

Pauline Woodward

1901-1981



Pauline Woodward was born Hazel Pauline Getter on September 28, 1901 to John Chandler Getter and Clara Ann Denny Getter. Her parents were farmers in Logan Township, Butler County, Kansas, just southwest of Leon. She had a younger sister, Irene.

She attended Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas for a year and a half, at which time she transferred to the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Her family moved to Lawrence at this time, providing a home for Pauline and engaging in the grocery business.

“I started there in the second semester of my sophomore year and went another year and a half before transferring to law school,” Pauline later explained. She had planned on getting both degrees at the same time, but found she had transferred a semester too soon.

Although she had earned enough credits to graduate from law school by the spring of 1923, the college began enforcing the rule that a student must attend school for at least three years. They held her for summer school after she had been admitted to the bar, causing her to get her degree in August of 1923 instead of June.

While at the University, Pauline met fellow law student Richard Clarkson Woodward. He had come to Kansas from Helena, Montana in 1920 to study at the University of Kansas. They were married in Lawrence on in November of 1921.

Richard influenced Pauline to switch her course of study from history and political science to law; She influenced Richard to stay in Kansas instead of returning to Montana. Richard received his law degree in 1922, moving to El Dorado to establish a law practice.

The couple had one daughter, Margaret Louise (Peggy), born in 1926. As an adult, Peggy married Robert Merton King in December 1946. They had three children: Mary Margaret, John Woodward (who died in infancy), and Richard Charles.

Robert King, former Butler county attorney, had trained as a Navy pilot during World War II. Though pilots were not needed at that time, he served in the Pacific theater near the end of the war. He was killed in an airplane crash near the southern edge of Butler County in 1960. Mary Margaret and Richard then came to live with their Woodward grandparents.

While Pauline was at the law office, Mary Margaret usually looked after Richard after school. When she later went to Kansas University, Richard came to the law office after school. But eventually Pauline chose to take retirement to be with him.

In February of 1974, The Wichita Eagle published a special-feature article on Pauline Woodward in their "Of Interest to Women" section. IN retirement, she continued to maintain a busy lifestyle, keeping the books and preparing tax returns for Woodward and Woodward, and researching potential members for the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter.

"I guess you could say I keep pretty busy. It seems like I have six months of work ahead of me all the time," she was quoted as saying. A member of the D.A.R. since 1930, she was instrumental in proving the revolutionary ancestry of many of the local members. At one time, she served as the group's past regent and state chairman.

The Woodward's grandson, Richard C. King, joined the law firm in 1976, at which time the name was changed to Woodward, Woodward and King.

As hobbies, Pauline enjoyed sewing, knitting, cooking, and growing roses. She also enjoyed riding horses and playing a game of "contract" with friends.

Pauline held memberships in the Kansas Bar Association, the Butler County Bar Association (where she served a term as president), Phi Delta Delta (the national women's legal fraternity), Alpha Gamma Delta, and was listed in Who's Who Among American Women. She also held membership in the Trinity Episcopal Church, the Eastern Star and the Twentieth Century Club.

She was a former state president of the Children of the American Revolution, as well as former librarian of the Kansas Society of the D.A.R. and a member of the National Genealogical Society. She also served as a board member and D.A.R. director of the Butler County Historical Society, and was a member of the Pennsylvania-German Dutch Society.

CONNECTION TO BUTLER COUNTY

Pauline Getter (Woodward) was a native of Butler County, graduating from Leon High School in 1918. Following graduation from college, she returned to Butler County, working first in the Hamilton and Woodward law office, and later in partnership with her husband, Richard. Early

law offices were in the Taliaferro Building, located at 114 ½ South Main. The Woodward's worked here for approximately 30 years.

In the 1920s, lived at 307 North High. In 1932, the Woodward's purchased a two-story red structure at 1000 West Central; having been built around 1882, it was one of the oldest homes in El Dorado, once owned by publisher Thomas Benton Murdock.

The couple tried to paint it white but the red kept bleeding through. They tried a coat of aluminum paint, which promptly peeled. Giving up, the house was re-painted red. "There was a rumor once that it was in writing that the house was not to be painted any other color but red. But it's not written – it's in the wood," Pauline later commented.

Pauline's parents, John Chandler Getter and Clara Ann Denny, were married in Leon in December of 1897. Her grandparents, John N. and Phebe Ann Getter, had come to Girod, Kansas in the early 1880s before moving to the family farm in Logan Township.

John Getter, a local farmer, was listed in the 1920 census as a grain merchant.

COMING TO THE AREA

After getting his law degree, Richard Woodward came to El Dorado in 1922 where he joined the honorable Judge A.L.L. Hamilton in the law office of Hamilton and Woodward. This partnership lasted until Judge Hamilton's death.

Pauline Woodward stayed behind in Lawrence until her graduation from the university. She came to El Dorado the following year, joining her husband's law office.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Mrs. Woodward received her admission to the bar in 1923. She had become an attorney "because there was some business that came up in the family. It made me think that we needed a lawyer in the family – and there weren't any boys."

Working in her husband's law office as a secretary until their daughter was born, she then took a few years off. In the meantime her husband was elected county attorney, an office he served in from 1931 to 1935.

In 1935, the law firm of Woodward and Woodward was formed, as a husband and wife partnership. In private practice, Mrs. Woodward specialized in abstracts, real estate and probate cases. Never regretting her choice of profession, she believed that legal training would be beneficial for everyone.

Mr. Woodward was appointed as city attorney of El Dorado in 1939. In addition, he had just been elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 1938. He continued as city attorney until 1957, with his wife, Pauline, serving as his assistant, filled in as acting city attorney when Richard was away to the legislature.

During this time, Mr. Woodward was found to have contracted tuberculosis. He was away many times over the next ten years, receiving treatment at Norton State Hospital, in Norton, Kansas, and at a sanatorium in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was gone sometimes for a year at a time, with Pauline filling in for him in El Dorado.

Mr. Woodward served three terms in the Kansas House of Representatives. He was then elected to the State Senate in 1944, where he served until 1957. He was defeated in the Democratic landslide of 1956. At this time, the Woodward's devoted their time to their law practice and to the ranch they owned in Logan Township.

In 1963, the couple purchased the site of their new professional offices, in what would become known as the Woodward Building at 123 West Central Avenue in El Dorado. Modernization of the site involved removing the top floors, converting the structure into a modern one-story building. A notable feature is the front facing of natural Utah turquoise, a delicate blend of blue-green and tawny shading.

RECOGNITION

In 1973, Mrs. Woodward became the first woman in Kansas to have practiced law for 50 years, being so honored at the 1973 meeting of the Kansas University Alumni Association and also at the Kansas Bar Association meeting.

She served as past president of the Butler County Bar Association, and is listed in the first edition of *Who's Who In American Women*.

A memorial was established at the time of her death with the Butler County Community College Endowment Association.

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