

Mrs. Chase Going Woodhouse

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On August 18th of this year, I had the privilege of spending an hour with Mrs. Chase Going Woodhouse, former Congresswoman from the second district. Mrs. Woodhouse was elected to the Congress in 1944 and again in 1948. At 86 Mrs. Woodhouse is still very active in political life. She is presently director of the Auerbach Service Bureau for Connecticut Organizations and was recently chosen by Congressman Toby Moffet to serve on the New England Energy Resource and Development Task Force. She is also a member of the Connecticut Humanities Council, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and Connecticut Partners of the Alliance.

Mrs. Woodhouse was born in 1890 to Harriet and Seymour Going in Victoria, Canada. She received her B.A. in Economics in 1912, and the following year received her M.A., also in Economics. At this time she began her graduate studies at the University of Berlin until the outbreak of World War I when she returned home to America.<sup>1</sup> In 1919 she was offered and accepted the position of professor of Economics at Smith College. At Smith, she began a workshop for women that provided information about jobs other than teaching and social work.

In 1928 she left Smith to become director of personnel of the Women's College of North Carolina. While there, Mrs. Woodhouse along with Mrs. Louise Shouse, who was formerly employed by the Department of Labor, inaugurated the Institute of Women's Professional Relations. The Institute studied the position of working women, and the desires and requirements of employers. The Institute also kept students and college administrations informed on each other's needs. Apart from her duties at the college, Mrs. Woodhouse also edited the Institute's publication: "Women's Work and Education."<sup>2</sup>

In 1934 Mrs. Woodhouse returned to Connecticut to become an Economic's professor at Connecticut College. Again with the help of Mrs. Louise Shouse they initiated the Annual Institute of Women's Professional Relations Conferences in Washington D.C. This gave educators, government representatives, students, and women a chance to meet and discuss their ideas, problems, and solutions.

In 1940 Mrs. Woodhouse ran for the office of Secretary of State. She became the first woman democrat to be elected to that office. In 1944 she was selected by the Connecticut Democratic Committee to run for Congress. Her opponent was the incumbent Republican, John D. McWilliams.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Woodhouse emphasized the need for full employment tax revision, and the need for educational facilities. Mrs. Woodhouse also stated that she felt Congressmen should be in their district frequently to discuss the issues with

their constituency. She won the election by a slight margin -- 63,013 to 59,973.

Mrs. Woodhouse served on the Banking and Currency Committee and was very actively in support of a world bank and price control. In 1946 she became director of the National Democratic Committee, Women's Division. Two years later she organized the Women's Division of the Office of Military Government of the U.S. in Germany under General Clay.

After serving two terms as representative in Congress, Mrs. Woodhouse at 62 did not give up her involvement in politics. Instead she chose to continue to serve the people of Connecticut and the nation in any capacity she could. From 1952 to the present, Mrs. Woodhouse has served on a wide range of committees and councils. For example, in 1962 she served on the Governor's Committee on Libraries and at the same time was a member of the State Advisory Committee on Unemployment Compensation. In 1965 she was a member of the Advisory Council to the State Board of Mental Health, delegate to the State Constitutional Convention, member of the Executive Committee, Association of Library Boards, and also a member of the Governor's Clean Water Task Force.

While speaking to Mrs. Woodhouse, I asked her what was the most rewarding position she has held; she responded that her most rewarding position was serving as a Connecticut Congresswoman. I also asked her what advice she would give to a young person interested in entering politics. She replied that a person should have a knowledge of government and economics, be willing to work hard, and willing to start at the bottom - at your community level. On the national level, Mrs. Woodhouse is supporting Jimmy Carter and Gloria Schaffer. She also feels that there are two Connecticut politicians worth watching: Toby Moffet and Chris Dodd.

In conclusion, I feel that Mrs. Woodhouse is an inspiration for any young person interested in entering politics. She has dedicated her life in the service of her nation; never afraid of challenging, questioning, and probing to find new solutions to the many problems of America.

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#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Anna Rothe, ed., Current Biography (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1946), p. 690.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 691.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.,