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City of Long Beach, City Auditor



Laura L. Doud
City Auditor

Celebrating 100 Years of Women Serving Long Beach

Did you know this year is the 100th anniversary of the first woman elected in the City of Long Beach? Myrtelle Gunsul was elected City Auditor in 1919. She was re-elected ten (yes, that's right, ten!) times and retired in 1951 after serving 32 years. During her tenure significant historical developments included: the ratification of the 19th amendment; the discovery of oil in Signal Hill; the Great Depression; World War II; the 1933 Long Beach earthquake; and the foundation of Cal State Long Beach. She holds the distinction of being the longest serving elected official in Long Beach.

City Auditor Gunsul's commitment to public service and women in leadership is a great inspiration to me. A true trailblazer, City Auditor Gunsul called for greater inclusion in governance. She wrote a powerful letter in 1931 to "Women of the Future" stating, "I hope that the position of women in National and City Administration of the future shall be more clearly recognized as a great constructive force for the betterment of all." At a time when there were conventional gender roles, she had incredible foresight in promoting the role of women leaders.

Further, she encouraged women to "enter public service and instill high ideals and motives into both political and business life." She stayed true to this herself as her motto was "Efficiency, not politics." She faced similar issues back then to what we face today. Through it all, she remained firm in her core values - leadership, independence and integrity - which we still hold.

This centennial occasion in honoring City Auditor Gunsul serves as a great reminder of the important role of women leaders in public service. She would be pleased to know that many women are indeed serving our City and are well supported by our male counterparts. For the first time in the City's history, a majority of commission seats are held by women. And recently, Councilwoman Price and her colleagues supported The Centennial Circle of Women to recognize the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment by reflecting on how women have had a positive influence on causes, policies and progress. Projects like this will inspire both young women and men in our community to become leaders.

This important milestone serves as a resounding testament to the invaluable contributions of women who have and will continue to make Long Beach better. As City Auditor Gunsul stated, "I have blazed this trail and have endeavored to leave a record that shall be an incentive to other women." Let's continue to celebrate and carry that legacy forward.

You can find out more on City Auditor Gunsul at CityAuditorLauraDoud.com.