

IDA MAY ADAMS

b.

Ida May Adams was born in Mt. Vernon, Rockcastle County, Kentucky, the daughter of Willis and Elizabeth (Schylér) Adams. Her early education was received in the schools of Mt. Vernon and in Southeastern Kentucky. She later attended the Kentucky College for Women at Danville, Kentucky, from which she graduated with Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. Her legal education was received at Southern California College of Law where she was graduated with five degrees, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Laws, Master of Laws and Juris Doctor. Miss Adams is a Presbyterian.

Early in life Miss Adams became interested in judicial procedure of the court and the practice of law. When she was still a small girl, Judge Thomas Z. Morrow (father of Governor Edwin P. Morrow) placed her upon the bench with him, and thus she had her first association with legal procedure. He remarked, at the time, having heard her express views on the cases he was hearing, that she would make an efficient and equitable judge, but that her feminine sex prohibited her entering that field. Women, occupying judicial benches, were, of course, at that time unheard of.

After graduating with her final degree from law school in California, she began practicing private law. In the eleven years that followed, Miss Adams won unusual distinction as an attorney, one of her most celebrated cases being the defense of fifty-four Indians on trial for their alleged conspiracy to alienate governmental affections of other Indians. Although Attorney Adams won her case against the government, she was not completely satisfied with laws as they stood as they related to the Indian. She proceeded to draft a bill known as the Howard-Dill Act, which was passed by Congress in 1924 and which gave citizenship to all American Indians who had previously been merely wards of the government.

In 1931 Ida May Adams was elected Judge in Los Angeles, California--the first woman ever to be elected to the bench who had not had a previous appointment to fill a vacancy. This distinction was of considerable importance, considering the fact that only nineteen women judges had ever filled judicial chairs.

Her career as judge has been outstanding in several respects. She is noted for her leniency with youth and is particularly interested in bettering domestic affairs in the homes of the young men and women brought before her for trial. Believing that most transgressions of youth can be traced to environment and bad influences in the home, she at times attempts to bring about a better condition therein by candidly discussing the problem with parents before she passes judgment on the child or adolescent youth. She is

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