

Resolution C-185

Commemoration of Elizabeth Huntington Dyer in the Church Calendar.

Submitted by the Diocese of Missouri's GC81 Deputation

BE IT RESOLVED that this 185th Convention of the Diocese of Missouri directs the Secretary of the 187th Convention (in 2026) to forward a copy of this resolution to the Resolutions Committee of Province V for consideration by the next Provincial Synod;
{expected to be in 2027}

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the 187th Convention of the Diocese of Missouri be directed to assure the following Resolution and Explanation (italicized below) is forwarded to the Resolutions Committee of the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church {incorporating any improvements from the 2027 Provincial Synod if they pass the Resolution};

**RESOLVED, the House of _____ concurring,
that the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church hereby directs the inclusion on the Calendar of the Church Year of Elizabeth Huntington Dyer, the first woman to serve as Lay Deputy to General Convention, and authorize for trial use for the triennium 2027-2030 to be observed annually on September 10.**

EXPLANATION:

Elizabeth Huntington Dyer was the first woman from any diocese to serve as Lay Deputy to General Convention. At Diocesan Convention in 1946, "Mrs. Randolph Dyer" was elected as lay deputy to represent the Diocese of Missouri at the 55th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Philadelphia PA that fall (September 10-20, 1946). She presented her credentials to the Secretary of the House of Deputies, but when the House was called to order, question was raised about the meaning and interpretation of the word "layman." The interpretation was made that the term meant both men and women, and Mrs. Dyer was seated with voice and vote and served as chief of Missouri's lay deputies.

In 1949, Missouri elected and sent Alice Cowdry to the 56th General Convention. Two other dioceses and one missionary district also sent women as lay deputies. This time, Convention chose to pass a resolution 321 to 242, stating that under the Constitution, women were not eligible to serve.

It would be 20 years before the House of Deputies would again include women. In October 1970, when the 63rd General Convention met, the final barrier was removed with final approval of Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution, substituting "lay person" for layman, with the House of Bishops concurring. Twenty-eight women were seated.

*Elizabeth Huntington Dyer remains as the first woman to serve as Lay Deputy to the General Convention of The Episcopal Church. (See article *Women Delegates: Early Attempts in The Archives of the Episcopal Church*, in Episcopalarchives.org., [Women Delegates: Early Attempts | The Archives of the Episcopal Church \(episcopalarchives.org\)](http://Episcopalarchives.org))*