



**REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN BLOOMINGTON AND MONROE COUNTY  
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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**CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP**

April 2005

Report on the Status of Women in Bloomington and Monroe County  
Commission on the Status of Women  
City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department



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### CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP/POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women comprise approximately 51% of the population. However, “when the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress convened, 86 percent of its members were male. This places the United States 60<sup>th</sup> worldwide in terms of the number of women serving in the national legislature. These large gender disparities are also evident at the state and local levels: 86 percent of state governors, 88 percent of big city mayors, and 78 percent of state legislators are men.” (Brown Policy Report)

If women want to affect change in their lives and those of others within the community, state, country and world, they must be actively engaged. This is particularly important in the civic arena, which shapes the policy of our daily lives. This engagement can take varying forms, from sitting on a local council or commission, to running for political office from county commissioner to United States President.

This section of the data report will review various civic leadership roles, the number of women within the various roles, and how this representation or lack thereof impacts the lives of women, first at a general level, and then more specifically within Bloomington and Monroe County.

### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation by women is necessary to affect the decisions and policies that impact their daily lives. Women have different concerns than men, and often place different values on the concerns that they have in common with men. Political participation can range from voting, to addressing labels for a feminist candidate, to sitting on a local council or commission, to running for political

*As Eleanor Roosevelt put it, “Only women in power would consider the needs of women without power.”*

office. Women's political participation is the only way to ensure that women's lives, opinions and ideas are represented. Also, women's political participation is important as democracy is strengthened through equal representation.

## **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Research on women as political candidates suggests that they generally win elected office at rates similar to men, but far fewer women run for office (National Women's Political Caucus, 1994). In fact, per the Brown Policy Report, "Men are 71 percent more likely than women to run for office."

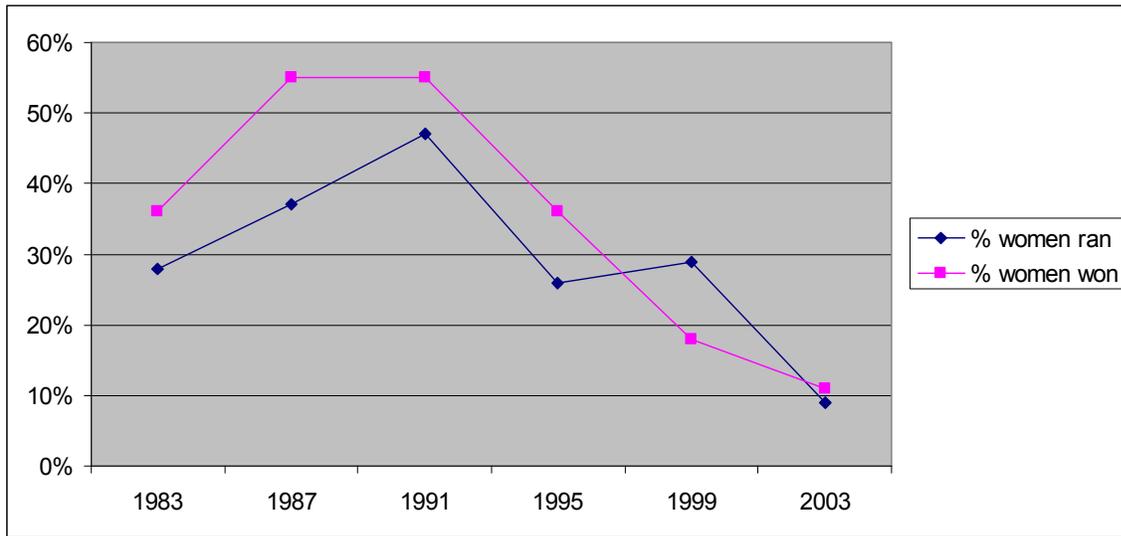
Regardless of party affiliation, female officeholders are more likely than males to support women's agendas (Center for American Women and Politics [CAWP], 1991). In addition, legislatures with larger proportions of female elected officials tend to address women's issues more often and more seriously than those with fewer representatives (Dodson, 1991; Thomas, 1994). Finally, representation through institutions such as women's commissions or women's legislative caucuses can both provide ongoing channels for expressing women's concerns and make policymakers more accessible to women, especially when those institutions work closely with women's organizations (Stetson and Mazur, 1995).

Policies and practices that might encourage women to run for office—including those that would help them challenge incumbents—can be integral to increasing women's political voice (Burrell, 1994). Such policies include campaign finance reform, recruitment of female candidates by political parties, and fair and equal media treatment for male and female candidates.

### **Bloomington Female Elected Officials – 2003**

- City Clerk – Regina Moore
- Common Council – 1/9 – District I – Patricia Cole

### Bloomington Female Elected Officials – 1983 to 2003



There has been a noticeable decline in both the percentage of women running for city elected positions, as well as the percentage winning, since the 1991 elections. This trend must be turned around if women are to achieve parity in representation and, consequently impact policies at the city level.

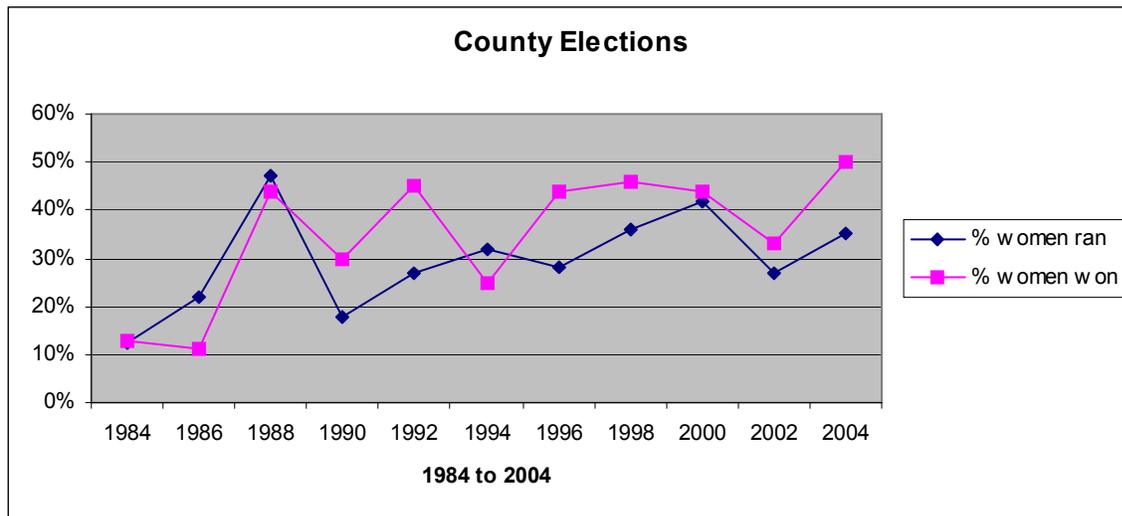
### Monroe County Female Elected Officials – 2002

- Board of Commissioners – 2/3 – Joyce Poling, District 2; Iris Kiesling, District 3
- County Council – 2/7 – Susan L. West, District 1; Martha Hawk, District 3
- Assessor – Judith Ann Sharp
- Auditor – Barbara Clark
- Judge, Div 4 – Elizabeth Mann
- Judge, Div 7 – Viola J. Taliaferro
- Recorder – Pat Haley
- Treasurer – Patricia Jeffries

### Monroe County Female Elected Officials – 2004

- Board of Commissioners – 2/3 – Joyce Poling, District 2; Iris Kiesling, District 3
- County Council – 3/7 – Susan L. West, District 1; Martha Hawk, District 3; Sophia Travis, At Large
- Auditor – Sandy Neumann
- Judge, Div 4 – Mary Ellen Diekhoff
- Recorder – Pat Haley
- Treasurer – Barbara Clark

### Monroe County Female Elected Officials – 1984 to 2004



A sharper decrease in women running and winning occurred in approximately 1990, but since that time, with the exception of 2002, it appears the percentage of women running and winning at

the county level has almost steadily increased, with a current percentage of 50% in the recent 2004 elections.

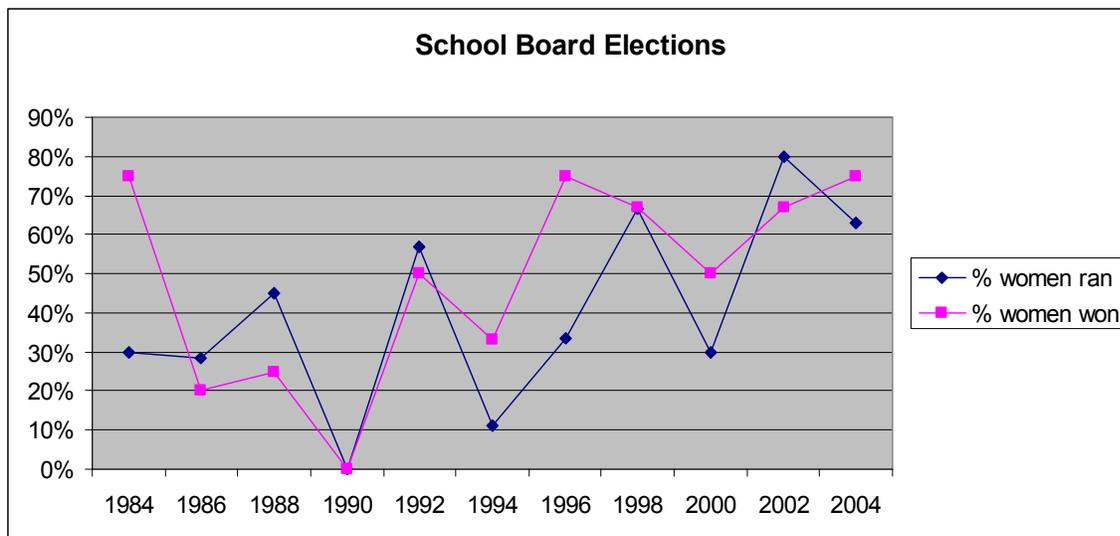
### **Monroe County School Board Female Representatives – 2002**

- District 3 – Janice Nelson
- District 7 – Cheryl Brown

### **Monroe County School Board Female Representatives – 2004**

- District 2 – Sue Wanzer
- District 5 – Teresa Grossi
- District 6 – Lois Sabo-Skelton

### **Monroe County Female School Board Representatives – 1984 to 2004**



The percentage of women running and winning elections at the School Board level seems to fluctuate much more than the other levels of office, but the overall trend since the low point of 0% in 1990, seems to be a sporadic increase, with the 2004 percentage of 75%.

**Source: Missing: Information About Women's Lives.** A report from the National Council for Research on Women.

**1961:** President John F. Kennedy establishes the Commission on the Status of Women to recommend ways to overcome barriers to women's full participation as citizens. Individuals who work on the Commission draw on data developed by the Labor Department to establish academic and public policy research centers and found national organizations such as WEAL and NOW to advance the Commission's recommendations.

**1974:** President Gerald Ford launches an initiative that invigorates efforts to root out remaining discriminatory barriers. The National Commission on the Observation of International Women's Year sets out "to promote equality between men and women." The research and surveys presented by the commission lead to an ambitious Plan of Action developed by the First National Women's Conference in Houston in November 1977.

**1995:** The United States joins 188 other governments in Beijing to adopt a Platform for Action on women's rights and public policy in 12 critical areas of concern at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. President Bill Clinton appoints a high-level President's Interagency Council on Women to implement those strategies in the United States. As part of its work, the Council produces **America's Commitment: Women 2000** which describes programs for women throughout the government, with contacts and names for easy access.

**2001:** The President's Interagency Council on Women is disbanded, as is the White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach.

## Appointed Officials

Per the Appointed Policy Makers in State Government: Five-Year Trend Analysis, "Women's progress as holders of appointed executive branch policy leadership positions has not been steady in recent years. Between 1999 and 2003, women's share of top-ranking gubernatorial appointments increased and then declined, but remained above the 1999 level. More specifically, women appointed policy leaders 2003 in Indiana was 32.7%. Women comprise 51.0% of the population in Indiana. Indiana ranked 29<sup>th</sup> in 1999, 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2001 and 26<sup>th</sup> in 2003."

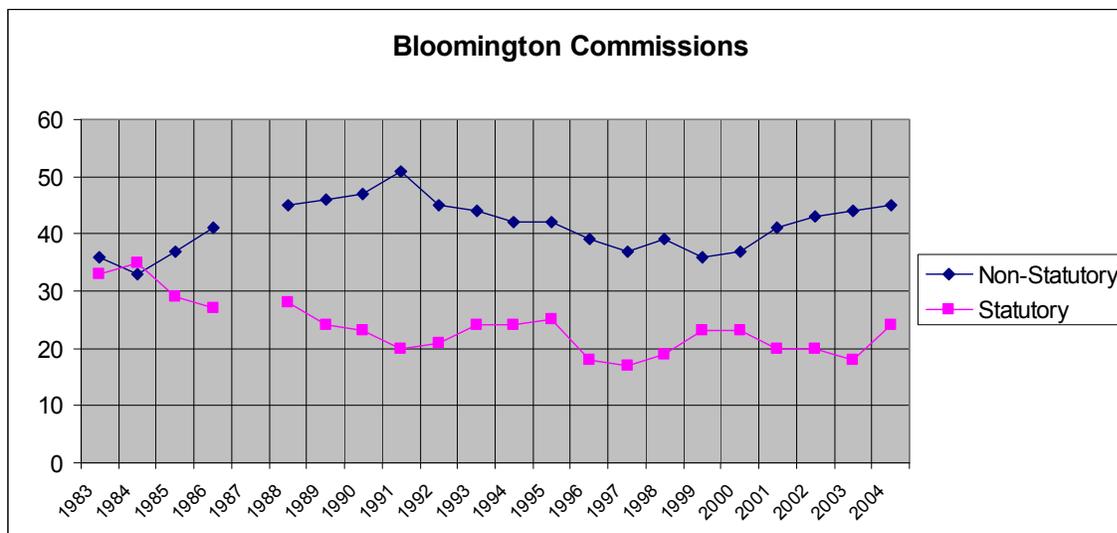
Appointed positions at the city and county level were not tracked for this version of the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women Data Report, but plans are to incorporate this in the next update.

## City of Bloomington Commissions – 2004

It is important to notice the disparity in female-to-male representation between statutory and non-statutory commissions, i.e. women are represented in greater numbers on the non-statutory commissions. Information regarding gender of the applicants for either type of board is not available. However, plans are to begin tracking this information for future updates to this report.

*Note: The numbers that follow the title of each commission represent: #of women/# of commissioners. Commissions are either Non-Statutory or Statutory (Statutory commissions are created, and actions regulated, by Indiana law.) Bold text denotes statutory commissions.*

- Animal Control Commission – 4/5
- Arts Commission – 4/9
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Commission – 2/6
- Commission on the Status of Black Males – 1/6
- Community and Family Resources Commission – 3/9
- **Economic Development Commission – 1/5**
- Environmental Commission – 5/8
- Historic Preservation Commission – 6/11
- **Housing Authority – 1/7**
- Housing Quality Appeals – 3/7
- Human Rights Commission – 5/7
- **Industrial Development Advisory Commission –4/9**
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Commission – 5/6
- **Park Commission – 1/4**
- **Plan Commission – 2/10**
- **Public Safety Board –2/5**
- **Public Transportation Corp. Board – 1/5**
- **Public Works Board – 2/3**
- **Redevelopment Commission – 0/3**
- Telecommunications Council – 0/5
- Traffic Commission – 1/9
- Tree Commission – 4/7
- **Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association – 2/11**
- **Utilities Service Board – 1/9**
- Commission on Status of Women – 7/7
- **Zoning Appeals Board – 1/5**



## INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Women's institutional resources can play an important role in providing information about women's issues and attracting the attention of policymakers and the public to women's political concerns. They can also serve as an access point for women and women's groups to express their interests to public officials. Thus such institutions can ensure that women's issues remain on the political agenda.

### *City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women*

One such institutional resource, at the city level, is the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women. The ordinance to create the Commission on the Status of Women was introduced by Charlotte Zietlow, City Council President, in December 1973. Mayor Frank McCloskey vetoed the ordinance on the grounds that it was redundant to the Human Rights Commission, but his veto was overruled and the ordinance was passed in February 1974. (Note the importance of having female elected representation in establishing this important institutional resource!) The first meeting was held on June 25, 1974, with twelve commissioners in attendance.

The City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of Women is a group of citizens appointed by the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Bloomington, chosen to represent the diversity of women's interests in the community. The Commission's responsibilities include

exploring issues relevant to women and informing the community of these issues through news media, forums, workshops and educational materials. The Commission is dedicated to addressing the concerns, interests and needs of women in our community. The Commission explores women's issues, celebrates their accomplishments and works to promote solutions to the problems and challenges faced by women. The Commission's purpose is to assure that women and men have equal opportunity to function fully and optimally as citizens of Bloomington, as equal participants in the economy, in politics and government, in education, in social development, in the system of justice, and in all other facets of life. To these ends the Commission identifies needs, resources, and gaps in resources for women; monitors federal, state, and local policies and their impact on women; stimulates and encourages legislation, issues publications, and does all it can to help improve opportunities for women in the community.

The goals of the Commission include:

- To identify the needs of, resources for, and services available for women in Bloomington;
- To monitor federal, state and local policies for their impact on Bloomington women and to make recommendations to the Community and Family Resources Department for appropriate actions to assure women's equity;
- To stimulate and encourage legislation for the development of social services of benefit to women in Bloomington and the State of Indiana;
- To issue publications, materials, research findings and legislative information to educate the community about the goals of the Commission;
- To assure a coordinated City-wide effort to improve opportunities for Bloomington women;
- To maintain close liaison with other women's commissions and advocacy groups throughout the state, and with other local, state or federal programs that relate to the needs, problems and opportunities of women;
- To maintain close liaison with federal efforts in programs affecting women to ensure appropriate City participation, and to consolidate efforts at the local level.

Current Commissioners include:

- Jillian Kinzie, Chair
- Dorothy Saltzman
- Toby Strout
- Hannia Burke-Aguero
- Melanie Castillo-Cullather
- Cathi Crabtree
- Deborah O'Brien

Staff: Craig Brenner, Liaison, and Lee Bowlen, City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department

**References:**

1. **Status of Women in Indiana: Politics, Economics, Health, Demographics.** Institute for Women's Policy Research. Indiana Commission on the Status of Women. (Note: Format and content of this report, in addition to some verbiage, draws heavily from the Indiana Commission on the Status of Women report.)
2. **Appointed Policy Makers in State Government: Five-Year Trend Analysis: Gender, Race and Ethnicity** (From A Report of the Center for Women in Government & Civil Society, University at Albany, State University of New York, Winter 2004)
3. **Missing: Information About Women's Lives.** A report from the National Council for Research on Women, March 2004.
4. **Brown Policy Report: Why Don't Women Run for Office?** Jennifer L. Lawless, Brown University and Richard L. Fox, Union College, January 2004.
5. **Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World,** Marie C. Wilson, 2004 Viking Penguin.