

Aloysius Larch-Miller

“A martyr to woman suffrage”

September 27, 1886 – February 2, 1920



Born in Tennessee in 1886, Aloysius Larch-Miller’s family moved to Shawnee, Oklahoma Territory around 1903. Larch-Miller went to Central State Teachers’ College in Edmond upon graduating high school, then becoming a kindergarten teacher at Shawnee’s Harrison School, where she taught for several years. During World War I, Larch-Miller worked with the American Red Cross, and her performance as state secretary of the nursing department for her division earned her the position of teaching Red Cross nursing in the state’s colleges, eventually working as Pottawatomie County’s chairperson.

A lifelong Democrat, Larch-Miller also served as the secretary of the Oklahoma State Suffrage Ratification Committee. Oklahoma’s legislature adjourned without voting on ratification of the 19th Amendment, so the only hope left was to get Governor James Robertson to call a special session. Larch-Miller caught influenza just days before the Pottawatomie County Democratic Convention and her doctor ordered her to stay in bed. Upon learning that Oklahoma’s Attorney General S.P. Freeling would be present at the convention to argue against calling a special session, Larch-Miller violated the doctor’s orders and attended the convention, knowing she was a far better orator than Freeling. She was successful, with the convention voting two to one to call a special session, additionally with the legislators paying their own expenses. After speaking at the convention, Larch-Miller caught pneumonia in addition to her influenza and died two days later on February 2, 1920 at the age of thirty-three. Twenty-six days later, the Oklahoma legislature met and ratified the 19th Amendment.

After her death, Judge George Carl Abernathy of Shawnee moved to pass a resolution of sympathy for Larch-Miller, naming her “a martyr to woman suffrage.” Governor Robertson ordered the state flag flown at half-mast and Attorney General Freeling was among the numerous other state dignitaries who attended Larch-Miller’s funeral. Larch-Miller today has a memorial to honor her in Shawnee, remembered as a gifted orator with boundless energy and charm paired with impressive ideas. Larch-Miller posthumously received a certificate from the National American Woman Suffrage Association signed by Carrie Chapman Catt who said Larch-Miller “was entitled to a place on the Honor Roll of the brave army of men and women” who fought for the vote. In 1982, Larch-Miller was inducted into the first Oklahoma Woman’s Hall of Fame.

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