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First Female Legislator in Kansas from Liberal Honored at State Capitol

On the 153rd Birthday of Kansas on Wednesday the Kansas State Captiol was re-dedicated for the first time since it opened 111 years ago. At the re-dedication former Liberal resident Representative Minnie J. Grinstead was honored. Grinstead was the first female elected to the Kansas Legislature in 1918.

On November 17, 1920, the Kansas City Star reported that "They (the men) believed that Mrs. Grinstead would be a 'fussy' member, and that she would scold and find fault, and 'nag' them for smoking cigars. They had visions of having to speak in whispers when they wished to express their thoughts in the plain Kansas language."

Grinstead, however, impressed her fellow legislators as well as her constituents and was re-elected in 1920 and again in 1922.

While a legislator, she served on the Judiciary Committee, in 1921 the first woman in any state ever to have done so.

In 1920 Grinstead was selected as an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention. At the 1924 National Convention she seconded the nomination of Calvin Coolidge for president.

When Grinstead's husband passed away in 1924, she decided not to run for re-election to the Kansas Houseand instead ran for Probate Judge of Seward County. She was elected and served until she died in Liberal on December 24, 1925.

Current Representative Reid Petty of Liberal said it was very neat to see Grinstead honored.

"I was very happy to see Representative Grinstead honored on such an important day at the State Capitol. Seward County and Liberal should be very proud that we were the first to elect a woman legislator in Kansas," Petty said.

Petty also stated that he would like to see the county and city do something to honor her such as name something after her.

State of Kansas/Rep. Reid Petty