

Thursday December 3: Sarah Berrien Casey Morgan

As 2020 rapidly comes to an end, and so many wonderful Savannah women left to highlight as part of our **#AmazingSavannahWomen** series, throughout December we will be spotlighting the many accomplishments of women in the history of Savannah's government each week. To kick the month off, we focus on Sarah Berrien Casey Morgan, pioneering suffragette and Savannah's first female alderwoman. Morgan was born in Augusta and moved to Savannah with her husband, Captain Thomas Morgan. As early as 1912, she was leading women in local civics by teaching classes on Parliamentary law. As a founding member of the Savannah Federation of Women's Organizations and the Savannah Branch of the Equal Suffrage Party, she was at the forefront of Savannah's suffrage movement. After the 19th Amendment was ratified, local suffrage leaders gave her the honor of being the first woman to register to vote in Chatham County. 1922 was not only the first year women were allowed to vote in Georgia, but also the first year women could run for office. In Savannah, three women were on the ballot for City Council, including Morgan. During her campaign, she vowed to "be fair and square in political office" and when discussing the topic of women as City employees said, "Women as women should not be denied office. Fitness to perform the duties of an office should alone be the controlling factor in the appointment." Morgan did not secure enough votes to be elected. However, on January 18, 1923, the last City Council meeting of Mayor Stewart's administration, Alderman George White resigned and in an honorary move Council appointed Morgan to fill the unexpired term. Morgan held the position for barely four days until the new administration took the oath of office. Alderman Cabell said it had been a "privilege to work with Mrs. Morgan during the last few weeks in a close association which has given her opportunity to prove her zeal as a worker and her capacity as a leader, and that he considered that in offering her the nomination they were not conferring an honor, but were honored in having her serve." Morgan took the oath of office in the presence of nearly 200 people, many women she had worked with. Morgan died on June 28, 1931. On the day of her funeral, the flag over Savannah's City Hall flew at half-staff, the first time in the City's history that it had been lowered in honor of a woman.