



Catherine D. May (Bedell)

Quick Facts

Birth: May 18, 1914
Yakima, WA

Death: May 28, 2004
Palm Desert, California

Occupation: Radio Commentator; Medical Secretary

Party Affiliation: Republican

Years served: 1953-59

Office: Representative; US Representative (1959-71)

District: 14 (Yakima County)

Personal:

- Born Catherine Dean Barnes
- Married James O. May in 1943 and had 3 children, divorced
- Married Don Bedell, divorced
- Taught English at Chehalis High School, 1937-1940
- Reported political topics and women's news at KIT radio station in Yakima
- President of Bedell Associates, a trade consulting firm in Palm Desert, California
- Women's editor and news broadcaster on KMO Radio in Tacoma, early 1940s
- Broadcaster of special events in Seattle, early 1940s Director of a radio department for a Seattle advertising agency, early 1940s
- Seattle insurance company, director of radio department, early 1940s
- Writer, assistant commentator and producer of the "Betty Crocker Show" for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in New York City, 1944-1946
- Women's editor for KIT radio in Yakima, 1948-1957
- Office manager and medical secretary for the Yakima Medical Center

Education:

- Yakima Valley Junior College, graduate, 1934
- University of Washington, B.S., 1936
- University of Washington, teaching certificate, 1937
- University of Southern California, studied speech, 1939

Community Service:

Affiliations:

- Altrusa & Soroptimist Clubs, honorary member
- Alpha Chi Omega Sorority
- American Association of University Women
- Business & Professional Women
- Executive Women in Government
- Young Republican Federation

Awards:

- Distinguished Alumnus Award, Yakima Valley Community College, 1982
- "Togetherness" Award, McCall's Magazine, 1959

Legislative & State Service:

- Governor's State-Wide Committee on Educational Television, vice-chair
- Washington State Federation of Republican Women's Clubs, chair
- Washington Association for Retarded Children, member
- Governor's Safety Council, member

Committees: (1953) Education and Libraries; Labor Relations; License; Public Utilities; Reclamation and Irrigation

(1955) Appropriations; Education; Public Utilities; State Institutions and Buildings

(1957) Cities and Counties; Education; State Government; State Institutions and Buildings

House Bills sponsored:

(1953 session)

56-Relating to liens for labor by hotel and certain other employees

Went to first reading

77-Subjecting condemnation of facilities of public service companies to jurisdiction of public service commission

Went to second reading

317-Providing for distribution of forest reserve funds to schools

Went to third reading

318-Recognizing statements as evidence for traffic citations

Went to first reading

437-Limiting cause of action for libel, slander, and invasion of privacy

Went to first reading

456-Repealing provision allowing livestock grazing in game preserve area

Sent to first reading

471-Requiring study of state history in institutions of higher learning

Went to first reading

(1953 extraordinary session)

17-Establishing a state merit system

Went to first reading

(1955 session)

218-Providing for the allocation of federal forest reserve receipts

Went to second reading

348-Establishing a distribution fund in the department of licenses and transferal thereof to the state treasurer

Full veto by Governor Langlie

392-Requiring notice of termination by mail to certified school district employees

Went to first reading

459-Changing the method of election of members of the state board of education

Signed by Governor Langlie

464-Establishing a state merit system of personnel administration

Went to first reading

(1957 session)

158-Authorizing construction of juvenile delinquent rehabilitation center

Went to first reading

175-Abolishing the use of certain vouchers by state, county, and municipal corporations

Went to third reading

177-Transferring real property from department of game to the Washington state penitentiary

Went to third reading

350-Establishing a department of natural resources

Went to third reading

600-Authorizing county and private hospitals to give psychiatric treatment under certain conditions

Went to first reading

House Joint Memorials sponsored:

(1957 session)

4-Providing use of federal income tax for educational purposes

Went to second reading

Leadership, Positions & Appointments:

- Appointed by President Nixon to be one of the eight original incorporators of the AMTRAK Commission in December 1970--- Board of Incorporators, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, national presidential appointee & member of the board of directors, 1971
- Appointed by President Nixon to the United States Tariff Commission (later the International Trade Commission), 1971-1981, chair, 1971-1975
- Appointed by Ronald Reagan as special consultant to the President on the Fifty States Project, as part of a White House project to convince states to take sexist laws off their books, 1982

Congress:

- First Washington State woman elected to the United States House of Representatives, 1959
- Throughout Congressional career: served on the Committee on Agriculture; attempted to encourage domestic production of beet sugar, important to her district, favored fee on imported sugar, 1964 proposed a higher permanent quota for domestic beets
- Atomic Energy Committee and Joint Committee on Atomic Energy member. Fought for the Hanford Nuclear Reserve
- Defeated by Mike McCormack in 1970
- While in Congress she worked to eliminate barriers for women advancing in the armed forces. She also supported the Equal Rights Amendment being added to the United States Constitution, and worked to include the word "sex" in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- Appointed by President Nixon to the United States International Trade Commission, 1971-1981

Sources:

- "A Few Good Women" Oral History Collection, 1938-2000, MGN 984, Penn State University Archives, Special Collections Library, University Libraries, Pennsylvania State University.
- Gizzi, John, "Catherine May Bedell, R.I.P.," *Human Events Publishing*, June 21, 2004, http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3827/is_200406/ai_n9428378
- Ward, Leah Beth, "Catherine May, Political Pioneer and Mentor to Women, Dies," *Yakima-Herald*, June 2, 2004
- Heisel Jr., Bill, "State's Pioneering Female Politician-Catherine May Blazed Trail to Congress," *Yakima-Herald*, February 7, 1999
- Congressional Papers, http://content.wsulibs.wsu.edu/cdm4/index_wsu_whc.php