



Photo: U.S. House of Representatives

Katie Hall

Gary, Lake County

April 3, 1938 – February 20, 2012

On April 3, 1938, Katie Hall was born in Mississippi. She received a bachelor's degree from Mississippi Valley State University and a master's degree from Indiana University in Bloomington in 1968. She then taught social studies in Gary, Indiana.

Hall was elected to the Indiana state house of representatives in 1974. She then was elected to the state senate, where she served from 1976 until 1982. In September of 1982, the Indiana Representative for the 1st U.S. District died while running for re-election. After a contentious process, she became the Democratic nominee for the November election and then became the first African-American woman from Indiana to serve in the U.S. Congress after winning the general election.

Among her chief accomplishments was introducing a bill to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday. Since King's assassination in 1968, similar measures had been introduced, but all had failed. The primary argument against these bills was the large cost to the federal government because the previous bills had designated a fixed date of King's January 15th birthday. In July 1983, she introduced a bill that designated the third Monday in January to prevent government offices from having to open twice in one week and thereby saving money. On August 2, 1983, the bill passed the House and on November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed it into law.

During her 1984 bid for re-election, Hall lost the Democratic nomination to Pete Visclosky during the May Primary. After Congress, she continued to be active in politics and tried unsuccessfully to recapture the Democratic nomination in 1986 and in 1990. She returned to Gary and served as vice chair of the city's housing board. She became the Gary city clerk in 1985, but resigned in January 2003 after pleading guilty to charges of federal mail fraud.

On February 20, 2012, Katie Hall died at the age of 73, in Gary, Indiana.

- For more information about Katie Hall, go to:
<http://history.house.gov/People/DetailPid=14359>.
- For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to:
<http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

Additional and more detailed references available at the end of Women's History Month

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