

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Paula Johnson Purdue

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
Oral History project

Interview # ISE-A-L-2018-061

Paula Johnson Purdue, a teacher, lobbyist and activist for women's equality in Illinois, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft - ERA Fight in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Oct 16, 2018 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Dr. Jan Droegkamp, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview being  
processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:49 / 1.81 hrs.

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,  
Illinois.

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## Abstract

Paula Johnson Purdue, *ERA Fight in Illinois*, ISE-A-L-2018-061

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Paula Johnson was born in February 1947 in Hillsboro, Illinois to Harold and Pat Johnson who were engaged in farming. Her hometown was Raymond, IL where she graduated from Lincolnwood High School in 1965. She earned a BA degree in Home Economics Education in 1969 at Illinois State University (ISU). She went on to study vocational education at Michigan State University, earning a master's degree. Her interest in politics later in life motivated her to also earn a MS degree in political science at the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS). Paula Johnson married James R. Purdue, a retired curator of zoology at ISU, in 1981. Their daughter Jenni was born in 1983.

Paula taught home economics at Battle Creek High School, Michigan, from 1969-1973, and was a teacher and the Department Chair of Home Economics at Thornton High School, Illinois from 1974-1976. In 1976 she was hired as a lobbyist for the Illinois Education Association (IEA) and served in that position until 2004. After leaving the IEA she worked as a lobbyist for various clients through 2012. The IEA was a major supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and dominated her time as a lobbyist with that organization. She knew the key political players involved in the protracted legislative effort to pass ERA, and observed pro and anti ERA players.

Ms. Purdue was a Trustee of the Illinois Education Association Pension System and from 2012 served on the State Political Board of Planned Parenthood. She was also a member of AAUW (American Association of University Women). During the 2018 passage of the ERA she worked with COWL (Conference of Women Legislators) and observed her daughter Jenni who has taken over her lobbying clients.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Equal Rights Amendment; ERA fight in Illinois, 1972-1982; Illinois Education Association; lobbying for ERA; Illinois State University; Michigan State University; Conference of Women Legislators; Planned Parenthood; Home Economics

**Note to the Reader:** Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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