



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF THE COOK COUNTY WOMEN'S CAUCUS HONORING MARY BARTELME, THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED JUDGE IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, in 1923, Mary Bartelme became the first woman elected to the bench of the Cook County Circuit Court; and,

WHEREAS, Bartelme was born near Fulton and Halsted Streets in Chicago, and became a Chicago Public Schools teacher before deciding to become one of the city's first women lawyers; and,

WHEREAS, Bartelme graduated from Northwestern University School of Law in 1894 -- the only woman in her class -- and was admitted to the Illinois Bar later that year; and,

WHEREAS, Bartelme was appointed as Public Guardian of Cook County three years later, where she helped draft and lobby for legislation creating the first Juvenile Court in Cook County 1899; and,

WHEREAS, The first Juvenile Detention Home was located in the 1600 block of West Adams in 1906. In 1913, Bartelme was chosen to assist the Cook County presiding judge, holding closed sessions for juvenile cases and creating a "girls court" as an alternative to jail; and,

WHEREAS, In 1923, Bartelme was elected judge and served in Juvenile Court for ten years where she heard over 50,000 cases. She also served as president of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois from 1927-28; and,

WHEREAS, Bartelme donated her own house in Chicago to establish a "Mary's Club," a group home where girls could be safe and learn important life skills; and,

WHEREAS, Nicknamed "Suitcase Mary," Bartelme formed a program to provide suitcases filled with proper clothing and toiletries to young women coming out of the court system to help them establish as respectable life.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners Women's Caucus honors Mary Bartelme, Cook County's first woman judge who devoted her life to reforming the treatment of children and women in the court system.