Journey to the Vote

VFTH

6/6/19

A hundred years ago women were fighting for the right to have their voices heard at the ballot box.

That journey is the focus of a year long celebration at WKU as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment, which guarantees and protects a woman’s constitutional right to vote. The effort to get 36 states to ratify the amendment began more than a year earlier which is why WKU’s celebration has already begun.

“Women spent over 70 years engaged in this dogfight to get the right to vote.”

That dogfight will be the focus of a years worth of programming at WKU called “Journey to the Vote.”

“The whole purpose of this is about student education and promoting awareness.”

The kick off acknowledged the date in 1919 when the U.S. Senate first approved the 19th amendment.

“From that point on states started ratifying, within a week three states, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin had ratified with others to follow. Kentucky was the 23rd state to ratify.”

The final holdout in 1920 was Tennessee which is a battle documented by recent Boyd Lubker speaker Elaine Weiss.

“She is really getting ready to blow up on the national scene with her book “The Woman’s Hour” which describes the final push in Tennessee to get the 19th amendment passed.”

It’s a story Claire Long of Hopkinsville knows well. She is a member of the Daughters of American Colonists.

“This is our regent and she called a meeting and said don’t you want to come to this and honor women getting to vote.”

The topic has double meaning for WKU history professor and State Representative Patti Minter.

“To be a part of the historic class of women, 26 women in the Kentucky House of Representatives. 18 democrats and eight republicans, which those are historic numbers on both sides of the aisle.”

A step in the right direction as we commemorate a milestone in history that forever changed American democracy.

“It’s a right, it’s a responsibility, it’s a privilege and sometime we take that for granted.”

The WKU Sisterhood provided grant money for Journey to the Vote. A complete list of events will be added to the website wku dot edu slash go slash journey until the culmination event on August 20th, 2020. With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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