

Editor's note: FHFG presented Grave Matters Cemetery Tour on October 7, 2017. During this tour, actors – dressed in attire from the era – portray former Forest Grove area residents. FHFG and the author of this script retains all rights to this script. Written permission is required for using any parts of this script.



Manche Langley, Attorney

8/19/1883-7/13/1963

Portrayed by Linda Taylor

Script written by: Cindy Dauer

Traits: Manche was a bright, accomplished leader of great professional integrity, she was charismatic, fun-loving and very caring, especially toward younger attorneys

“People like to call me a pioneer, but not in the traditional Oregon sense of the word with covered wagons and dusty trails. I was a pioneer for women’s rights and women lawyers in my day.

Women were not allowed to vote or serve on a jury when I was the 13th woman admitted to the Oregon Bar in 1909. Instead, women were often considered second class citizens.

Even though I studied and later practiced law with my father at his office - upstairs in the old Caples Building on Main Street - his firm was called, Langley and Son, giving billing to my older brother Lotus but not me.

I practiced law until the day I died at age 79, and throughout my storied career I worked to encourage and support other professional women and lawyers.

I was president of the Women Lawyers Association of Oregon, active in Phi Delta Delta, a national women’s legal fraternity, and a longtime member of the League of Women Voters. I helped found the Queen’s Bench, a professional organization for women attorneys at my alma mater, Lewis & Clark College.

It actually wasn’t called Lewis and Clark College at the time when I officially earned my law degree there in 1927, back then it was Northwestern College of Law.

Nevertheless, to this day there is a scholarship there in my name to support individuals with “superior integrity and intelligence” who wish to pursue a career and education in law, especially women.

I was lucky to be quite educated for a woman in my day. When we moved to Oregon from Kansas in 1891, I attended classes at the Tualatin Academy and later Pacific University where we settled in Forest Grove. I wasn’t pursuing a specific degree, simply taking classes relevant to my interests and my pursuit of law.

I returned to Pacific University in the years after receiving my law degree to lecture and inspire the next generation of lawyers, something I loved to do. I taught for seven years before more opportunities came my way.

From there my career took me to Multnomah County, where I climbed the ranks of the district attorney's office until the end of my career, starting as a deputy and eventually being chief deputy of the domestic relations department.

While law was certainly a passion in my life, I also found time for hobbies and charitable work. I was an active member of the Mazamas, a mountaineering group, and I climbed Mt. Hood, at least twice, I can't recall there were so many hiking adventures. Because of my interest in the mountain, I was invited to oversee the construction of Timberline Lodge during Franklin Roosevelt's administration. It's certainly a lovely building.

And archery. That was a hobby I developed as a child. I had the wonderful opportunity to learn from famed bowmaker and Pacific University archery instructor Friend Barnes. I attended meetings of the Pacific University Archery Club, though I never officially became a member.

Later in my career, I volunteered for the Oregon Prison Association and remained active in the Oregon Democratic Party. I was a member of the Order Eastern Star, and national, state, and county bar associations.

Lotus, my brother, also practiced in Portland and had been active with the democrats for years. He lost several bids for a seat on the bench, both for a circuit court position and state supreme court position, but was elected Multnomah County District attorney in 1931. His term ended there right as my tenure began.

My friends honored me as a humanitarian after my death in 1963. They said I was sensational, incomparable, and unforgettable, and touched the lives of many. Despite my efforts at anonymity, it was said my ever-impulsive, unselfish generosity to those in need became legendary in my lifetime."

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