

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT HALL PETITION

If historians are asked who are the most significant of Iowa State University's alumni, three names surface: George Washington Carver, Henry A. Wallace and Carrie Chapman Catt. There are, of course, many more but these three are the most frequently mentioned. Yet, on our campus today most people cannot identify the woman. Both men have buildings, scholarships and/or endowed chairs in their honor but Carrie Chapman Catt, who left her entire estate to her Alma Mater, has none of these.

It is time to correct this oversight; an appropriate beginning would be the dedication of a major campus building in Chapman Catt's honor. We propose that 'Old Botany' join the rank of its neighbors with an honored name. This should take place now rather than waiting indefinitely for interior renovations funding.

The possible future tenants of the building under discussion were consulted about the naming of the building and were unanimous in their enthusiastic acceptance of **Carrie Chapman Catt Hall**. Those contacted were William Kelly, Richard Van Iten (S&H administrative offices), Andrejs Plakans (Department of History), David Kline (Department of Philosophy) and Richard Mansbach (Department of Political Science). Given her educational background and accomplishments, all of these disciplines are relevant to her life.

One of the major objections has been: "If we name a building after Carrie Chapman Catt it would be called 'cathouse'." Suffice it to say that this does not justify a negative response and it would not be valid: the name would be **Carrie Chapman Catt Hall**. Carrie was most often referred to and signed her correspondence as Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt.

The following are just a few of Chapman Catt's accomplishments. She entered ISU in 1877, graduating three years later in 1880. While at the college, she initiated the effort to establish military exercises for women, gave the first oration by a female student and graduated as class valedictorian. She was the first woman to give the Commencement Address at ISU in 1921 and again in 1930. She went on to become Superintendent of Schools in the Mason City area followed a few years later by state, national and international suffrage work. She was President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association twice, first in 1900 succeeding her friend and mentor, Susan B. Anthony and second in 1915 taking her through to victory in 1920. She also founded the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance and became its first president. She received many awards including the Chi Omega, given to her at the White House by her friend Eleanor Roosevelt and she was voted one of the ten most admired women in the world numerous times. She was devoted to Iowa, where she had grown up, and returned frequently. In 1936 she gave the dedication address at the Capitol in Des Moines for the placement of the pioneer suffragists plaque.

She went on to found the Committee on the Cause and Cure of War and worked toward world peace until her death in 1947.

It is most appropriate that the University Archivist work jointly on this project with the League of Women Voters, the national organization that Mrs. Chapman Catt founded in 1920 after securing the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. We hope the Naming of Buildings Committee will take this petition up immediately for consideration so that this woman who was honored by her public during her lifetime will take her proper place in history at her Alma Mater, which she loved dearly and never forgot. Let us not continue to forget her.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. For an overall view of her life and accomplishments, a videotape of a presentation given to the League of Women Voters in Ames is available at your request as well as additional files located in the University Archives in 403 Parks Library.

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Laura Kline, University Archivist

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Joyce Hertz, President League of Women Voters, Ames Chapter

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

William Kelly, Dean of the College of S&H

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Richard Van Iten, Associate Dean of S&H

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Andrejs Plakans, Chair of Dept. of History

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David Kline, Chair of Dept. of Philosophy

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Richard Mansbach, Chair of Dept. of Political Science