

Women in Education in Kentucky

Sophia Kindrick Alcorn (Lincoln, 1883-1967)

Alcorn was a teacher of the deaf and blind who invented the Tadoma method for teaching students to speak using vibrations through the lips and mouth.

Nannie R. Catlett (Caldwell, 1866-1931)

First elected as County School Superintendent in 1897. She later served as Kentucky State School Examiner and published a semi-weekly newspaper, The Princeton Banner.

Jane Coomes (Nelson, n. d.)

Kentucky's first schoolteacher in 1776, she opened Kentucky's first school in Harrodsburg.

Allyson Hughes Handley (Scott, b. 1947)

Hughes was the first female president of Midway College, Kentucky's only women's college, in its 150 year history.

Belle Mitchell Jackson (Boyle, 1848-1942)

The first black teacher at Camp Nelson in Jessamine County and one of the founders of the black Orphan Industrial Home in Lexington.

Helen Lew Lang (Jefferson, b. 1926)

Founded The Crane House in Louisville, an internationally recognized center for learning about Chinese culture and Asian life.

Alice Spencer Geddes Lloyd (Knott, 1876-1962)

Founded Caney Creek Community Center, High School, and Junior College. Caney Creek Junior College later became Alice Lloyd College.

Katherine Pettit (Harlan, 1868-1936)

Established Pine Mountain Settlement School in 1913. She found a Kansas City woman architect to design the school that opened windows on young minds for decades. Today it is an environmental education center.

Alice Slone (Knott, 1904-1994)

Founded Lotts Creek Settlement School in 1933. It is the only one of the 7 settlement schools still open today—a testament to her philosophy of community involvement and ownership.

Lucy Harth Smith (Fayette, 1884-1955)

One of the only women presidents of the Kentucky Negro Education Association, which ceased to exist around 1960. She was instrumental in creating a Black History curriculum.

Jane Stephenson (Madison, b. 1938)

Opened the New Opportunity School for Women in 1986 for financially distressed, out-of-work women who have had little work experience or traditional job skills. After a 3-week residency, women leave with a sense of worth and the courage to face opportunity and conflict.

Cora Wilson Stewart (Rowan, 1875-1958)

The first woman president of the Kentucky Educational Association and the founder of the Moonlight School Movement, an effort to fight adult illiteracy.

May Stone (Knott, 1867-1946)

Along with Katherine Pettit, Stone established Hindman Settlement School in 1902. She remained at Hindman, acting as principal, until 1936.

Addie Talbott (Davies, 1923-1999)

One of Owensboro's most respected teachers and community members, she participated in the integration of Owensboro schools and served on both local and state committees, such as the State Archives and Records Commission and the Owensboro NAACP.

Julia Ann Tevis (Shelby, 1799-1880)

Opened Science Hill Female Academy in 1825. She directed the school for more than 50 years with a philosophy that science and math were important for young women to study.

Marie Roberts Turner (Breathitt, 1900-1984)

Succeeded her husband as the powerful Democratic Superintendent of Schools in Breathitt County, serving from 1931-1969. During her career she abolished one-room schools.