

# Roberta MacAdams



1881-1959

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*A beacon of change for women in Canadian society, Roberta MacAdams embodied strength, independence and accomplishment.*

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**B**orn in Sarnia, Ontario, in 1881, Roberta MacAdams was the youngest of six children. Following her graduation from Macdonald Institute in Guelph in 1911, she accepted a domestic sciences teaching position with the Alberta government's Department of Agriculture and relocated to Edmonton.

When the First World War broke out, MacAdams knew she could contribute a variety of skills to the cause, and in 1916 she enlisted in the Canadian Army Medical Corps stationed at Orpington, England, to serve as a dietitian.

Following the introduction of the *Alberta Military Representation Act*, MacAdams decided to run in the 1917 general provincial election against 20 men to be one of two Soldiers' Overseas Representatives in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Upon her election to the Assembly she became one of the two first women elected to a legislature in the British Empire, a title she shared with Louise McKinney.

During her short service she became the first woman to introduce a piece of legislation within the British Empire. The bill she introduced was a measure to incorporate the War Veterans' Next-of-Kin Association. MacAdams served until 1921, when she returned to devoting her life to education.

Roberta MacAdams passed away in Calgary, Alberta, in 1959.

*An oil painting honouring Roberta MacAdams and her many accomplishments was painted by Mrs. Thelma Manarey of Edmonton. The Legislative Assembly of Alberta was presented with the painting in 1967. This painting hangs on the fifth floor of the Legislature Building.*