

Constance Woodruff, First Chair

New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women

Constance Woodruff of West Orange, known to everyone as “Connie,” served as the first Chair of the New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women. She first became involved in public life during the Eisenhower years when she was leader of the Central Ward (Newark) Young Republicans.

By the time Brendan Byrne became Governor in 1974, Connie had long since switched her affiliation to the Democratic Party and rose in its ranks to become Democratic National Committeewoman. For Governor Byrne, Connie was a natural choice to become the first Chairperson of the New Jersey Advisory Commission on the Status of Women. Not only was she a leading Democrat, but she was also Community Relations director for the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and outreached constantly with community leaders throughout the state.

Simultaneously with and subsequent to her ILGWU employment, Connie served as a newspaper columnist and correspondent for New York’s Amsterdam News. After leaving the ILGWU, Connie became an educator at Essex County College.

Connie was Chair of the New Jersey Commission on Women from 1975 until 1992. During the administration of Governor Thomas Kean, Connie also served two terms as President of the National Association of Commissions for Women. She passed away on October 19, 1996.

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