



CENTER FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY
JOHN W. MCCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Betty Taymor and Her Legacy for Women in Politics



The first-in-the nation [Graduate Certificate Program for Women in Politics & Public Policy](#) was founded by [Betty Taymor](#) in 1968 at Simmons College. At that time, it was called the Program for Women in Politics and Government, as it was developed to educate women about the governmental process, to encourage them to run for elective office and to guide them through the enormous obstacles of running for public office. The program moved to Boston College in 1971, where it flourished for 20 years with Betty Taymor as director. In 1992, with support from Chancellor Sherry Penney and women faculty, the program moved to the University of Massachusetts Boston, where it was renamed the Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy. Understanding and implementing public policy had moved to a prominent position and is now a focal point of the program. Over 900 alums have pursued leadership roles in elective office, academia, and nonprofits and have been influential in creating public policy.

In 1994, following the lead of the program and with support from the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, the [Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy](#) was established at UMass Boston, giving the program a permanent home. The center's [mission](#) is to promote diverse women's leadership to achieve more just, equitable, and responsive public and institutional policies and meaningful inclusion through the Gender, Leadership and Public Policy (GLPP) graduate certificate programs; applied research on electoral representation and intersectional public policy analysis, relating to the economic, health and social well-being of women and families; and public convenings that mobilize community and women's political participation. In addition to its research publications, the center hosts research forums and sponsors panels and events centered on topics central to women. The center serves as a resource for the empowerment of women from diverse communities. In our work we employ an anti-racist and intersectional approach taking into account persistent systemic inequities relating to race, ethnicity, gender identity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, and other identities.

About Betty Taymor

Betty Taymor was born and raised in Baltimore. She holds a BA from Goucher College, a master's in government from Boston University, and was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor in Humane Letters from Goucher. The Gender, Leadership and Public Policy graduate certificate program (originally the Program for Women in Politics and Government, and then the Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy) was conceived in 1968 as part of a federal grant for innovations targeting women's political involvement. Betty helped administer the successful one-year grant and was then off and running. In 1971, Boston College welcomed Betty and the program, where it thrived with Betty as director for 20 years. In 1992, the program moved to UMass Boston. Betty combined an academic career with a strong commitment to politics and the Democratic Party.





Betty was Massachusetts coordinator for the campaigns of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, and Congressman Robert F. Drinan, but her success with them did not generate a win for her when she ran for state representative. On a national level, she was an eight-term delegate to the Democratic National Convention and was a member of the U.S. National Commission of UNESCO. In her hard-hitting memoir, *Running Against the Wind: The Continuing Struggle of Women in Massachusetts Politics*, Betty wrote about her own experiences running for office and addressed the reasons for women's lack of success in breaking through the political glass ceiling in Massachusetts. Her writing style is engaging, and her specific examples of how "politics works" in the Commonwealth have a universal application.

Betty was married to Dr. Melvin L. Taymor, who, until his death, was always very supportive of her work. Betty has three children and lives in Dedham.

Highlights of Betty's life include the following:

- Served as Delegate to the Democratic National Convention on multiple occasions.
- Ran twice for Massachusetts State Representative.
- Directed the Program for Women in Politics and Public Policy for 20 years.
- Worked for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- Worked to advance women's roles in politics in a time when women all over the nation were fighting for increased rights and overall equality in all aspects of life.
- Wrote [*Running Against the Wind: The Struggle of Women in Massachusetts Politics*](#).

The Betty Taymor Collection

[Letter from President John F. Kennedy](#) (November 5, 1958)

A letter written by John F. Kennedy thanking Betty for her support of the Democratic party.

[Letter from Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey](#) (September 14, 1968)
Vice President Humphrey praises Betty Taymor for her role as a delegate in the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

[Letter from Evelyn Murphy](#) (November 5, 1986)

A letter in which Evelyn Murphy, the first woman to hold the office of lieutenant governor in the State of Massachusetts, thanks Betty Taymor in supporting her efforts to reach said position.

[Letter from President Bill Clinton](#) (November 4, 1992)

A letter in which Bill Clinton thanks Betty Taymor for her support in his bid at obtaining the United States presidency, and how he looks forward to working with her in the future.

[Oral History Interview with Betty Taymor](#) (2016)

Edward M. Kennedy Institute

