



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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## **Justice Clement Leads Supreme Court Celebration of Women's Suffrage Milestone**

LANSING, MI, June 14, 2019 – Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth T. Clement today led a celebration to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. Justice Clement was joined by Judy Karandjeff, president, League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVM), as well as LWVM members and Supreme Court staff with their daughters, mothers, sisters, and other guests who assembled around a resplendent 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Victory Flag in the main floor rotunda of the Michigan Hall of Justice.

“Today we gather to mark a milestone that changed history for women across our great nation. This amendment not only opened doors for women at the polls, but it also opened up opportunities for women to officially hold leadership positions that were previously unavailable to them,” said Justice Clement, who is the 11<sup>th</sup> woman to serve on the MSC and one of three women currently on the bench.

Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack and Justice Megan K. Cavanagh are the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> women to serve on the MSC, respectively, and this year Chief Justice McCormack became the 6<sup>th</sup> woman Chief Justice. The first woman to serve on the Michigan Supreme Court was Mary S. Coleman in 1973, who also became the first woman Chief Justice six years later. The MSC Learning Center in the Hall of Justice includes an interactive exhibit about the “First Women on the Court”—featuring Justice Coleman, Justice Dorothy Comstock Riley, and Justice Patricia Boyle.

Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin were the first three states to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment on June 10, 1919. The amendment was first introduced in Congress in 1878 and began a decades-long journey of suffragists writing, lecturing, marching, lobbying, and practicing civil disobedience. A major shift in momentum for the amendment took place when President Woodrow Wilson changed his position to support it in 1918.

A boon for women's suffrage organizers was their media savvy in embracing the power of using visuals, especially color, to effectively convey their message and create an impression of harmony and order. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Victory Flag was designed by the National Women's Party. The flag's colors – purple, white and yellow – stood for loyalty, purity and hope, respectively. The flag is decorated with 36 stars, which represents the number of states required to approve the amendment.

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