

With All Your Might, Mind and Spirit...



Hannah Rolinson Gale, a very intrepid and gallant woman has proudly marked her situate in Calgary's past. Seeking change in humanity with authenticity and willpower was an aspiration, a hope that never forsook her. Triumphs along her pathway only amplified the esteemed respect that so many have for her in the present day. With a psyche so ingenious, she gave new hope to women, an innovative starting line that they could stand at and know with conviction that they could and would cross the finish. Support and confidence in Hannah Gale was never scarce. Seen as a leader, she took her stand and defined herself audaciously, as would the full moon on an empty night. One victory awed hundreds of people with only the future knowing that other triumphs were to come; knowing that Hannah Rolinson Gale would be remembered as a hero and as an Albertan champion.

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Hannah Rolinson Gale was born on the twenty ninth of December, in 1876, to a merchant grocer and his wife. Soon nicknamed Annie, she thrived in her school work, possessing an exceptionally keen mind. Intellect was one of her many gifts, making it feasible for her to be one of the first woman to pass the Oxford Entrance Examination. As expected, however, she was not permitted to attend because she was female. 1901 introduced Annie to a young man, William Gale, who soon asked her to marry him. Shortly thereafter, the couple decided to join family members who had previously emigrated to Canada. They arrived in Calgary, Alberta, with their two sons in 1912. Only five years later, Annie became the first alderman in the British Empire after winning a seat in the Calgary Civic Election. The possibilities of her winning a seat in the election was almost slimmed down to unattainable but her fortitude and stamina proved differently. *The Canadian Magazine* wrote an article about Annie that said the following, "She is exactly the type of woman who should be in public life--a feminine, gracious, magnetic personality without aggression or bombast; a woman with a charming platform manner which does not

come off the instant she reaches the bottom step and stands on the floor of the hall; the type of woman of whom the West is justly proud."

Annie ran for alderman four years in a row, but did not win a seat in the fourth year. In spite of her disappointment, she dedicated her life to taking an active role within her community. She personally noticed that there was deprived quality and lofty expenditure of fresh vegetables. Also, affordable heat and free hospitals were not available. She was appalled by this and worked on lowering the costs of food, encouraging personal gardens, convalescing city police cells and establishing municipally owned hospitals. She made sure that women were able to have adequate medical care when she learned that livestock received more medical attention than women.

Annie also organized Canada's first Women's Ratepayers' Association. She accepted the group's invitation to run in the 1917 city council election in Calgary, after women gained the right to vote in 1916. She had a seat with her name on it, even when there were no other women in government across Canada. She once said, "I have always believed that the mission of women in political life was to clean up politics." And she did just as she said.

After moving to Vancouver, she met the famous Nellie McClung. Nellie was deeply impressed by the accomplishments of Annie and paid her tribute, acknowledging her many contributions to the community. "Women haven't an easy time in public life and Mrs. Gale has played her part courageously and intelligently. Mrs. Gale could always be depended upon to take a sane, forward, dependable view. Her tact and charming personality have carried her through many difficulties. Women haven't an easy time in public life but they count the cost before they enter. Mrs. Gale has always upheld the standards of womanhood and we cherish the hope that she will come back to us again." Annie passed away on August 7th, 1970, but died leaving the amorous, altruistic, benevolent and honest part of her with us.

But countless women speculate, what would the life of Canadian women be like if Hannah Gale hadn't pioneered the cause for women's rights and freedoms? Another woman could have done what

she did and the result would remain the equivalent. But what if no one else had had the mind or heart to stand up and be the voice to give women the rights they deserved and still do deserve? Women would not be 'persons'. Women would not be accepted. Women would not be a significant part of life. Women may be restricted, held down from making change. But still, women could simply let the regulations be what they are. Women could deal with not being a person, and being no one. Judgements with unjust headings would continue to rain down on them and still they could do nothing. But women are what they are today because of Hannah Rolinson Gale and others such as the Famous Five. Because of women who weren't afraid to stand up for themselves. Women today wouldn't be able to thank Annie Gale enough for what she did. A feeling of self worth now actually exists within the present day women. Because of the rights that are given to women today, they influence others to make change and have a significant impact on the world. Many women and girls organize associations that support a needy cause, such as Hannah Taylor, a young girl who raised awareness for the homeless in Canada.

Hannah Rolinson Gale made history fighting for the rights of women. She spent her entire life searching for a solution that would give opportunities to women in the future. Today, we have the responsibility of cherishing her life and her role. Out of respect and honour, the duty of women today is to always remember Annie Gale and make sure that what she changed stays alive forever and thrives on the good works of women through out the world. Her influence taught me to value my rights and freedoms and to not take them for granted. There are so many countries that do not give rights to women. In places such as Afghanistan, women are not even endorsed to go outside without a man and clothes covering their entire person. The outdoors is always inviting me to come out and almost every day I do without anyone telling me I can't. So many women would give anything to have what I and all Canadian women have. More women are not permitted to vote and choose their leaders than women who are permitted to. Canadian women are some of those few fortunate ones who are able to. Annie

Gale helped make all of this possible. Present day women in Canada can follow in her footsteps and help give women in other countries the rights they deserve. Annie Gale had her own saying that she based much of her life around. Now we can live ours around this one, "Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around." Battle for you beliefs and you will become an Albertan Champion. Make Canada proud to know your name.