

3/5/2018 Question of the Week

In 1932, Anne Brancato Wood—a Philadelphia real estate and insurance broker—became the first...

- A) woman in Philadelphia to own a real estate company
- B) Democratic woman to serve in the Pennsylvania legislature
- C) Philadelphian to win an Olympic medal
- D) actor from Pennsylvania to win an Oscar

Answer: B

When Anne Brancato Wood died in Philadelphia in 1972, she held several distinctions. In 1932 she became the first Democratic woman to hold a seat in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Just a few years later, in 1935, she became the first woman in Pennsylvania chosen as Speaker Pro Tempore for the House. Wood held her office in the House of Representatives until 1940, and she served again from 1944 to 1946. While in office, Wood supported labor and social legislation. She authored the “Hasty Marriage Act” that required a three-day wait before couples could receive their marriage licenses. She also formed the Pawnbrokers’ Act to protect destitute individuals against unfair treatment from loan sharks and pawnbrokers.

After her final term in office, Wood moved back to Philadelphia where she opened a telephone answering service. She also worked as an insurance and real estate broker. In 1956 she made a run for the state senate but did not win. Despite this setback, she remained active politically active, as seen in her formation of “More Women on the Ballot,” an effort to bring more women into elected political offices. Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo declared March 1, 1979, as “Anne Brancato Wood Day.”
