

# Emily Murphy

“I believe that never was a country better adapted to produce a great race of women than this Canada of ours, nor a race of women better adapted to make a great country.”

— Emily Murphy

**1868, Cookstown, ON – 1933, Edmonton, AB**

A prominent suffragist, reformer and writer, Emily Murphy (born Emily Gowan Ferguson) became the first female magistrate in the British Empire in 1916. Before that, she championed the right of wives to share ownership in their husband's property — giving them and their children security in case of abandonment. Her efforts helped create The Married Women's Protective Act, passed in Alberta in 1911. Her tireless activism as judge and advocate of social welfare for women and children earned Emily widespread respect across the nation.



This led to many organizations and individuals calling for her appointment to the Senate. This was not possible, however, because the federal government deemed that women were not “qualified persons” as required for Senate appointments. But Emily was a tough, no nonsense woman who never backed down from a fight... In fact, one of her trademark quotes was “Whenever I don't know whether to fight or not, I fight.” Naturally, she saw the Senate issue as an injustice against all women. So she enlisted the help of four equally brilliant and determined women to challenge this unfair bias.

Emily Murphy died suddenly in her sleep in 1933 at the age of 65. Though she won an important victory for women's rights throughout the British Empire, she never realized her dream of becoming a Senator.