

Maurine Neuberger Biography

By Unknown

1906-2000Maurine Neuberger, Oregon's first female United States Senator, served from 1961 to 1966. Born Maurine Brown in Cloverdale, Tillamook County, she spent most of her formative years on pastoral farms in the Willamette Valley, which she claimed helped her understand the once predominately rural state. Neuberger earned a teaching certificate at the Oregon Normal School in Monmouth in 1925 and graduated from the University of Oregon in 1929. She taught in Newberg and then Milton-Freewater. In 1932, she moved to Portland where she taught Physical Education and English at Lincoln High School. In December 1945 she married Richard Neuberger, a renowned reporter and state legislator, who inspired her entrance into politics.

In 1950, Maurine Neuberger was elected state congresswoman as a Democrat and she and her husband became the first married couple in U.S. history to serve in the same legislature. Using an apron, mixing bowl, and spoon Neuberger demonstrated on the House floor how difficult it was to whip yellow food coloring into white margarine. Her well-publicized demonstration ended a ban on yellow margarine by bringing attention to the state's powerful dairy industry.

In 1954, Richard Neuberger was elected to the U.S. Senate. Unfortunately, he died on March 10, 1960, before his term expired. Maurine Neuberger ran for his seat that November and defeated her Republican opponent Elmo Smith. In the Senate, Neuberger said she had to prove herself before she was respected. Serving alongside and sometimes against Wayne Morse she accomplished much and focused her efforts on protecting the rights of consumers. She endorsed a smoking bill and wrote the first federal cigarette warning label. A feminist, Neuberger was the first Senator to support legalized abortion.

Because of limited campaign finances, Neuberger did not seek re-election, and in 1967 Mark O. Hatfield took her seat. She married Boston psychiatrist Phillip Solomon in 1964 and taught American politics at Radcliffe and Boston University. She divorced Solomon in 1967 and returned to Portland in 1969. She later taught at Reed College and served on the consumer advisory panel for Presidents Johnson and Carter.

Revered by Oregon's politicians, Neuberger died in Portland at the age of 94 on February 22, 2000.

Oregon History Project

<https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/biographies/maurine-neuberger-biography/>