



Girl Guides
of Canada
Guides
du Canada



FAMOUS FIVE CHALLENGE BROWNIES



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada and the Famous 5 Foundation formed a partnership to support a national tour of a bronze maquette (smaller version of a monument) of Famous 5 'Persons' Case statues in 2000. The monuments are located in Calgary and Ottawa.

Objective: To learn the names of the Famous 5, their occupations and what they achieved.

Challenge Questions (answers follow). Complete the following challenge questions:

1. What was the 'Persons' Case? Name the five women involved in the 'Persons' Case.
2. Where did these women live at the time of the 'Persons' Case?
3. What types of occupations did these women hold at the time of the 'Persons' Case?
4. Where did the term/phrase, Famous 5, originate?
5. What was the significance of 5 women working together?
6. What prompted these women to launch this case/petition?
7. What tribute was made to the Famous 5 in Alberta? When and where did it occur?

Activities Do at least one of the following:

1. Monument - Visit the Famous 5 Monument in either Calgary or Ottawa or locate it on a map, draw a picture of it, or make a model of it using plasticine or clay.
2. Interactive Story - Assign the girls various roles from the story and the action which goes with the role. Read the story and have the girls participate when their role is mentioned.

Emily Murphy - say "Here Comes the Judge" or "Order in the Court", stand at attention

Nellie McClung - say "Once Upon a Time", pretend to be reading from a book

Henrietta Muir Edwards - say and act out "Y.W.C.A."

Irene Parlby - say "Give Blood - Save a Life", hold out arm to donate blood

Louise McKinney - say "Mr. Speaker" and pound desk (like M.L.A.'s do in parliament)

WOMEN ARE PERSONS - all stand and say together loudly, "WE ARE PERSONS"

Story

Once upon a time, there was a lady named Emily Murphy who was a Judge working in a Court in Edmonton, Alberta. Emily Murphy liked hats, especially ones with large feathers.

One day a lawyer asked why she was a judge, because she was not a person. She found out that the Government did not consider women as persons. This meant that they could not be judges, or be elected to Government. She thought this was wrong. She wanted to be a person. She asked the Alberta Government to decide if she was a person. The Alberta Government said that both men and women were persons, but the Canadian government said they were not the same. The Canadian Government said that women were not persons. Emily Murphy decided that this was wrong.

She decided to ask the Supreme Court of Canada to have women declared as persons. She found out that she needed five people before she could ask them. She asked four of her important friends in Alberta to help her do this.

Her friend, Nellie McClung, who wrote stories, said she would help her. Nellie McClung liked to laugh and tell jokes.

Henrietta Muir Edwards, who helped start the YWCA, said she would help her. Henrietta Muir Edwards was very short, so she liked to stand on a chair to make a speech.

Irene Parlby, who was a Red Cross worker, said she would help. Irene Parlby liked to grow lots of beautiful flowers in her garden.

Another friend, Louise McKinney, said she would help. Louise McKinney often wore a white ribbon to protest against drinking alcohol.

There were now five individuals, so they could ask The Supreme Court of Canada to have women declared as persons. The newspapers heard about Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, and Louise McKinney. They began to call these five ladies the "Famous 5".

The Supreme Court of Canada said no, women were not persons, so the Famous 5 traveled all the way across the ocean to England to ask the Government of England to ask them to have women declared persons. They said **yes, WOMEN ARE PERSONS.**

Because the Famous 5 did something so important for women, we will have two monuments to remind us of how they changed the laws for women. One monument will be located in Calgary and the other will be in Ottawa. There is an extra chair waiting for you to join Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, and Louise McKinney, have tea with them and share in their excitement as they learned that **WOMEN ARE PERSONS.**

Answers

1. The 'Persons' Case refers to a challenge to the laws of Canada, contained in the British North America (BNA) Act, in which women were not considered 'persons' under the law and, therefore, could not hold "appointed" positions such as being appointed to the Senate of Canada. However, women did have the right, at that time, to vote in federal elections and to vote in some provincial elections and some municipal elections. For example, Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby and Louise McKinney
2. They all lived in Alberta at the time of the 'Persons' Case.
3. See profile on each woman following the answer sheet.
4. The media coined the term, Famous 5, that was given to the five women who took part in the 'Persons' Case as it was a landmark decision in Canadian Law. In addition, these women were leaders of, or involved in, many of the reforms to laws affecting women and children and in the formation of many of the institutions which we benefit from today. They truly helped to shape Canada for all of us.
5. In order to bring a petition in front of the Supreme Court of Canada, five people were required to "stand together" to launch the petition. Emily Murphy was the woman who first decided to bring the case to the Supreme Court. When she was informed that five individuals were required to act as a unit, she asked four of her friends, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby and Louise McKinney to join her in this fight.
6. Emily Murphy became the first woman judge in the Commonwealth in 1916. On her first day on the bench a lawyer, who was proceeding with a case in front of her, questioned her right to hear the case because, as a woman, she was not considered a "person" under the law. She asked the Province of Alberta for a ruling on this matter and, in 1917, Alberta declared that both men and women were considered equal under the law. However, this ruling did not apply to federally appointed positions, so she decided to try and change the federal laws that applied to "persons" contained in the BNA act.
7. The Alberta-based Famous 5 Foundation sponsored a monument entitled, "Famous 5 - Nation Builders", depicting the five women involved in the 'Persons' Case. This monument was unveiled on October 18th, 1999 in Calgary, Alberta at Olympic Plaza.

Information on each of the women

Emily Murphy, 1868-1933

- Born in Cookstown, Ontario
- Died in Edmonton, Alberta, at age 65
- First woman magistrate in the British Empire
- Writer and journalist; wrote many books about pioneer life in the West; pen name was Janey Canuck
- Wrote books on drug addiction, mental illness, venereal disease and birth control
- Political and legal reformer
- Suffragist
- President, Canadian Press Club, 1913-1920
- Instrumental in the creation of the Dower Act of 1910 - this Act protected a woman's rights to at least one-third of her husband's property
- Member of the National Council of Women

Nellie McClung, 1873-1951

- Born in Grey County, Ontario
- Died in British Columbia, at age 78
- Suffragist
- Helped to make Manitoba the first province in Canada to give women the right to vote in 1916
- Only female member of the Dominion War Council in 1918
- Political and legal reformer
- Author of 15 books
- Member of WCTU – Women's Christian Temperance Union (to try and prohibit alcohol which was seen as a destroyer of the family)
- Fought for Prohibition (banning the sale of all alcohol)
- Liberal politician, 1921-1926
- Delegate to the League of Nations in 1938
- Founded Winnipeg Women's Rights Reform
- Also campaigned for Dower Rights for Women
- First woman member of the Board of Governors of the CBC
- Member of the Canadian Press Club
- Famous quote "Never retract, never explain, never apologize; get the thing done and let them howl"

Henrietta Muir Edwards, 1849-1931

- Born in Montreal, Quebec
- Died in Fort Macleod, Alberta, at age 82
- Women's Rights Activist
- Political and Legal Reformer
- Founded the Working Girls' Association which provided extra vocational training and support for single, working girls - this became the forerunner of the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association)
- Along with Lady Aberdeen helped to found the VON (Victorian Order of Nurses)
- In 1893 she, along with Lady Aberdeen, helped to found the National Council of Women - the National Council of Women worked (and still works) to improve the conditions for women by reforming laws (examples include the laws granting divorce on equal ground, the introduction of a Mother's allowance, laws concerning equal parental rights to their children after the marriage has ended in divorce, and welfare reform for poor working girls)
- Journalist (she published the first women's magazine)
- Legal Expert
- Artist

Irene Parlby, 1868-1965 (pronounced Irene)

- Born in England
- Died in Edmonton, Alberta, at age 97
- Red Cross worker
- Served on the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta
- First female to receive an honorary degree from the University of Alberta
- Advocate for rural women in Alberta
- Politician, represented Lacombe, Alberta for 14 years
- First female appointed as a cabinet minister in Alberta
- Second female appointed as a cabinet minister in the Commonwealth
- Founded the auxiliary for women of the Farm Workers Union and this evolved into the United Farm Women organization in 1916; she was the first president
- Delegate to the League of Nations in 1930

Louise McKinney, 1868-1931

- Born in Frankville, Ontario
- Died in Edmonton, Alberta, at age 63
- One of the first two women elected to a Legislature in the British Empire
- First woman to sit as a MLA in the Commonwealth in 1917 (which was the first election where women could vote or run for political office)
- Worked towards the formation of the Dower Act
- Women's Rights Activist
- Legislator
- Organizer of the WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union)

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Additional bibliography is listed on the website.

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