

Mayor Lee

DOROTHY McCullough Lee is Portland's first woman mayor, but in electing her to that office the voters picked no political novice. For 20 years, since she first served as a member of the house of representatives of the Oregon legislature, she has been a figure in Oregon's political life.

And long before that, Mrs. Lee had learned to meet new situations and strange people, for her father, Frank E. McCullough, was a medical officer in the navy and as a child she lived in various parts of the world where he was stationed. She was born in Oakland, Cal., April 1, 1901. In 20 years of law practice and in her public life Mayor Lee has proved the date had no significance.

Mrs. Lee obtained her bachelor of arts degree from the University of California in 1921 and her doctor of jurisprudence degree in 1923, beginning immediately the practice of law, which she continued until named to the Portland city council in 1943.

On June 11, 1924, she married W. Scott Lee and they have two adopted children, David Scott Lee and Priscilla Dorothy Lee.

After two sessions as a representative in the state legislature, she was elected state senator and represented Multnomah county in the senate in eight regular and special sessions until 1943 when she resigned to take a position on the city council as commissioner of public utilities. She was elected to the council twice after this original appointment. In May, 1948, in the race for mayor she received nearly a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Besides these activities, Mrs. Lee has found time to serve as chairman of the Oregon crime commission from 1931-35, as a member of the Portland traffic safety commission for several years and as municipal judge during 1940. She is a member also of many civic, professional and fraternal organizations.



Mayor Lee in view of Caricaturist Basil Wolverton.

MY JOB—By Dorothy McCullough Lee

IN MY JOB anything can happen and usually does. As mayor of Portland it is my duty to see that all the functions of city government are properly carried out. To do this, the mayor assigns various departments and bureaus to the other city commissioners who then act as the administrative heads of those departments or bureaus, and the mayor also serves as the actual administrator of the bureaus kept in the department which the mayor retains and has not assigned to other commissioners. As mayor, I must also preside at meetings of the city council when it performs its legislative functions. So, you can see what I mean when I say anything can happen.

My job is a most interesting job. One of the most satisfying parts of the job is my detail on what has been jokingly called the "Tommy Tucker" circuit. There are innumerable occasions which I attend to extend a greeting, make a speech, cut a ribbon, throw a switch or the like. Sometimes I am fed, sometimes it is not a meal-time occasion. But the real feast is my opportunity to make contact with people—real people—interesting people of all kinds. I often wish that I had a great deal more time available for this part of the job.

The mail addressed to the mayor is tremendous in volume and varied in detail—suggestions for solutions of traffic problems, reports of mosquito bites, requests for street lights, requests from Florida for information about Oregon's laws, requests for favorite recipes for cook book compilation, and so on. Then, there are the inevitable complaints covering a wide range of subjects, often outside the jurisdiction of the mayor or even the city government.

In some ways, it is a job where many "road blocks" to accomplishment are encountered, because realizing your objectives depends not only on your own efforts, but also on the co-operation of many other people. And that co-operation may or may not be forthcoming.

It is a job that is naturally very demanding on your time and energy, because there are many people to be served in a great variety of ways. It necessitates working from early morning until late at night. And even then, you feel that you have had to handle many things hastily that you would like to have really studied more thoroughly. What you really need in my job is a "day stretcher." But it is a job that is very satisfying. Because in spite of the criticism and the animosity of some, you realize that somehow, if you hew to the line in your efforts to realize your objectives, you will help your people as a whole, and will make it possible for your city to progress. And you will feel, too, that the great army of the good, average, sound citizens of your city, though unorganized and perhaps unknown to you, are with you in your efforts.

Public officials get into deep water when they become so confused that they believe power is inherent in themselves as individuals instead of knowing that the individual is merely the agency through whom the power is applied by the people—the only true source of power in a democracy. I am hopeful that through my job as mayor I can encourage and stimulate more of the people to take an active and continuous part in their government. This is definitely necessary for the preservation of our American way.



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Mayor Lee's favorite photo.