

Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's

Capitol Report



**Miriam Ferguson: First Woman Governor of Texas**

In the spirit of Women's History Month, it is important to remember and reflect on some of the most inspiring female trailblazers such as Texas' first woman governor, Miriam Ferguson. Miriam Amanda Wallace was not considering a career in politics when she enrolled at Baylor Female College in the 1890s. She married James Edward Ferguson in 1899, who went on to become the governor of Texas from 1915-1917. During her time as first lady of Texas she devoted her energies almost exclusively to her husband and two daughters.

Miriam earned the nickname 'Ma' due to both her nurturing spirit and her first and middle initials. 'Ma' Ferguson stunned Texas when she announced she would run for Governor, following the impeachment of her husband a few years prior. During her campaign she told Texans they were getting "two governors for the price of one." Her campaign was clear and aggressive: Ferguson promised extensive cuts in state appropriations, condemned the Ku Klux Klan, and opposed new liquor legislation. She also urged voters to restore her husband's honor by voting for her. At the age of 49, Miriam Ferguson became Texas' first woman governor and the second in the nation's history.

**"Women's History Month is an opportunity for us to recognize and commend female leaders of the past and present for the ingenuity and ambition in all realms of society. Miriam Ferguson set the bar high for the future generations of Texas women,"** stated Rep. Roberto Alonzo.

Miriam 'Ma' Ferguson retired from public office in 1935. Although her political life was over, she certainly secured her place in Texas history. 60 years would pass before Texas elected Ann Richards as its second woman Governor.



**Benito Juarez's Birthday: A Mexican National Holiday**

March 21 is a Mexican National Holiday with banks, government offices and many businesses closed as people around Mexico celebrate the 210th anniversary of the birth of Benito Juarez. Sometimes referred to as the Abraham Lincoln of Mexico, Juarez too came from humble Native American beginnings, worked hard to become well educated, studied law, and ultimately guided his nation through troubled times.

Benito Pablo Juarez Garcia is one of Mexico's most beloved leaders. He was a Zapotec Amerindian born in the small village of San Pablo Guelatao, Oaxaca in 1806. From an early age Juarez was interested in politics. He was a passionate leader in his roles as a politician, lawyer, Governor, and President of Mexico for five terms. Today Benito Juarez is remembered as being a progressive reformed dedicated to democracy, equal rights for his nation's indigenous people, diminishing the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexican politics, and the defense of national sovereignty.

**"Benito Juarez had vision and perseverance unrivaled by most leaders of his time. His courage of conviction won him an education, career, and a place in history. It is important that we honor his legacy and unswerving dedication to the people of Mexico."** urges Rep. Alonzo.



**Rep. Alonzo at UT Arlington, discussing the role of technology in the future success of Latino students**