

**Excerpts from  
“Utah considers placing female statue in nation’s Capitol  
amid national conversation on monuments and values”<sup>1</sup>**

By Lois M. Collins  
Deseret News, 24 January 2018

Utah is famous for giving women the vote decades before other states, but fewer people know Utah also elected the first female to a state senate, clear back in 1896. Now there’s a push on Utah’s Capitol Hill to send that same woman -- Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, who was also a physician -- to Washington to represent the state in the National Statuary Hall Collection in the U.S. Capitol.

Fans of Cannon believe it’s time to emphasize the valuable role that women have played throughout American history. Utah women were leaders in the women’s movement, and “Mattie” Cannon was one of the state’s most precocious and accomplished players.

“We’re part of a valuable movement that is identifying gaps between what we see in our public **iconography** and what we value and hold dear...If we truly value women, their contributions to public and private life and to our modern culture, then we should have powerful visual confirmations of that value in our public images.”

Neylan McBaine, CEO of Better Days 2020 (at time of writing)

Statues are “about **memorializing** those who seem to be important by those who have the power (and) the means to erect them.”

Kathryn MacKay, Weber State University professor (at time of writing)

**Memorials** indicate what matters to those who can erect them, but “statues are not history. They send a message about history.” And statue placement is often not permanent -- as views change, as new heroes emerge, as time passes or other ideas become prominent, they are moved, much like exhibits in museums are rotated.

Barbara Jones Brown, historical director Better Days 2020 (at time of writing)

“We keep hearing 2018 described as the Year of the Woman, of trying to get women more involved and to run for office. I think it puts an exclamation point on those efforts. And it tells a great story that even many Utahns don’t know, that Utah was historically a leader in advancing women.”

Utah State Senator Todd Weiler (at time of writing), co-sponsor of Senate Concurrent Res.1

---

<sup>1</sup> “Utah Considers placing female statue in nation’s Capitol amid national conversation on monuments and values” Deseret News, 24 January 2018;  
(<https://www.deseret.com/2018/1/24/20638834/utah-considers-placing-female-statue-in-nation-s-capitol-a-mid-national-conversation-on-monuments-and> : accessed 13 October 2021)

“Who we place in the public sphere should be a sort of vital, flexible, organic process depending on who and what we value at that time in our culture -- and who has already been valued and who still has an opportunity to be valued in the future.”

Neylan McBaine, CEO of Better Days 2020 (at time of writing)