

## Women of Postal Headquarters

The first female clerks at postal headquarters were appointed in the 1860s. In the 1960s, the Post Office Department focused efforts on encouraging women to apply for higher level positions nationwide. In 2015, the first woman, Megan J. Brennan, was appointed Postmaster General.

### Dead Letter Ladies, 1862

During the Civil War, the number of undeliverable letters, called "dead letters," nearly doubled.<sup>1</sup> The Dead Letter Office at postal headquarters was swamped trying to return undeliverable letters to their senders. At the start of the war, only nine clerks worked in the office — Postmaster General Montgomery Blair asked Congress to authorize more. To "promote the efficiency of the Dead Letter Office," Congress granted the Postmaster General's request to hire 25 more clerks in January 1862.<sup>2</sup> Later that year, Blair appointed at least ten women as clerks in the Dead Letter Office.

Blair may have been inspired by U.S. Treasurer Francis Spinner, who employed women as currency trimmers in the Treasury Department earlier in 1862. Reportedly, Spinner hired women because he thought that they could work "better than men for half the money, and that men 'ought to be handling muskets instead of shears.'"<sup>3</sup>

Like most 19<sup>th</sup> century appointees, the first women clerks in the Post Office Department received their appointments through political connections. Adeline K. Evans, a widow, reportedly got the job because her son worked for Representative Carey Trimble of Ohio. As recounted in *The Washington Post*, one day her son was asked if his mother would like a position in Washington, and:

*Being told that she was dependent upon her own work for support, Congressman Trimble wrote Mrs. Evans and told her that Postmaster General Blair was about to put a number of women in the dead-letter office and offered her a place.<sup>4</sup>*

Evans served faithfully in the Dead Letter Office for over 30 years. Some of her colleagues served for only a short time, like 22-year old southern belle Otelia Jordan, who worked in the Dead Letter Office for two years before marrying a Mexican diplomat, moving to Mexico, and joining the court of the ill-fated Empress Carlotta. Another of their colleagues, Vinnie Ream, clerked for about three years before, almost overnight, becoming a world-famous artist (see sidebar at right).



*Courtesy Library of Congress*

### Vinnie Ream, Sculptor and Postal Clerk, circa 1865

Vinnie Ream, the first woman to receive a federal commission for a statue, was one of the first women hired to help process undeliverable letters in the Dead Letter Office in 1862.

Originally from Wisconsin, Ream came with her family to Washington, D.C., at the beginning of the Civil War. To help support her family, she took a job as a clerk in the Dead Letter Office in 1862 at the age of 15. Shortly thereafter, she met the sculptor-in-residence at the U.S. Capitol and, inspired, picked up a piece of clay and created a medallion of an Indian chief's head. Her work was so impressive that she soon began sculpting part-time and had a stream of congressmen and generals sitting for their likenesses. Together, some of these men commissioned a bust of President Lincoln and convinced the president to sit for her. Ream's likeness of Lincoln was so realistic that in 1866 it led to a congressional commission for a life-size statue of the president, for the U.S. Capitol.

Almost overnight, Ream went from being a \$600-a-year unknown postal clerk to the recipient of a \$10,000 federal commission. At age 18, Ream was the youngest artist and the first woman ever to receive such an honor.

To transfer her clay model to marble, Ream went with her parents to Europe, where she was welcomed by the leading artists of the day, entertained by Franz Liszt, and had an audience with the Pope. Her completed Lincoln statue was unveiled to great acclaim at the U.S. Capitol in 1871 in what Ream later called "the supreme moment" of her life.

Over the next decade she completed many other notable works, including a statue of Admiral Farragut located in Farragut Square in Washington, D.C. Marriage at the age of 30 largely ended her career, as she deferred to her husband's wish that she quit work.

<sup>1</sup> The annual reports of the Postmaster General list 2,550,000 dead letters as being processed in 1861 and 4,368,087 in 1865.

<sup>2</sup> 12 Stat. 332.

<sup>3</sup> Bernice M. Deutch, "Propriety and Pay," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives*, Fall 1971, 68.

<sup>4</sup> "Many Years in Office," *The Washington Post*, July 13, 1891, 8.

Postmaster General Blair was pleased with the women's work, reportedly complimenting the women clerks for performing their duties more faithfully than the men.<sup>5</sup> Although they were paid at least 50 percent less than the men, they worked twice as hard, increasing the average number of letters processed per day per person from 125 to 250.<sup>6</sup> Because it would have been improper to mix sexes in a public office, the women were "stowed away" in separate work spaces and used a separate entrance.<sup>7</sup>

By October 1863, half the clerks in the Dead Letter Office were women — 16 out of a total of 32. Most of the women were paid \$500 per year, about \$250 less than their male counterparts. In 1865, only seven men worked in the office, versus 38 women; each of the men earned \$900 annually and each of the women earned \$600. An 1869 article in *The New York Times* cautioned the women who were "coming to be somewhat extensively employed as clerks and assistants in public offices" not to ask for equal pay, since the cheapness of their labor was the main reason they were hired. The same article expressed the opinion that "the proper condition for a woman, in all civilized countries, is undoubtedly that of dependence upon somebody else for support."<sup>8</sup>

In 1870, Congress passed a law allowing — but not requiring — equal pay for equal work.<sup>9</sup> Most women, however, continued to be paid far less than men. In 1876, Congress tacitly acknowledged this when it allowed department heads to replace high-paid clerks whose work could be performed by "a clerk of a lower class or by a female clerk" with such "lower grade" clerks.<sup>10</sup>

## Branching out by the 1870s

Although in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century most women at headquarters worked in the Dead Letter Office, by 1871 a handful served in other offices. In a few cases, highly skilled women were paid as much or more than men — for example, Annie Driver, a linguist who spoke 10 languages and worked as a translator in the Office of Foreign Mails, earned \$1,200 in 1871 and \$1,600 in 1879, more than most of the male clerks.

By 1879, nearly 19 percent of headquarters employees were women, including all 55 clerks in the Dead Letter Office and 15 of 24 clerks in the Topographic Division.<sup>11</sup>

In 1887, a controversy arose over workplace etiquette. As reported in the *New York World*:

*The female clerks of the Post-office Department at Washington are all torn up over the question whether the Postmaster-General should remove his hat while in their presence in-doors. ... His gentleman friends ... invariably remove their hats in the rooms where there are ladies, but the Postmaster-General does not.*<sup>12</sup>

Contemporary etiquette manuals advised gentlemen to remove their hats when in the presence of ladies indoors. The manuals, however, did not address the proper behavior of gentlemen working with ladies in government offices.

Marshall Cushing, the private secretary of Postmaster General John Wanamaker (1889-1893), remarked on other socially awkward aspects of women in the workplace. In his book *The Story of Our Post Office*, Cushing noted that while women workers were skillful and diligent, men were often preferred as clerks "because it is not ... easy to ask a woman to work after hours, or to go to another room of an errand; nor may one smoke in the same room." In praising the women employees — including "a gentle little woman," "a tall, fine faced girl," and "a bright little brunette" — Cushing placed them on a narrow pedestal:

*The women of the Department ... are good and true ... There is one, perhaps, who meddles in the politics of her division (or of the country), or causes comment at the seashore, or walks in the corridors and talks to men;*

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> August W. Machen, Superintendent of Free Delivery, quoted in *The Postal Record*, March 1898, 1.

<sup>7</sup> "Down Among the Dead Letters," *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine*, December 1869, 517, *ProQuest American Periodicals Series* (accessed April 3, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> *The New York Times*, February 18, 1869, 4.

<sup>9</sup> 16 Stat. 250.

<sup>10</sup> 19 Stat. 169, August 15, 1876. See also Lucille Foster McMillin's *Women in the Federal Service* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941).

<sup>11</sup> 1879 *Official Register of the United States*, Volume 2, pages 3 to 9. A total of 441 employees are listed at headquarters, including 83 women. Not included in this tally are special agents, employees of the Stamped Envelope, Postal Card, and Postage Stamp Agencies, and employees of the Auditor's Office, who were not domiciled at headquarters.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in *The United States Mail*, Vol. III, No. 32, May 1887, 112.

*but it is not one in a hundred, and all the rest work very demurely, purifying the rooms they work in. ... They are the kind of women a son or brother likes to respect and love.*<sup>13</sup>

By 1897, women served in over 165 positions at headquarters, but their positions were precarious. In 1899, First Assistant Postmaster General Perry Heath ordered that if a female clerk married a male clerk in the same office, "the woman's position should go to someone who had no means of support."<sup>14</sup> Discrimination against the hiring of women was government-wide. In 1902, one government official was quoted as saying that this was "in the interest of ... women themselves," because "every time a woman is appointed to a clerkship in one of the departments she lessens the chance of marriage for herself and deprives some worthy man of the chance to take unto himself a wife and raise a family."<sup>15</sup>

On November 24, 1902, Postmaster General Henry Payne made discrimination against the employment of married women in Civil Service positions — which included clerks at Department headquarters — official postal policy. If an unmarried female clerk got married, she lost her job. Although exceptions were made in 1918 for women with husbands or sons in the military, this prohibition endured until December 1921.<sup>16</sup>

Despite discrimination, the percentage of women workers gradually increased. By 1906, nearly 26 percent of the positions at headquarters were filled by women, although the average female clerk earned 9 percent less than the average male clerk.<sup>17</sup>

Although most women remained in subordinate positions, there were exceptions. In 1901, Lillian Norton received a temporary appointment as superintendent of the system of postal finance — one of the top jobs in the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General, with a salary of \$2,250. The appointment was in "recognition of her great executive ability, she having acted as head of the division on many occasions when [the former superintendent] was out of the city."<sup>18</sup>

## Prominent Appointments in the 1920s

Manpower shortages brought on by World War I increased the number of women in the Department. By 1921, 39 percent of the clerical force at headquarters was female.<sup>19</sup>

In July 1921, Mary K. Macarty was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Foreign Mails. According to the Department she was the first woman officer "for many years."<sup>20</sup> She began her career as a clerk in 1900, at a salary of \$900 per year, and advanced through the ranks. While lauding her appointment, contemporary news articles noted that she was underpaid.<sup>21</sup> Her salary was \$2,000 per year, while the Assistant Superintendent of Post Office Service, for example, received \$3,000.

Other notable appointments in the early 1920s were those of Juliette Ford, who was appointed Chief Clerk in the Division of Money Orders at a salary of \$2,700 in 1922; and Alice Mummenhoff, who was promoted to Private Secretary to Postmaster General Harry S. New at a salary of \$2,500 in 1924. Mummenhoff's pay was increased to \$3,000 just three months after her appointment. In 1923, the average female clerk's salary was \$1,515.

### 1902–1921: Married Women Need Not Apply

2. A married woman will not be appointed to a classified position in the postal service and a classified woman employee in the postal service who shall change her name by marriage will not be reappointed.

Section 157.2, *Postal Laws and Regulations*, 1913

From November 1902 to December 1921, postal policy prohibited married women from serving in classified positions, which included all clerk positions at Post Office Department headquarters.

<sup>13</sup> Marshall Cushing, *The Story of Our Post Office, The Greatest Government Department in all its Phases* (Boston, MA: A. M. Thayer & Co., Publishers, 1893), 680-704.

<sup>14</sup> *The New York Times*, December 15, 1899, 8.

<sup>15</sup> *The New York Times* on November 9, 1902.

<sup>16</sup> *Postal Bulletin*, November 15, 1918, and December 21, 1921.

<sup>17</sup> *Annual Report of the Postmaster General*, 1906, 16-17.

<sup>18</sup> *The Washington Post*, October 26, 1901, 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Postal Spirit*, January 1923, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Post Office Department press release, July 23, 1921.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, *The Woman's Journal* of August 27, 1921, page 21, and *The New York Times*, July 24, 1921, 2.

In 1925, Alice B. Sanger was sworn in as one of two assistant chief clerks of the Post Office Department, the first woman to hold that position. As chief clerk, she reported directly to the Postmaster General and was responsible for the clerical force of the Department as well as a variety of budgetary, printing, and business correspondence duties. Two years later, Sanger was placed in charge of the appointment division of the Post Office Department — the first woman in that position — and by 1930 had been promoted to personnel officer. She is also remembered for having designed the first official flag used in the Post Office Department (see sidebar at right).

## First Policy-Level Appointment in 1953

In July 1953, Dr. Beatrice Aitchison became the first woman in a postal policy level position when she was named Director of Transportation Research in the Department's Bureau of Transportation. Aitchison, who had a doctorate in mathematics, had assisted the Office of Defense Transportation during World War II and the Department of Defense after the war. Her work with the Post Office Department was to determine the most efficient and economical ways to transport mail. In part because of her efforts, the Department experimented with "piggy-back" methods (containerization) in carrying mail going from New York to San Juan, Puerto Rico, via sea and land, and made changes to better integrate the use of railroads, highway post offices, and contract truck services in transporting mail. In 1961, she was among the first recipients of the Federal Women's Award, the highest honor bestowed upon women in civil service, in part for saving the Post Office Department millions of dollars in transportation costs. She was honored with a Career Service Award by the National Civil Service League in 1970, the year before she retired.

On September 1, 1957, Cora M. Brown became the Department's Special Associate General Counsel. Brown had been a social worker and policewoman before earning her law degree. Prior to her postal appointment, she had been the first African American woman elected to a state senate (Michigan, 1952), where she served two terms. Politics led to her postal job — her appointment was a reward for her political support of President Eisenhower's reelection campaign. She served in the post until a new presidential administration began in January 1961.

In March 1959, Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield appointed Cecil M. Harden, a former congresswoman, as his Special Assistant for Women's Affairs. During her two-year term, Harden went on a nationwide speaking tour, promoting the employment of women in Post Offices. She focused on the 61 largest post offices, which employed 40 percent of all postal employees. In part because of her efforts, the number of women employed in these offices increase from 8,071 early in 1959 to 13,242 by the end of 1960, a 64 percent increase.

In March 1961, Reva Beck Bosone joined the Post Office Department as its first woman Judicial Officer. In 1948, she had gained distinction as the first woman elected to Congress from Utah. Bosone was the highest-ranking woman postal official until she retired in 1968.

In 1965, Virginia Brizendine, a 29-year postal veteran, was appointed the director of the Division of Philately. Brizendine had years of experience in the Philatelic Division, reviewing stamp designs.<sup>22</sup> In 1966, Brizendine was awarded the Department's highest career service honor, the Distinguished Service Award, for "dedicated ... work



**Alice B. Sanger, Assistant Chief Clerk, 1925**

Alice B. Sanger was appointed a clerk in the executive office of the White House in 1889, under newly-elected President Benjamin Harrison — she was the first woman to serve as a clerk-stenographer at the White House. Sanger had worked in Harrison's law office in Indianapolis prior to his election and had served as his stenographer during his presidential campaign.

In 1894, Sanger was appointed a clerk in the office of the Post Office Department's chief clerk. She was promoted several times, rising to the post of personnel officer of the Department before retiring in 1934.

A lover of flags, Sanger championed the Department's annual celebration of Flag Day beginning in 1908, and amassed a large collection of state flags for display in the lobby of Department headquarters. She was the custodian of both the state flags and the large U.S. flag which hung in the building's atrium. Known affectionately as the "Betsy Ross of the Post Office Department," Sanger cleaned and repaired the flags herself as needed.

In 1921, Postmaster General Will H. Hays asked Sanger to suggest a design for a flag for the Postmaster General. Sanger recommended a design adapted from the flags of other Cabinet members — the seal of the Department on a blue field, with a white star in each corner. A flag featuring her design was ordered from Arthur Copeland, a Washington, D.C., flag maker, and was used at special events attended by Postmasters General.

<sup>22</sup> *Federal Times*, August 25, 1965.

that has significantly improved the quality of the philatelic programs of the United States."<sup>23</sup> She received the Meritorious Service Award in 1968, before retiring the following year.

Another prominent 1960s appointee was Anne P. Flory, who was promoted to Director of the Compensation Division in the Bureau of Personnel in June 1967. Flory, who had an M.A. in comparative government, had served as assistant director of the division since 1962; she had joined the Department in 1953 and had been promoted to an analyst position the next year.

## 1960s: Groundwork for Equal Opportunity

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the President's Commission on the Status of Women to study, among other things, federal employment policies, practices, and laws, to determine what needed to be done "to demolish prejudices and outmoded customs which act as barriers to the full partnership of women in our democracy," specifically to their employment.<sup>24</sup> Kennedy thought that the federal government should lead by example — in 1962 he directed the heads of all executive departments and agencies to "take immediate steps so that hereafter appointment or promotion shall be made without regard to sex."<sup>25</sup>

On July 2, 1964, Congress passed title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, which stated that

*It shall be the policy of the United States to insure equal employment opportunities for Federal employees without discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin and the President shall utilize his existing authority to effectuate this policy.*<sup>26</sup>

In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson issued Executive Order 11375, which expressly prohibited sex discrimination in federal employment and directed federal agencies to establish affirmative action programs to support the equal employment of women.<sup>27</sup>

In 1968, Postmaster General W. Marvin Watson published a policy statement in the *Postal Bulletin*, stating that it was the responsibility of postal officials to "promote and assure equal opportunity for all qualified persons without regard to ... sex."<sup>28</sup> Watson created a roving, three-person task force to visit Post Offices nationwide, to review Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) practices and advise both local postal officials and top management on areas needing improvement.

On August 8, 1969, President Richard Nixon signed Executive Order 11478, which reiterated the Government's policy of prohibiting discrimination in employment because of sex and directed each executive department and agency to establish and maintain an affirmative action program of equal employment opportunity. In 1971, Nixon specified that this executive order also applied to the United States Postal Service, which took over from the Post Office Department that year.<sup>29</sup> Nixon also directed the heads of all executive departments and agencies to develop action plans to identify and attract qualified women for



**Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Task Force, 1968**  
From left to right: William W. Chapp, management analyst in the Office of Postal Regional Administration; James L. O'Toole, executive assistant to the Assistant Postmaster General of Operations; Postmaster General Watson; and Evelyn B. Anderson, EEO specialist in the Bureau of Personnel.

<sup>23</sup> Post Office Department Philatelic Release No. 37, May 21, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> John F. Kennedy, "Statement by the President on the Establishment of the President's Commission on the Status of Women," December 14, 1961. From University of California, *American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/print.php?pid=8483> (accessed May 30, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> John F. Kennedy, "Memorandum on Equal Opportunity for Women in the Federal Service," July 24, 1962. From University of California, *American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/print.php?pid=8786> (accessed May 30, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> 78 Stat. 254.

<sup>27</sup> Executive Order 11375, dated October 13, 1967. The order amended Executive Order 11246, dated September 24, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> *Postal Bulletin*, June 6, 1968.

<sup>29</sup> Executive Order 11590, April 23, 1971.

top positions and to increase the number of women in mid-level positions. At the time, a survey found that only 5 of the 366 employees at headquarters in the top five grades, grades PS-18 and above, were women, while in grades PS-12 through PS-17, the ratio of men to women was roughly 12 to 1 — 1,218 men versus 99 women.

In March 1972, Congress passed the *Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972*, extending the protections of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to federal workers.<sup>30</sup> To help implement the law, in October 1972 the Civil Service Commission directed each agency to designate Federal Women's Program coordinators, to advise management on matters affecting the employment and advancement of women.<sup>31</sup>

At first, the Postal Service's EEO coordinators doubled as Women's Program coordinators. But EEO coordinators focused on the recruitment and promotion of racial minorities, with little time left for women's issues. In 1973, a group of women employees at headquarters pressed postal leaders to appoint an independent National Women's Program Coordinator (see "Organizing for Change," at right), to focus more specifically on women's issues.

In 1974, the Postal Service established a Women's Program, to foster the recruitment and career advancement of qualified women employees and to advise management on women's issues. Initially, the program consisted of a full-time National Women's Program Coordinator and a coordinator in each of the five postal regions, as well as ad-hoc coordinators at the district level, who served as part-time coordinators in addition to doing their "real" jobs. In 1980, dedicated Women's Program Coordinators were also appointed at the district level, to increase the program's reach.

### **First Woman Assistant Postmaster General in 1979**

In 1979, when the Postal Service created the Postal Career Executive Service (PCES), 22 of 796 executives in PCES I positions were women — about 2.8 percent. Only one woman was among the 33 PCES II officers of the Postal Service. In June 1979, Nancy L. George was appointed Assistant Postmaster General of the Employee Relations — the first woman Assistant Postmaster General (APMG). She served in that position until being named Executive Assistant to the Postmaster General in 1985.

In the next twelve years, the following women were also appointed as APMGs:

Jackie A. Strange	Procurement and Supply, October 1981
Mary J. Layton	Public and Employee Communications, May 1982
Karen T. Uemoto	Rates and Classification, February 1985; Technology Resource, April 1989
Deborah K. Bowker	Communications, April 1989
Sherry A. Cagnoli	Labor Relations, January 1991
Patricia M. Gibert	Customer and Automation Service, April 1991

Ann McK. Robinson served as the Executive Assistant to the Postmaster General from July 1983 until she was appointed Consumer Advocate in March 1985.

### **Organizing for Change**

In February 1973, women at headquarters formed an action committee after attending a new "Women in Management" course at the postal training academy. On March 16, 1973, more than 100 women met in the headquarters cafeteria. The headquarters newsletter *The Postal Pulse* featured a front-page story on the meeting. "This is to be a pressure group," one of the group's leaders acknowledged (*The Postal Pulse*, March 22, 1973, 3). The group wanted to pressure senior executives into supporting the advancement of women workers.

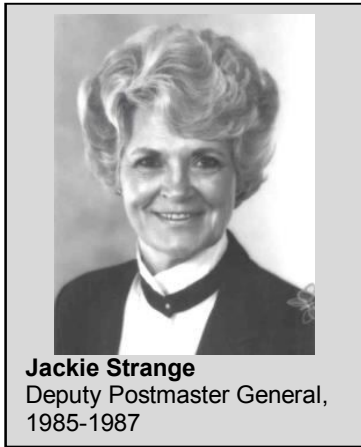
Initially, top management resisted the women's efforts. The newsletter was abolished the day after it ran the feature story — to deprive the women of a communications vehicle, it was rumored. Permission for future meetings at headquarters was denied. Undeterred, the women posted signs in the women's restrooms, inviting interested employees to meet in the adjacent Department of Labor building, which offered space.

On June 19, 1973, the women sent a letter to Postmaster General E. T. Klassen. Noting the "dramatic absence of women in top management positions," they asked Klassen to appoint a Federal Women's Program Coordinator, in line with federal law, and to require *all* appointments to be publicly posted, to help ensure compliance with the *Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972*. They also asked Klassen to specifically include women in the Postal Service's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan and to give their group permission to meet at headquarters.

Klassen met with representatives of the group that summer and ultimately agreed to appoint a National Women's Program Coordinator. In 1974, the first National Women's Program Coordinator was appointed and the Postal Service's Women's Program was officially launched.

<sup>30</sup> 86 Stat. 111.

<sup>31</sup> *Federal Register*, vol. 37, no. 205, October 21, 1972, 22718.



**Jackie Strange**  
Deputy Postmaster General,  
1985-1987

In 1985, Jackie Strange was appointed Deputy Postmaster General — the highest-ranking woman appointee to that time. Strange began working as a part-time postal employee in 1946 while she was a college student. Her career spanned more than 40 years and included service as the first woman Regional Postmaster General (Southern Region) from 1983 to 1985 and as a loaned executive to the Australian Post. She received numerous awards of distinction, including the Postmaster General's Executive Special Achievement Award in 1981. Strange served as Deputy Postmaster General from 1985 until her retirement in 1987. Recalling her role as the first woman Deputy Postmaster General, she stated:

*Sometimes it humbled me to feel that I was the first woman to be in that position. But it also made me want to achieve so much more for the other women because I realized that I was a role model ... and I wanted to work so hard so that I could be an example for them. ... I wanted them to know that they also could achieve that position — if I could do it then they could do it too.<sup>32</sup>*

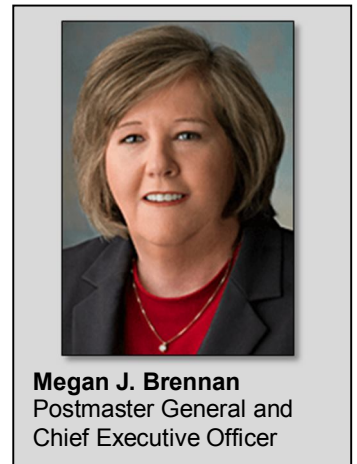
A reorganization of the Postal Service in 1992 changed the title of Assistant Postmaster General to Vice President. Since that time, more than 50 women have served as Vice Presidents (see list on next page).

In 1991, nearly 12 percent of all individuals in Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) positions were women. A survey of female postal executives that year identified a host of perceived barriers to advancement. Most of the perceived barriers were external, including an "old boy network," a male-dominated organizational perspective, and sexual stereotypes.<sup>33</sup> As more women advanced to higher-level positions in the Postal Service, it became easier for others to follow. By 1999, 20 percent of PCES positions were filled by women, and this rose to nearly 29 percent in 2006, similar to the number in other federal agencies.<sup>34</sup>

## First Woman Postmaster General in 2015

On February 1, 2015, Megan J. Brennan became the 74th Postmaster General of the United States — the first woman to lead the Postal Service. Like the previous three Postmasters General, Brennan had worked her way up through the ranks. She began her career as a letter carrier in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1986, and was eventually promoted to Vice President of the Eastern Area and Northeast Area Operations. In 2010, she was appointed Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of the Postal Service, and served in that capacity until her appointment as Postmaster General.

Brennan was born into a postal family, with two brothers who were letter carriers; her father retired after 43 years in the Postal Service. In a 2015 interview, Brennan noted that there had been "substantial changes in terms of attitudes and opportunities for women" in the organization during the course of her career.<sup>35</sup> She spoke proudly of the progress made, and summed up the Postal Service's attitude towards its workforce with a simple sentence: "We view diversity as a competitive advantage."



**Megan J. Brennan**  
Postmaster General and  
Chief Executive Officer

<sup>32</sup> Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, "Women in the U.S. Postal System. In Their Own Words: Jackie Strange, On Being a Role Model for Other Women," July 2008,

[http://postalmuseum.si.edu/womenhistory/documents/transcript\\_strange\\_rolemodel.pdf](http://postalmuseum.si.edu/womenhistory/documents/transcript_strange_rolemodel.pdf) (accessed August 26, 2015).

<sup>33</sup> Bridgette A. Robinson, "The Female Executive within the U.S. Postal Service: The Ladder to Success," thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1992, page 36.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Human Capital: Diversity in the Federal SES and the Senior Levels of the Postal Service," GAO-07-838T, May 10, 2007, Highlights.

<sup>35</sup> Hazel King, "New Focus," *Postal Technology International*, September 2015, 50 and 54, <http://www.postaltechnologyinternational.com> (accessed September 25, 2015).

## **Women Vice Presidents of the Postal Service Since 1992**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Title (of most recent Vice President position)</u></b>
Kathleen Ainsworth	Vice President, Retail Operations
Mitzi R. Betman	Vice President, Corporate Communications
Anita J. Bizzoto	Chief Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President
Megan J. Brennan	Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President
Susan M. Brownell	Vice President, Supply Management
Veronica O. Collazo	Vice President, Diversity Development
Marie Therese Dominguez	Vice President, Government Relations and Public Policy
Mary S. Elcano	General Counsel and Executive Vice President, Human Resources
Jo Ann Feindt	Vice President, Area Operations (Southern)
Rosemarie Fernandez	Vice President, Employee Resource Management
Nancy L. George	Vice President, Northeast Area Operations
Deborah Giannoni-Jackson	Vice President, Employee Resource Management
Mary Anne Gibbons	General Counsel and Executive Vice President
Patricia M. Gibert	Vice President, Retail, Consumers and Small Business
Joanne Giordano	Vice President, Public Affairs and Communications
Suzanne J. Henry	Vice President, Employee Relations
Delores Killelte	Vice President and Consumer Advocate
Linda A. Kingsley	Vice President, Channel Access
Susan M. LaChance	Vice President, Consumer and Industry Affairs
Yvonne D. Maguire	Vice President, Employee Resource Management
Lynn Malcolm	Vice President, Controller
Linda M. Malone	Vice President, Network Operations
Nagisa Manabe	Chief Marketing/Sales Officer and Executive Vice President
Maura A. McNerney	Vice President, Controller
Suzanne F. Medvidovich	Senior Vice President, Human Resources
Pritha Mehra	Vice President, Mail Entry and Payment Technology
Donna M. Peak	Vice President, Finance, Controller
Susan M. Plonkey	Vice President, Sales
Michele C. Purton	Vice President, Treasurer
Diane M. Regan	Vice President, Operations Redesign
Maura Robinson	Vice President, Consumer and Industry Affairs
Cynthia Sanchez-Hernandez	Vice President, Pricing
Kristin Seaver	Vice President, Area Operations (Capital Metro)
Kelly M. Sigmon	Vice President, Retail and Customer Service Operations
Francina G. Smith	Vice President and Consumer Advocate
Jacqueline Krage Strako	Vice President, Area Operations (Great Lakes)
Gail G. Sonnenberg	Senior Vice President, Sales
Giselle E. Valera	Vice President, Global Business
Linda J. Welch	Vice President, Area Operations (Southwest)
Deborah K. Willhite	Senior Vice President, Government Relations and Public Policy



## Women Governors

The Postal Service's Board of Governors — similar to a board of directors of a private corporation — was created by the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. The Governors are appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

As of September 2015, ten women have served as Governors of the United States Postal Service, out of a total of 55 individuals who have served.

Frieda Waldman was the first woman elected an officer of the Board when she became vice chairman in 1984. Norma Pace was elected as the first woman chairman of the Board in 1991.

The names and terms of the women Governors are listed below.

Paula D. Hughes	1980-1983
Ruth O. Peters	1983-1988
Frieda Waldman	1984
Norma Pace	1987-1995
Susan E. Alvarado	1988-1997
LeGree S. Daniels	1990-2005
Ernesta Ballard	1997-2002
Carolyn Lewis Gallagher	2004-2010
Katherine C. Tobin	2006-2009
Ellen C. Williams	2006-to date