

Alice Jamieson

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Alice Jamieson was an American-born Calgary feminist and magistrate born on July 14th, 1860. She was originally from New York, but moved to Calgary in 1903. Her women's rights work came after her husband's death in 1911. She was an important part of our country's past, and still has an impact today because of many brave steps she took during her life.

One of Alice's civil rights actions includes her being one of the founding members of Calgary's YWCA, an organization that aided all types of women in an assortment of ways. The early YWCA created the YWCA Traveler's Aid, and gave English instruction to foreigners. They also petitioned legislature to give working women a minimum wage of 12 dollars an hour. Alice was a driving force behind the YWCA, and she helped with the many campaigns and services the organization offered.

But Alice did not stop there. Later on she managed to become the first president of the Calgary Local Council of Women. This proved she had immense leadership skills. She rallied with other members of the council to support women's rights, such as legal aid for women, and the inclusion of women on other local and governmental boards and councils. The CLCW was important for promoting women's rights, and Alice was extremely influential in the council. However, Alice's civil rights journey does not end there.

In 1916, Alice was appointed a judge in a juvenile court, making her the first woman in the British Empire to do so. She proved that women were just as capable as men to make important decisions. Later in 1916, shortly after the appointment of Emily Murphy, Alice was also appointed magistrate of the women's court. But in 1917, a lawyer appealed her ruling in a case because she was a woman. He claimed she was "legally incompetent and incapable" of directing the case because women were not considered 'persons' under the Canadian law. However, the Supreme Court of Alberta favoured Alice in the case and allowed her to continue serving in the court as a judge. Alice continued to serve as a judge for many more years until it became best for her to retire due to health complications. She died at the age of 88 in 1949. During her life, she inspired many women to stand up for their rights, and she proved that women were capable of anything men could do.

Her actions helped shape not only Alberta, but Canada's future as she was a groundbreaker for women's rights. She showed that women could be strong, make important decisions such as court rulings, and consequently shaped Canada into a more equal place for all citizens. As a result of her remarkable activist work during her life, there is a school named after her right here in Calgary, the Alice Jamieson Girl's Academy. She helped support her community by lifting other women up and showing them they are powerful and shouldn't be held back by people who believed they were lesser than.

Her strong feminism and leadership would have been helpful today, as we are dealing with the sexist views of the newly elected U.S. President, Donald Trump, which could be considered a modern-day version of the political issues Alice would have faced back in 1916. I imagine she would have played a huge role in the women's march and other protests for equal rights for all. She would be proud to see how far we've come, even if we still have quite a long ways to go in terms of equality. She would help lift up all women and prove that we are strong. She would be proud to see that not only women are fighting and protesting for equal rights, but men also. She was a huge reason all of Canada was able to become as equal as it is today, and even if we still have some work to do, we have come quite a long way and I think Alice would be proud of that.

Alice has inspired me in terms of her leadership skills, and her immense passion for women's rights. She has proven that to truly transform the world into one that you want to live in, you cannot just stand on the sidelines and hope others will put the hard work in for you. To create progress in the world, you have to stand center stage and fight for what you believe in. And although it may feel like being the only person fighting is rather pointless, that one person alone cannot change the world, Alice has proven that even one lone person can drastically change how the society views certain issues. Alice is a role model to me because she wasn't afraid to stand up for what she believed in, and pushed for what is right despite the adversity she faced on her journey. I hope to someday have the same revolutionary impact on the world by inspiring others to push for equality for all, not just women.

In conclusion, Alice Jamieson impacted not just Calgary, but our whole country by being a true leader and inspiration to women all over Canada. She changed how women were perceived in areas such as the courthouse, and she inspired others to push for the same ideals she had for the world. If it weren't for Alice Jamieson, we may have still been many steps behind reaching equality today.

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