

ELAINE NOBLE

b. January 22, 1944

POLITICIAN

"I was elected in spite of being gay."

She was the first-ever openly gay candidate elected to a state office.

Elaine Noble served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives for two terms starting in 1975, becoming the first-ever openly gay candidate elected to a state office. Noble says that during her controversial, groundbreaking campaign, her windows were shot out, her car was vandalized, and she and her staff suffered ongoing harassment. She still managed to win the election.

"I was elected in an largely Irish Catholic town," she later said. "There was a level of animosity in all strata of society against homosexuality." Noble's victory came three years before Harvey Milk, the gay San Francisco supervisor, was shot to death.

In 1977 Noble was among the first delegation of gays and lesbians invited to the White House by President Jimmy Carter. She helped form the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus with Ann Lewis, the sister of former U.S. Congressman Barney Frank. Frank was not out about his sexuality at the time.

Noble ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate and went on to work for Boston Mayor Kevin White. At the time, she was romantically involved with the writer Rita Mae Brown.

In 1986 Noble helped create the Pride Institute, an LGBT alcohol and drug treatment center in Minneapolis. She eventually moved to Florida to teach and sell real estate. She also became involved in the local Democratic Party. In 2009 she helped raise money to build the Palm Beach LGBT Center.



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