

# Stovall takes poll to test support for her candidacy as governor

TOPEKA (AP)—Attorney General Carla Stovall, considering a bid for the Republican nomination for governor, says she's taken a poll gauging her support.

The poll of likely GOP voters was done in late September by Neil Newhouse, the pollers used by two other Kansas Republicans, Gov. Bill Graves and Sen. Pat Roberts.

While declining to discuss the results, Stovall indicated they were encouraging.

"I'm still interested in the governor's race, so I guess you could put two and

two together," she told The Topeka Capital-Journal.

The newspaper said sources who have seen the poll said it showed Stovall leading the pack of declared and potential Republican candidates.

So far, House Speaker Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan, state Treasurer Tim Shallenburger and Shawnee County Treasurer Rita Cline have announced their candidacies for the GOP nomination.

Considering entering the race, besides Stovall, are Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, Senate President Dave Kerr of

Hutchinson and former state GOP Chairman David Miller.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington brought about some major changes in the jockeying and potential Republican candidates.

Graves is completing his second term and can't run again, and Rep. Jerry Moran was considering giving up his seat in the U.S. House to enter the race.

But Morgan said the terrorist attacks changed his mind, and that he would seek re-election to his seat in the 1st

District. Stovall, meanwhile, announced a year ago that she planned to leave politics when she completes her second term as attorney general and enter private practice, possible in New York. Then she, too, had a change of heart following the attacks and said she was considering a bid for the governor's office, something she said she would not have done had Moran sought the nomination.

Stovall said she probably wouldn't make an announcement about the governor's race until after Oct. 30,

when she is scheduled to defend the state's sexual predator law before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The law being challenged allows the state to keep criminals convicted of sex crimes locked up indefinitely beyond their prison terms while they receive psychiatric treatment.

Sherrer, who after Moran's announcement said he planned to make a decision within a few weeks, said Wednesday that he no longer has a timetable.

"Making a final decision about running is not a microwave decision it is a

slow-cooker," Sherrer said. "I am voting with a lot of people."

Sherrer said it is still possible that Stovall would sign on to run as his lieutenant governor running mate. He said there also is talk of Glasscock running with Stovall.

"I think people are painting all kinds of scenarios," he said.

Scott Holeman, a spokesman for the Glasscock campaign, denied that Glasscock is thinking about running for lieutenant governor.

"Kent is gaining momentum and support every day," Holeman said.

# Kansas progressive when it came to women's suffrage

By JOHN HANNA  
Associated Press Writer  
TOPEKA (AP) — When she suggested women's suffrage was a sign that American society didn't value families enough, state Sen. Kay O'Connor may have inherited part of the political legacy of fellow Republican Joseph Hooker Mercer.

Mercer, from Cottonwood Falls, didn't think highly of women's suffrage. He suggested that it represented a burden for women and that, "It would be the means of disturbing the homes of our state, which is the foundation of our free government."

The problem for O'Connor, the 59-year-old Olathe legislator who received national news with her remarks, is that Mercer made his comments 90 years before she did.

It was February 1911, and Mercer had just cast his vote against a proposed amendment to the Kansas Constitution to give women full voting rights.

Mercer was on the losing side. Not only did both houses of the Legislature adopt the proposed amendment within a day of each other, but voters ratified it in 1912 — eight years before universal women's suffrage was added to the U.S. Constitution.

Kansas has a fairly progressive history when it comes to women's suffrage and the involvement of women in politics.

"The battle for women's suffrage was a long and hard-fought one," said Virgil Dean, a research historian for the Kansas State Historical Society. "Kansas became, early on, a place where that battle occurred."

O'Connor said she isn't against women voting, encourages them to do so and wouldn't take the right away from them.

**II The battle for women's suffrage was a long and hard-fought one . . . Kansas became, early on, a place where that battle occurred."**

Virgil Dean, research historian

But she argued that in an ideal America, one in which men are taking care of their women properly, women wouldn't feel the need to vote.

The 1920 enactment of the 19th Amendment, which gave women universal suffrage nationwide, is a sign that men weren't doing their jobs at the time, O'Connor said. Men should be the head of their families, women their hearts, she said.

Her comments led one angry constituent to start a recall attempt, and Attorney General Carla Stovall suggested O'Connor should resign. Even Jay Leno felt compelled to comment in a "Tonight Show" monologue.

Perhaps it's because the debate over women's suffrage seemed settled for so long. And it was settled in Kansas before it was settled in most other states.

"The land that was broken in this state was broken by women and men together," said Senate Majority Leader Lana Oleen, R-Manhattan.

In 1869, the Wyoming territory granted women the right to vote in all elections, making it the first. But Kansas law had allowed women to vote in board of education races since statehood in 1861.

By the time Colorado granted full suffrage to its female citizens in 1893,

women had been serving in local offices throughout Kansas.

An 1887 law allowed women to vote in municipal elections and hold city offices, and less than two months after its enactment, Susanna Madora Salter, of Argonia, became the first woman elected mayor in the United States. The following year, Oskaloosa had an all-female city council.

There were setbacks, of course. In 1867, a proposed amendment to the Kansas Constitution to allow full women's suffrage failed by a wide margin, despite visits from nationally known advocates like Susan B. Anthony.

And in 1911, plenty of people still agreed with Mercer.

Some opponents claimed that women weren't interested in voting. Rep. Clement Wilson, a Republican from Tribune, said no woman had asked him to vote for full suffrage.

"I take it from this, that the women of my district are satisfied with present conditions and care not for political equality by ballot," he said, also suggesting that women generally believed "the protection of morals of a community rightfully rests upon the stronger

sex."

Some who voted for the proposed amendment said Kansans should have the right to decide. Others argued it was fair. One, Rep. W.T. Watson, an Iola Republican, said he voted yes "in deference to the wishes of the best woman in Kansas" — his wife.

Kansas became the seventh state to enact full suffrage for women, behind Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington and California.

In 1978, Nancy Kassebaum, a Republican, won a seat in the U.S. Senate, becoming only the third woman elected to that body.

Kansas became the ninth state to have a woman governor in 1990, when Democrat Joan Finney was elected.

This year, 13 of the Kansas Senate's 40 members are women, and 10 are Republicans. In the House, women hold 40 of 125 seats, and they include 23 Republicans.

They all became legislators decades after the question of whether women should be given the vote was settled. It didn't take long for opposition to vanish from Kansas politics.

In 1919, Gov. Henry J. Allen called a special session so that the state could ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as quickly as possible. The votes in both houses were unanimous, and Allen took pride in the fact that its enactment a year later would not give Kansas women something they didn't already have.

"It is a fitting episode in the closing chapter of a long struggle — a struggle in which Kansas has held leadership from the beginning," Allen said in a message to legislators.

# Hearing opens; request denied by judge for victim evaluation

TOPEKA (AP) — A judge has denied a defense request for a psychiatric evaluation of a woman who says she was gang-raped last year.

Before making the ruling Wednesday, Shawnee County District Judge Matthew Dowd re-opened his courtroom to the public, after having closed it for more than two hours the day before.

The judge had acted at the request of defense attorneys and a prosecutor, who cited the sensitivity of information to be discussed.

A reporter for The Topeka Capital-Journal was ordered to leave the hearing, and three witnesses testified while the session was closed.

When the hearing resumed Wednesday, Dowd, who had read records linked to the victim, said there was nothing in the testimony he heard Tuesday or that he expected to hear Wednesday that would warrant closing the court-

room. The judge said he was very uncomfortable with closing the courtroom on Tuesday, adding, "I don't think it was necessary."

A protective order barring dissemination of the victim's records with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services doesn't extend to testimony in court, Dowd said.

Seven or eight people, including several trial attorneys and a Capital-Journal reporter, watched Wednesday's proceedings.

Three Topeka men, Shawn David Root, 30, Matthew Thomas, 28, and Robert Nickelson, 35, are charged with multiple sexual assaults of the 24-year-old woman.

The victim, who had been expected to testify, wasn't called to the stand because defense attorneys thought Dowd already had heard enough evidence to find she needed an evaluation.

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