

Theodosia Ammons

Her Legacy: First female faculty member and dean at Colorado State University, tireless women's suffragist

Theodosia Ammons holds the dual distinction of first female faculty member at Colorado State University (then Colorado Agricultural College) and first female dean of a department. Theodosia was born in 1862 to a Baptist minister in North Carolina who moved to Denver for work in the early 1870s. She went into teaching in Denver after graduating high school and was drawn to women's suffrage.

Through teaching, Theodosia met Eliza Routt, Coloradoan suffragist and the governor's wife. Eliza encouraged Theodosia to join the movement, which also sparked an interest in women's education. In 1895, Theodosia and Eliza cofounded the department of domestic economy at CAC, of which Theodosia became the university's first female faculty member. She taught liberal arts as well as practical skills. Theodosia also helped new graduates find jobs in teaching and nursing. In 1902, Theodosia became dean of the department and changed the name to the department of domestic science.

In the same year, Theodosia was elected president of the Colorado Equal Suffrage Association. She had been secretary while Eliza was president for years. She was nominated to represent Colorado at the 1902 National Convention of Delegates of Woman Suffrage in Washington, DC. Her speech discussed the importance of equal suffrage and its outcomes in Colorado. Theodosia argued that giving women the vote would make American politics more equitable. She finished by mentioning the positive results of the recently held Suffrage Day at the Colorado Chautauqua in Boulder.

Theodosia also involved herself in a number of women's groups around the state; a postcard from Mary C. C. Bradford to Theodosia shows an invitation to participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors for the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, though the extent of her participation is unclear.

Theodosia never married; her health was poor during the last years of her life. Theodosia passed away on July 17, 1907, in Denver, Colorado.

Written by Melissa Allbrandt, Archivist, Editor, and Writer