

= Norma Paulus =

Norma Paulus (born March 13 , 1933) is an American lawyer and politician in the state of Oregon . A native of Nebraska , she was raised in Eastern Oregon before becoming a lawyer . A Republican , she first held political office as a representative in the Oregon House of Representatives , and then became the first woman to hold a statewide elected office in Oregon when she became Oregon Secretary of State in 1977 . Paulus later served as Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction for nine years . She had failed bids to become Governor of Oregon and United States Senator . She lives in Portland where she is involved with several non @-@ profit groups and sponsored a ballot measure to create open primaries in Oregon 's statewide elections .

= = Early life = =

Norma Jean Petersen was born in Belgrade , Nebraska , on March 13 , 1933 . She was raised as one of seven children in Eastern Oregon , where she graduated from Burns Union High School in Burns , in 1950 . Paulus started her career as the secretary for the district attorney for Harney County in Burns , Oregon .

After recovering from polio she moved to Salem , Oregon (the state 's capitol) , and worked as a legal secretary , including working for Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl C. Latourette . At this time Latourette recommended Paulus to attend law school , which she did at Willamette University without a college degree , enrolling in 1956 . While in law school she met her future husband William G. Paulus . Norma Paulus graduated with honors from Willamette University College of Law in Salem with a LL.B. in 1962 . Following law school Paulus worked in private practice until entering politics .

= = Political career = =

Paulus began her political career by winning election to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1970 . Elected as a Republican , she represented Salem and Marion County in District 11 . She won re @-@ election in 1972 and 1974 to additional two @-@ year terms in the House with her district changing to District 31 , serving through the 1975 special legislative session . Paulus was then elected as Oregon 's first female Secretary of State in 1976 , the first time a woman won election to a statewide office in Oregon .

She took office on January 3 , 1977 , and served through January 7 , 1985 , after winning re @-@ election to a second four @-@ year term in 1980 . Paulus keeps a small statue of a lion on a desk in her downtown Portland home that was given to her in October 1981 by the northeast Portland Lions Club when she was inducted as their first female member . The next day , Paulus was visited in her office at the Oregon Capitol by the president of the statewide Oregon Lions Club . He had come to ask Paulus to return the Portland club 's gift . He did not think the statue ? or membership into the club ? should have been given to a woman .

She was one of the speakers at a national conference for women legislators in 1982 . Paulus remarked in her speech that " We have come a long way " referring to women in politics . In 1984 , followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh bused homeless people to Wasco County in an attempt to sway local elections . As Secretary of State , Paulus recommended the county institute emergency procedures to restrict these transients from registering to vote , which the Rajneeshes challenged in federal court . At that time Oregon allowed citizens to register to vote on the same day as an election . Then federal district judge Edward Leavy ruled against the Rajneeshes , determining the emergency procedures were proper . The religious sect later faced government investigations over immigration fraud , a related failed murder plot , and the first bioterrorist attack in the United States .

Following her two terms as the Secretary of State , Paulus ran for governor in 1986 . She won the Republican primary in May , but lost to Democrat Neil Goldschmidt in the November election . While campaigning for the office she had been a critic of the new MAX Light Rail that opened that year .

Paulus was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to help oversee the 1986 Filipino presidential elections .

In 1987 , she was appointed as one of two Oregon members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council . While on the council , she was a supporter of regional fish habitat protection . She resigned her position on the Council in late 1989 to run for Oregon Superintendent of Public Instruction after the retirement of Verne Duncan .

Goldschmidt later appointed her as the Superintendent of Public Instruction on October 1 , 1990 . Paulus won election to a full four @-@ year term in that office later in the year , and was re @-@ elected in 1994 . Paulus then ran for the United States Senate in the December 5 , 1995 , special primary election . The election was for the nominations to replace Bob Packwood who resigned . Paulus lost to Gordon Smith in the Republican primary . Smith then lost to Ron Wyden in the general election before he was elected later in 1996 to fill the vacancy left when Mark Hatfield retired .

As state superintendent , Paulus helped introduce statewide assessment testing for grades 3 , 5 , 8 , and 11 in 1991 . Other education reforms introduced that year were the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) that were designed to replace the high school diploma in Oregon . These were optional programs which were part of a broader program that included issuing a report card outlining the progress as a state , as required by a law the state legislature passed in 1991 . Paulus also supported school to work initiatives for reforming public education while in office , which were part of the 1991 reforms . At the time Paulus was one of only ten women in the nation to hold the top education position in their state . She left the office on January 4 , 1999 , after two terms . In 2007 , the Oregon Legislature eliminated the optional certificates from schools in the state .

= = Later life and family = =

Norma and her husband William (Bill) have two children , Elizabeth and Fritz . In 1996 , she was named to National Assessment Governing Board by US Secretary of Education Richard Riley . She has been conferred with honorary degrees by Willamette University in 1999 , Whitman College , Lewis & Clark College , and Linfield College . In December 2000 , she was appointed as the executive director of the Oregon Historical Society and served in that position until 2003 . Since April 2000 , Paulus has served on the Oregon State Capitol Foundation Board . She is an original member of the organization and has served as chair of the group . She also serves on the boards of the High Desert Museum in Bend , the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport , and the City Club of Portland . In 2004 , she received University of Oregon 's Distinguished Service Award .

She worked to raise funds for a statue honoring former governor and longtime friend Tom McCall , with the statue completed and installed in Salem along the Willamette River in 2008 . In 2008 , Paulus and co @-@ petitioner Phil Keisling , also a former Oregon Secretary of State , brought Ballot Measure 65 to the November ballot , in an effort to reform the state 's primary election system for partisan races .