

Women's suffrage pioneers the Famous Five honoured in new downtown Edmonton mural



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Metro Edmonton



A mural depicting the Famous Five, a group of Alberta women who fought for women's suffrage and equality in Canada, was unveiled Tuesday at the Melcor parkade, 102 Street and 100 Avenue.

Metro/Laurie Callsen

Behind an unsuspecting parkade in downtown Edmonton looms the Famous Five, the pioneers behind Canada's women's suffrage movement of the early 1900s.

Unveiled Tuesday by Alberta Premier Alison Redford and Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel, the mural

Unveiled Tuesday by Alberta Premier Alison Redford and Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel, the mural graces the walls of the Melcor parkade at 10027-102 Street NW.

“When I look at these five women and when I think about them ... I remember understanding as a university student what really sparked them to get involved,” said Redford at the unveiling.

“Very often, it was living in their communities and seeing things that needed to be fixed to ensure people’s voices, to ensure that people were empowered, and that they were connected to what was going on in their community. Each of them in their own way was involved in ways ... where they brought a voice for people who didn’t have a voice.”

The mural depicts portraits of Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Muir Edwards and Nellie McClung, separating scenes of the women’s rights movements from the early 1900s to the 1970s.

“What can one say about these fabulous five women that we are now on a first name basis. I think it’s quite fantastic that this group of people were able to come up with an idea to recognize these five amazing women who really changed the course of history in our country,” Mandel said.

The Famous Five, all from Alberta, won a ruling in October 1929 to change the constitution by recognizing that women could be elected as politicians and be recognized as persons. Many say their work paved the way for several women’s rights movements across Canada.

Edmonton artist Kris Friesen called the project one giant comic book, and said he felt privileged to take part.

“This project was a really great challenge to visually summarize the five, but also to show a variety of movements in women’s rights,” he said.

The mural is the eighth [Giants of Edmonton](http://www.edmonton.ca/environmental/capital_city_cleanup/giants-of-edmonton.aspx) (http://www.edmonton.ca/environmental/capital_city_cleanup/giants-of-edmonton.aspx) project by Capital City Cleanup to deter graffiti.

Famous Five

- Emily Murphy, the British Empire’s first female judge
- Irene Parlby, women’s leader in farming, activist and first female Cabinet minister in Alberta
- Nellie McClung, a suffragist and member of the Alberta legislature
- Louise McKinney, the first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, or any legislature in Canada or the rest of the British Empire
- Henrietta Muir Edwards, an advocate for working women and a founding member of the Victorian Order of Nurses.



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