THE HISTORY, ART, AND FUTURE OF WYOMING AS THE EQUALITY STATE

From December 10th, 2019 through September 6th, 2020, Wyoming is celebrating its unique status in the country as the first territory, then state, to recognize women’s right to vote and hold office. To bring awareness, celebrate, and reflect on Wyoming’s role as The Equality State, the University of Wyoming brings three members of its faculty to share their research and perspectives on women and their relationship to civic equality in the state. The topics for this Saturday University take us on a journey from the earliest years of the Territory to the present day, addressing issues of equality and equity that have an impact not only for women, but all Wyoming residents.

Moderator: Kent Drummond, Director of Saturday University

9:00 AM • Wyoming and the Frontiers of Suffrage
Renée Laegreid, Ph.D. — Professor of History, UW

Dr. Laegreid with begin her presentation with a clip from the new documentary, “The Equality State: Wyoming Women Get the Vote,” then addresses the question of why women gained suffrage in a new territory in the West instead of a seemingly more civilized and progressive state in the East. Her talk will include three historical frontiers—ideological, religious, and economic—that helped set the stage for Wyoming’s Territorial government to make history by being the first in the country to recognize women’s right to civic equality.

9:45 AM • The Visual Propaganda of Wyoming Women’s Suffrage and Beyond: What is the Visual Legacy of Women’s Suffrage Pioneers in Wyoming, New Zealand and Australia?
Colleen Denney, Ph.D. — Professor of Art History/Gender and Women’s Studies, UW

During her talk Dr. Denney will take you on her own journey of monuments to women’s suffrage around the world and will share with you some of the community service learning programs she has accomplished with students on women’s activism, women’s rights and advances.

10:30 AM • Past as Prologue? Assessing the Legacy of the Equality State in 21st Century Wyoming
Cathy Connolly, Ph.D. — Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies, UW

Dr. Connolly will discuss the legacy of sufrage in Wyoming in the context of the status of Wyoming’s women today. While Wyoming can boast of high female labor force participation and low poverty rates in comparison with other states, the state also has one of the worst wage gaps and among the lowest rates of elected female legislators in the nation. Are we still truly the Equality State? Connolly will examine the data and contemplate solutions and encourage audience engagement by considering questions such as “Where do we find inspiration for change?” “What’s on the horizon and how do we get there?” creating an opportunity to not only learn the facts but become part of the solution.