



#30: Three Women Who Broke Barriers

For years, I have been enlightening everyone about important people in Humble's past. I am usually telling stories about men, such as Pleasant Humble, Nick Lambrecht, Joseph Dunman, and so on. But there are important women in Humble's past too. Here are three you need to be familiar with. These three women broke barriers in their world, and you need to know who they were and why they were significant to Humble's history.

Betty Lou Wiederhold: Betty Lou Eller was born in Lexington, Texas. She married Dee George Wiederhold in 1931, and they moved to Humble. Betty Lou and George were very active in the Humble community. In 1947, Betty Lou ran for a position on the Humble City Council and won! **Betty Lou Wiederhold was the first woman to serve on the Humble City Council.** In fact, she was the first woman elected to ANY city council in the history of Harris County! She served on the Humble City Council 1947-1951, and then again 1963-1967. When not working on the city council, she processed tool inventories for a Houston company.

Louise Panzarella: A native of Chicago, Louise moved to Humble in 1942 with her husband, Dr. Carlo Panzarella. After the death of her husband, she became very active in civic activities. **Louise Panzarella was the first woman to serve on the Humble ISD School Board.** She served on the school board two times: from 1969 through 1979, and then again from 1985 through 1988. Her 13 years on the school board included serving as School Board President 1972-1973. During her break from serving on the school board (1979-1985), Louise Panzarella served as a member of the Humble City Council (the 2nd woman to ever do so).

Gladys La Trelle James: While other districts fought desegregation in the courts well into the 1970s, Humble ISD quietly voted to end the segregation of their students starting with the 1965-1966 school year. **Gladys James was the first African American teacher to work in Humble ISD after the end of segregation.** (She was not the first African American teacher to work for Humble, since Humble had schools for African American students from 1886 until 1947.) Gladys James held a Bachelor of Science degree in home economics from Prairie View A & M. She taught for 18 years in the Edgewood School District in San Antonio, including time as Vice Principal at E. T. Wren Junior High School. She moved to Kingwood when her husband began work at Continental Airlines in 1971. She started at Humble Elementary on January 3, 1972 and stayed at that school for over 30 years. After more than 50 years of teaching, she retired at the end of the 2002-2003 school year.