



MichiganWomenForward



Dora Hall Stockman

(1872 - 1948)

Inducted: 2006 Locale: Lansing Era: Historical

Area(s) of Achievement: Agriculture, Education

Dora Hall Stockman was a woman ahead of her time, a bold, progressive leader in politics, education, and agriculture. Born on a Manistee County farm in 1872, Dora Hall became a teacher at 16. She went on to attend Benzonia College and to earn a master's degree in education from Hillsdale College. Dora and her husband, Francis Stockman, owned a mercantile business and later bought a farm on Lansing's west side.

In 1914, Dora was elected Lecturer of the Michigan State Grange. This position, which she held for 16 years, was responsible for the program activities of the statewide organization. In addition to serving as editor of the Grange newsletter, called the Michigan Patron, Dora was instrumental in establishing the 4-Leaf Clover Club, a junior Grange that became the 4H Clubs of today.

A year after women's suffrage passed in Michigan, Dora was elected in 1919 to the Board of Agriculture, now the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University. With this election, she became the first woman elected to a statewide office in Michigan, and the first woman in the United States to serve on the board of a Land Grant College. In this position until 1932, Dora championed the expansion of curriculum to include the liberal arts, while urging more emphasis on higher education of women at Michigan State and elsewhere. In 1934, Michigan State recognized Dora's contributions to the Board, education and agriculture by awarding her an Honorary Doctorate of Laws. She was the first woman to receive this honor from Michigan State.

Dora ran as a Republican for the state Legislature in 1938, serving four terms until she retired because of advanced diabetes in 1946. During this time, she introduced legislation that resulted in the Michigan Medical Insurance Program, the first of its kind in the nation. This was implemented as Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Dora served on the organization's Board of Directors until her death. Dora co-introduced legislation to require political parties to have two chairpersons, one of each gender, to increase the role of women in politics. Stockman's legacy lives on in education, health care, politics, and agriculture throughout Michigan.