

Madelyn Hurlburt - Tolland Middle School

Ella Grasso

Ella Rosa Giovanna Oliva Tambussi Grasso was born in 1919 and died at the age of 61. She was the first ever woman governor in the U.S. without succeeding her husband. Her husband was Thomas Grasso. Ella Tambussi and Thomas Grasso got married in 1942. They had 2 kids, Susanne and James. Ella Grasso was elected governor in 1974. She was re-elected in 1978 but was unable to finish her second term due to her death caused by ovarian cancer. Ella's parents were James Guacomo Tambussi (father) and Maria Oliva (mother). Her parents were Italian immigrants, her father was a mill worker. Ella Grasso was the 83rd governor of Connecticut. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan posthumously presented Ella the Presidential Medal of Freedom and was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1993. In 1994 Ella was a member of the inaugural class and inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.

Ella Grasso was a Democrat before 1942 and after 1951. She was a Republican from 1942 to 1951. In 1958 Ella was elected Secretary Of The State Of Connecticut and was re-elected in 1962 and 1966. She was an architect of the state's 1960 Constitution. During the 1970 election, Ella was considered a candidate for higher statewide or federal office. After Senator Thomas J. Dodd was censured in 1967, his seat was left open and Ella was considered a possible candidate for the 1970 senate race with the Democratic Town Committees of Windsor 1

Locks, Glastonbury, and New Milford voting to endorse her if she would announce a Senate Campaign.

Ella participated in a difficult primary against Attorney General Robert Killian, who received the support of multiple party leaders, but after narrowly winning the seventy delegates of Hartford by two thousand votes, she effectively secured the nomination with her committed delegates. Following John Moran Bailey's death, there was no longer someone strong enough to prevent a primary challenge between Ella and Lieutenant Governor Robert K. Killian. In December 1978, Killian announced his gubernatorial campaign, but after defeating her primary challenge, Grasso was re-elected in 1978 with little difficulty against Representative Ronald A. Sarasin.

Ella Grasso died on February 5, 1981. It had been less than a year since she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She died after suffering a heart attack and organ failure after falling into a coma earlier that day. Following her death, she was laid to state from February 8 to 9 at the Connecticut State Capitol. And was later buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Windsor Locks.

I enjoyed learning more about Ella Grasso because she paved the way for women in politics. I hear a lot about politics from my family, so it was interesting to learn more about it.