

### **Biographical sketch – Anne Dallas Dudley**

Anne Dallas Dudley was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1876. She was the grandniece of George Dallas -- President James. K. Polk's Vice-President for whom the city of Dallas, Texas is named.

In 1911, she founded the Nashville Equal Suffrage League and spent nearly ten years of her life in Tennessee organizing over 60 local chapters of the Tennessee Equal Suffrage League. She rose to prominence as a leader of the woman's suffrage movement in Nashville, Tennessee and nationally.

On May 2, 1914, Dudley organized the first woman's suffrage parade in the south, starting in front of the Tennessee State Capitol and proceeding down Capitol Boulevard through downtown, then down Broadway to Centennial Park. When the parade reached Centennial Park, Dudley gave an impassioned speech in front of The Parthenon before a crowd of 2,000 on the right to vote for women, telling the audience "every reform is started by a minority." *The Tennessean* reported that it was the first time in Tennessee history a woman had given a speech outdoors to a crowd.

After the success of the parade, the National Woman Suffrage Association, founded by Susan B. Anthony (and now known as The League of Woman Voters) accepted Dudley's invitation to hold their national convention in Nashville in November, 1914.

The National Woman Suffrage Association eventually held their convention in Nashville at The Hermitage Hotel which backs up to Capitol Boulevard. Their day sessions were held in the House of Representatives Chamber in the Tennessee State Capitol and the evening sessions in the Ryman Auditorium. This convention attracted top leaders of the movement, including Carrie Chapman Catt, Jane Addams, and hundreds of other delegates from around the country, and gave Tennessee huge momentum in the woman suffrage movement.

Dudley was later appointed to the board of the National Woman Suffrage Association as Third Vice President in 1917 and worked with President Carrie Chapman Catt on national strategy.

She continued her dedicated efforts for women's suffrage in Nashville and nationally. She was a constant force in the halls of the Tennessee State Capitol and she organized thousands of women to march and lobby.

Finally, on August 18, 1920, the Tennessee legislature held a vote upon ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment – approving the measure by a slim one-vote margin, and thereby giving 27 million women across America the right to vote – an accomplishment largely resulting from the efforts and dedication of Anne Dallas Dudley.

Dudley was also one of the first women to serve as a Delegate At-Large for the Democratic National Convention where she gave a speech at the 1920 convention in San Francisco, California.

The 100<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of the Tennessee legislature's historic vote occurs August 18, 2020.