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CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: MAE STREET KIDD (PUBLIC SERVANT)



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LOUISVILLE — Mae Street Kidd was born in Millersburg in 1904. Her father was white and her mother was of mixed race. She was educated at Lincoln Institute in Shelby County and then moved to Louisville to work for the African American-owned Mammoth Life Insurance Co. During World War II, Street served the army with the American Red Cross, where she met her second husband, James Meredith Kidd.

In 1968, Kidd reluctantly ran for the General Assembly from Louisville's 41st District. She won by a landslide and served her district until 1985. She was the first woman elected

secretary of the Democratic caucus, the first woman to serve on the Rules Committee and the first woman elected as the chair of the Enrollment Committee. She became known as the "Lady of the House."

During her tenure, Kidd sponsored a number of civil rights-related bills, including an open-housing bill. One of her most proud accomplishments, though, was in 1976 when she helped Kentucky ratify the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The laws had passed the required number of states to be enacted upon their initial proposal in the 19th century, but Kentucky had refused to ratify them at that point.

Kidd lost her seat in the 1984 election, but continued to serve her community with different initiatives, especially for women and girls.

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