

Women's History Month

www.leg.bc.ca



Rita Johnston

1991 – First female Premier in Canada

Rita Johnston was born in Melville, Saskatchewan in 1935. She later moved to Surrey, British Columbia where she became a small business owner and, in 1969, was elected to city council. Rita Johnston later served two additional two-year terms at the municipal level in 1978 and 1982.

After deciding to enter provincial politics, Rita Johnston ran successfully as the Social Credit candidate for the riding of Surrey in the provincial general election of 1983 and was re-elected to represent Surrey-Newton in 1986. She served in a variety of Parliamentary Secretary roles and was later appointed to several cabinet posts, including Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture, and Transportation and Highways.

Following the resignation of Premier Bill Vander Zalm in 1991, Rita Johnston was selected by her caucus to serve as interim leader of the governing Social Credit Party, thereby becoming the Premier of British Columbia. On taking office, she committed to giving women's issues a higher priority.

While her government was ultimately defeated in the provincial general election later that year, through her tenure as party leader, Rita Johnston had entered the annals of women's history as the first female Premier in Canada.



Honourable Iona Campagnolo, OC, OBC

2001 – First woman to serve as B.C.'s Lieutenant Governor

Iona Campagnolo was born on Galiano Island in 1932. However, she spent much of her childhood and adolescence in northern British Columbia.

In 1966, Iona Campagnolo was elected to the school board in Prince Rupert, B.C. and later served as its chairwoman. She also worked locally in radio broadcasting before entering federal politics in 1974, winning election to the Canadian House of Commons as the Liberal Member of Parliament for the riding of Skeena.

In the House of Commons, Iona Campagnolo was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and later served as the first Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport.

In 1982, she became the first female president of the Liberal Party of Canada and was later the first Chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia.

In 2001, Iona Campagnolo was installed as British Columbia's 27th Lieutenant Governor, the first woman to be appointed as the provincial representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

The Honourable Iona Campagnolo is the recipient of the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia.

1991

Rita Johnston is the first female Premier in Canada

1991

Judi Tyabji is the first female MLA of Indo-Canadian descent

1993

Kim Campbell, former B.C. MLA, is the first female Prime Minister in Canada

1996

Ida Chong and Jenny Wai Ching Kwan are the first women of Chinese-Canadian descent elected to the B.C. Legislative Assembly

2001

Hon. Iona Campagnolo is installed as B.C.'s first female Lieutenant Governor

2009

Mable Elmore is the first Filipino-Canadian and Naomi Yamamoto the first Japanese-Canadian elected to the B.C. Legislative Assembly

2013

Jane Jae Kyung Shin is the first Korean-Canadian elected to the B.C. Legislative Assembly

2013

Hon. Christy Clark is the first elected female Premier in B.C.