

The Montana Constitution at Fifty Speaker Series

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1972 constitution, the Montana Historical Society is dedicating its May Thursday afternoon lecture series to exploring the history, legacy, and impact of the 1972 Montana State Constitution.

All presentations are in the MHS auditorium and livestreamed on the [MHS YouTube Channel](#) unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, May 5, 4:30 pm.

Rewriting Montana's Constitution: How It Happened, with Chuck Johnson



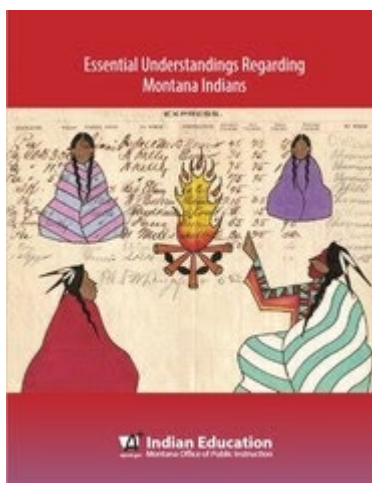
Retired journalist Chuck Johnson will look at how Montanans, by the narrowest of margins in 1972, ratified a modern constitution with a strong bill of rights, environmental protection, and other reforms to replace the previous creaky state charter adopted in 1889.

Johnson will explore how the changing political currents in the 1960s and plenty of advance studies paved the way for the convention to succeed.

Delegates to the 1972 Constitutional Convention sat alphabetically and worked across party line to hammer out the new state charter that has won praise from experts and remains in place today.

Thursday, May 12, 4:30 p.m.

Indian Education and the 1972 Montana Constitution, a panel discussion with Carol Juneau and Joyce Silverthorne, moderated by Mike Jetty



In 1972, Montana citizens rewrote the state's Constitution and at this historic gathering they included a unique Constitutional mandate to teach about American Indians. This commitment was reaffirmed in 1999 with the passage of Indian Education for All.

Join OPI Indian Education Specialist Mike Jetty, retired legislator and educator Carol Juneau, and Joyce Silverthorne, former director of the Office of Indian Education at the Department of Education, for a discussion on how the constitution's recognition of "the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians" and its commitment "in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity" created an opportunity for Montana to lead the nation in teaching all K-12 students about the state's tribal nations.

Thursday, May 19, 4:30 p.m.

Women and the 1972 Constitution, with Diane Sands

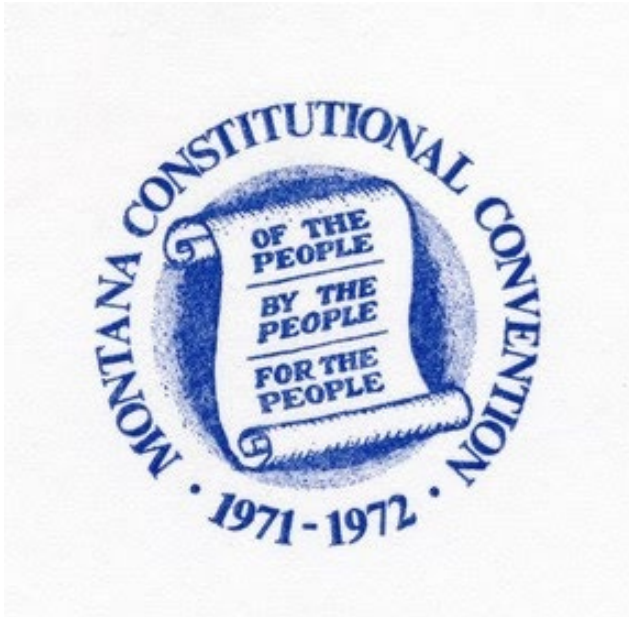


In 1969, members of the Montana League of Women Voters identified constitutional reform as the most critical step toward more open, efficient, and democratic state government. League members successfully campaigned to call a constitutional convention, served, alongside other women, as convention delegates, and were vital in the campaign to adopt the new constitution.

Join feminist historian Diane Sands will discuss the women who served as constitutional convention delegates and how the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, and other women's organizations helped shape the new constitution and assured its adoption.

Thursday, May 26, 4:30 p.m.

Before and After the Montana Constitution of 1972, a panel discussion with Bob Brown and Dorothy Bradley, moderated by Evan Barrett



Bob Brown and Dorothy Bradley served in the Montana state legislature before and after the passage of the 1972 Constitution.

Constitutional historian Evan Barrett will moderate a panel discussion with Bradley and Brown, as they discuss their memories of how constitutional provisions surrounding the public's right to know and participate in governmental proceedings transformed Montana politics.

Brown and Bradley will also talk about work the legislature engaged in to align Montana law to the new constitutional mandates, including the passage of laws designed to implement the new constitution's promise of "equal protection," and the prohibition of discrimination based on "race, color, sex, culture, social origin or condition, or political or religious ideas."