

Single Women are Breaking Through a 'Glass Ceiling' into Governors' Club

Last year, Ruth Ann Minner (D-DE) was the only member of the National Association of Governors who was not married.

Minner, a widow, joined the American Association for Single People a few years ago when she was Lt. Governor of Delaware. She has remained a member ever since.

With few exceptions over the years, chances are that an unmarried gubernatorial candidate won't gain acceptance of a majority of voters for a state's top executive position. Jerry Brown, Governor of California for two terms in the 1970s was one of those few exceptions, as was Ann Richards, former Governor of Texas.

With marital status and household demographics changing throughout the nation, and with unmarried households becoming a majority in many cities and states, perhaps more unmarried candidates will win approval of voters as they contend for the position of chief executive.

AASP is pleased to report that two outstanding women demonstrated last November that it is possible for single politicians to break through the marital status "glass ceiling" which in the past has proved to be a barrier to becoming a state governor.

Linda Lingle, a Republican, is now the Governor of Hawaii, while Janet Napolitano, a Democrat, has become the Governor of Arizona.

Because of the bipartisan nature of these victories, and because both women are excellent role models, AASP is pleased to present a profile of each in this newsletter.

After they settle into their new positions, AASP plans to reach out to these new governors and to their administrations. We will share information with them about the unmarried populations of their respective states and suggest ways in which the new governors might help to eliminate unfair practices by the government as well as encourage private businesses to do the same.

We also hope Governor Lingle and Governor Napolitano will consider



Linda Lingle

History was made in Hawaii on November 5, 2002 as Linda Lingle was elected as governor of Hawaii. Lingle is the first female governor elected in Hawaii and the first Republican to hold that office since 1962.

Lingle was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1953. When she was 12, her family moved to Southern California, where she graduated from Birmingham High, a public school in Van Nuys. In 1975, she graduated from California State University at Northridge, where she was editor of the Journalism Department Newspaper and the Alumni Newsletter. She moved to Hawaii after graduation, following her father who had moved there to open a Ford dealership.

Following her arrival in Hawaii, Lingle worked as the public information officer for the Hawaii Teamsters and Hotel Workers Union in Honolulu. Lingle then moved to Moloka'i where she founded the Moloka'i Free Press, a local newspaper serving the 6,000 residents of the island.

In 1980, Lingle was elected to the Maui County Council where she served for ten years. In 1990, Lingle made history by becoming the youngest person elected as Mayor of Maui County, the first woman and the only non-Maui born person ever elected to that office.

Lingle, who is divorced, is the adoptive parent of Snooze, a cat she obtained from the Maui Humane Society.

accepting an invitation to become honorary members of AASP, joining more than 80 other elected officials throughout the nation who have already done so.



Janet Napolitano

Janet Napolitano grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She attended college at Santa Clara University in California, where she was named a Truman Scholar and graduated summa cum laude, and later attended law school at the University of Virginia.

She came to Arizona in 1983 as a law clerk to U.S. Appeals Court Judge Mary Shroeder, and in 1989 became a partner at the Phoenix law firm of Lewis and Roca.

She was named U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona by President Clinton in 1993, and was elected Arizona Attorney General in 1998.

She created the first Office for Women inside the Attorney General's office to make issues affecting women a top priority. Therefore, it is no surprise that she is "pro choice."

Although Napolitano says that she does not support the legalization of gay marriage, she believes in "fundamental human rights" and that "all Arizonans should be treated with respect and dignity."

Napolitano believes that sex education courses should move beyond a message of "abstinence only" and should include information on how young people can protect themselves from pregnancy and diseases.

Although Napolitano, who is single, is known for her hard work, she finds time for hiking in the Arizona mountains or taking rafting trips and is a serious sports fan. ▲▲

As for reproductive rights, she is "pro choice." Lingle has indicated she would sign a domestic partnership law if one were passed by the Legislature.