  
VP Advocacy

At the end of October, a film, Suffragette, starring Cary Mulligan and Meryl Streep, opens in Canada. It is the story of the women's suffrage movement in the United Kingdom. Exciting, terrifying, but here in Canada it was quite different.

The suffragette movement in Canada was not the exciting, harrowing experience as it was in Great Britain and the United States. It was typically Canadian - quiet and very determined.

In the 1870's the women's suffrage movement that had been bubbling in the United States and Great Britain became important in Canada. Dr. Emily Howard Stowe and her daughter Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen created the Toronto Women's Literary Club in 1876 (later became The Dominion Woman's Enfranchisement Association and then the Canadian Suffrage Association). Dr. Stowe-Gullen would much later, at the turn of the century, become one of the first members of the University Women's Club of Toronto, the first club founded in 1903.

At the same time in 1874, one of the more formidable forces for suffrage was created - the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). This would grow to become the largest non-denominational women's organization in Canada. This group felt that only women's suffrage would bring about prohibition, hence their strong support for women's right to vote.
In 1884, unmarried women or widows were allowed to vote in Ontario municipalities, but not married women who were not considered "persons".

Sir John A. MacDonald introduced three bills in Parliament to allow unmarried women and widows to vote. All were defeated, and ultimately a change in the Electoral Act made this a provincial issue - a very early version of downloading of responsibilities!

In 1887 in Manitoba all women were allowed in municipal elections, and the next barrier to fall were school board elections when female rate-payers were allowed to vote in most of the provinces. But in 1907 Manitoba revoked women's right to vote in municipal elections.

In the early years of the last century, a number of women, like Nellie McClung, Agnes Macphail and Alice Amelia Chown were becoming strong, vocal feminists. Chown was the founding member of the Toronto Equal Franchise League, a break away group from the Toronto Women's Suffrage Association. Women's organizations were growing. Adelaide Hoodless started the Women's Institute, the National Council of Women had been formed, the Political Equality League of Vancouver and Victoria started, as well as the early university women's clubs. Mabel Chown, niece of Alice Amelia Chown, was the first President of the first University Women's Club in Toronto in 1903, and helped found another in Regina in 1915.

Over the next period of time a number of bills concerning suffrage were proposed in all the provinces, and were defeated.

The "fight" continued. In Manitoba, in January 1914 in response to their Premier who opposed the women's right to vote, Nellie McClung and the Political Equality League and their supporters staged a play, "The Women's Parliament", a satire about the dangers of giving men the vote. The play received national attention, even going 'on tour'.

Yet it would take the defeat of that government in 1915 to secure the vote.

On January 28, 1916 Manitoba became the first province to give the vote to women in provincial elections, followed by Saskatchewan and Alberta that same year, and British Columbia and Ontario the next in 1917.

The impact of women's work during the war was strongly felt. In 1918 enfranchisement finally happened for federal election for some women - 21, not
alien-born, met the property requirements where they lived. This did exclude Asian and First Nations women. This wasn't fixed until 1948 and 1960 respectively!

In 1918 the vote came in Nova Scotia, 1919 in New Brunswick, 1922 in Prince Edward Island. It was not until 1940 that women gained the right to vote in Quebec provincial elections.

The first federal election when women were both allowed to vote and to run for office was in 1921. Agnes MacPhail became the first female MP. And we were still not considered "persons" under the law at this time. This did not happen until 1929 with the intervention of the Privy Council in England.

The 40-year fight for the franchise was long and frustrating, but not without interesting bed-fellows - Sir John A. MacDonald, the Women’s Temperance Union, labour councils and unions, Ontario municipalities, National Council of Women, and many women's suffrage organizations across the country.

**FALL ADVOCACY PACKAGE**

Look for the Fall Advocacy Package coming out after the election, complete with congratulatory notes for your Member of Parliament, template letters about the newly adopted resolutions plus other

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