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Photos available upon request.

CARLIN SPEAKS ABOUT PAVING THE WAY AT FORT RILEY WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

By Mike Heronemus

Editor



When things aren't right, someone has to pave the way, Kansas Rep. Sydney Carlin seemed to be emphasizing to her audience at the post observance of Women's Equality Day Aug. 25 at

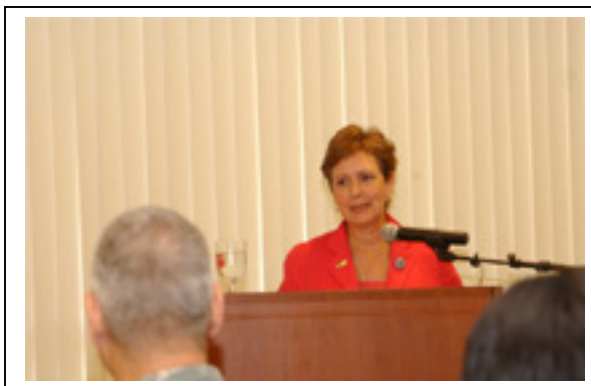
Riley's Conference Center.

She illustrated her points with references to women in America's history who played prominent roles in achieving some equality for black people of their time and obtaining the vote for women.

She added a personal example in much more recent years and the example of women in the military throughout the Army's history and today in Afghanistan and other countries.

Carlin's introduction to politics came when her county commission decided to expand the county jail with plans to put it on a public playground across the street from the Catholic school her children attended.

When the church's priest protested the commission's decision, he was told he had "no right to tell the commission what to do." That realization of prejudice prompted Carlin and six other women to gather around a kitchen table and to organize a protest group to stop the commission's plans. It took 12 years, but they succeeded in their quest after several significant failures and a public education effort that constantly jumped hurdles placed before them by the politicians already in power, she said.



Carlin and other women in her original Jail CORP (Coalition for Responsible Placement) have gone on to leadership positions in their chosen fields of government, education, women's



betterment and the military. Along the way, they learned how to battle the inequality that exists in our society, but Carlin admitted they did not face the obstacles the early champions of women's rights faced or even that women in some other countries still face. For example, the women in Afghanistan have practically none of the freedoms that women in the United States enjoy, she said. They have no choice in who they marry, no choice in their

education and no say in business, she pointed out, although that is beginning to change.

The military, too, she said, has had its periods of inequality between the sexes. Even today, however, some prohibitions restrict women from being everything that male Soldiers can be, she reminded. In her situation regarding the new jail, it was three entrenched male politicians who made the initial decision about where to put a new jail. They had not thought about, or had no concerns

about, the inmates contained by large fences and razor wire being so close to a school and church and the effect that might have on the students.

The six women might not have won their battle without garnering noticeable community support to give their concerns a popular voice. With that support, Jail CORP accomplished its goal, she said. "When we work together, we accomplish the most," she said.

