

RHODA LAVINIA GOODELL

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SUMMARY

Accomplished trial and appellate litigator; frequent author and columnist on social justice issues, including temperance, penal reform and the advancement of women in the legal profession; first woman lawyer in Wisconsin (1874); first woman to litigate (and win) an appeal in the Wisconsin Supreme Court (1879); author of and lobbyist for the Wisconsin law prohibiting gender discrimination in the legal profession.

EXPERIENCE

Attorney, Law Office of Lavinia Goodell

Janesville, WI (June 1874-January 1879).

Madison, WI (October 1879-March 1880).

Lead counsel and co-counsel on cases in Wisconsin circuit and appellate courts.

Case types: Criminal defense, liquor licensing, divorce, property disputes, will contests, debt collection.

Responsibilities: interviewing clients and witnesses, taking depositions, drafting pre-trial motions, writing briefs, examining and cross-examining witnesses, arguing cases to juries and courts.

Independent contractor doing legal research and briefing for other law firms.

Partner, Goodell & King

Janesville, WI (February-August 1879).

Co-founder and managing partner of Wisconsin's first female law firm.

Served as lead counsel and co-counsel in Wisconsin circuit courts.

Editor, Harper's Bazar

New York City, New York (1867-1871).

Helped launch America's first fashion magazine.

Responsibilities included: Systematically reviewing over 270 newspapers and periodicals to highlight feature subjects for writers and editors;

reviewing proof sheets; locating and preserving all notices regarding Harper publications.

Teacher (1865-1867)

Lynn School, Brooklyn New York.

Head of school, sole teacher for 15 students of all ages.

Subjects: Reading, writing, literature, mathematics, science, geography, history, and gymnastics.

Editor, columnist, *The Principia*

New York City, New York (1859-1865).

Managing editor of a leading United States anti-slavery newspaper; in charge of the “News,” “War,” “Foreign,” “Family Miscellany,” and “Miscellaneous” pages (1862-1865).

Interim Editor-in-Chief (1863).

Writer, proofreader, researcher (1859-1862).

LEADERSHIP

Founder, manager, and teacher at the Rock County Jail school for prisoners in Janesville, WI.

Vice President, Society for the Advancement of Women.

Vice President, American Women’s Association.

Contributing member, *Woman’s Journal* (leading women’s suffrage newspaper in the United States).

Founding member, Janesville Women’s Temperance Association.

Acting Treasurer, Ladies Temperance Union, and co-organizer of its march on the Janesville Common Council.

Clerk, Janesville Congregational Church (first woman to hold position).

DISTINCTIONS

First woman lawyer in Wisconsin.

First woman to litigate and prevail in court trials, jury trials, and supreme court appeals in Wisconsin.

First woman to run for city attorney in the United States.

First woman notary public in Wisconsin.

Certificate of Admission to Rock County Circuit Court and related pleadings displayed at the Centennial International Exhibition of 1876, the first World’s Fair in the United States.

Wisconsin's signatory to the 1878 Susan B. Anthony Amendment, which the U.S. Congress ultimately passed in 1920 as the 19th Amendment giving American women the right to vote.

EDUCATION

Apprenticeship in practice of law with Pliny Norcross, completed 1874.

Brooklyn Heights Seminary, graduated 1859.

PUBLICATIONS

Frequent columnist on social reform issues published in national and local press. Representative articles include:

Author, "How It Looked to a Lawyer Half Century Ago," *Woman's Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 41, 10/11/1879.

Author, "Another Tramp," *The Advance*, 12/19/1878.

Author, "A singular Bible Class in a Strange Place," *The Advance*, 10/11/1877.

Author, "An Unfortunate Career of a Noted Young Man," *Janesville Gazette*, 6/2/1877.

Author, "Subjection of Women,," *Woman's Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 53, 12/30/1876.

Author, "Ownership of Wives," *Woman's Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 44, 10/28/1876.

Author, "Should Women Practice Law in Wisconsin?" *Chicago Legal News*, 3/25/1876 and 4/1/1876.

Author, "My Tramp," *Christian Union*, 12/15/1875.

Author, "Matrimonial Economy," *Chicago Tribune*, 9/10/1875.

Author, "Advanced Principles," *Woman's Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 11, 3/14/1874.

Author, "An Irruption of Depravity: Women in the Pulpit—A Presbyterian Protest," *Woman's Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 25, 5/18/1872.

Author, "Womanhood Suffrage: A Review of Objections," *Woman's Journal*, Part 1, Vol. 2, No. 17, 4/19/71; Part 2, Vol. 2, No. 18, 5/6/1871; Part 3, Vol. 2, No. 21, 5/27/1871; Part 4, Vol. 2, No. 22, 6/23/71.

SPEECHES

Lecturer on temperance and suffrage in towns around Wisconsin. Major, national speeches include:

Speaker, on penal legislation at the Women's Congress in Madison, Wisconsin, October 1879.

Speaker, on women's suffrage at the Rhode Island Woman Suffrage Association, Providence, Rhode Island, October 1878.

Speaker, on temperance at the 1876 International Temperance Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania held in conjunction with the World's Fair.

Speech, "Women in the Legal Profession," read by designee at the Women's Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in October 1876, reprinted in *Woman's Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 48, 11/25/76.

Delegate/speaker on temperance at the Women's Christian Temperance Union conference, Chicago, Illinois, May, 1875.

INTERESTS

Reading literature, scientific journals, and feminist works; spending time with family; writing letters to relatives, friends, mentees, and social activists.

Member of the Executive Committee of the Round Table, a society of prominent Janesville citizens devoted to the study of literature.

Member of Janesville's Mutual Improvement Club, a society dedicated to letters, art, and literature.