

# Hazel Abel

Hazel Hempel Abel was born on July 10, 1888 in Plattsmouth, Nebraska. She attended Omaha High School and graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1908. She became a high school teacher in math, English, Latin, and German. In 1916, she married George Abel. After her marriage, she left teaching to act as the secretary-treasurer of the Abel Construction Company. Upon her husband's death in 1937, she became the company's president, a position she held until 1951. Abel was also an advocate for the reform of Nebraska's children laws, especially concerning the juvenile probation system and juvenile courts. After a special election on November 2, 1954, Abel became the first female US Senator to succeed a female US Senator, Eva Bowring. She carried 86 of Nebraska's 93 counties and 58% of the total vote. During her 60-day term as an US Senator, she helped to bring about the censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy for his role in the Red Scare. At the time, Abel was one of only two female senators, the other being Margaret Chase Smith of Maine. In January 1955, Abel was replaced by Carl Curtis. While she was only in office for two months, Abel's election to the Senate raised the visibility of women in political office. In 1956, she chaired the Nebraska Republican state delegation at the national convention and, in 1957, she was chosen as the American Mother to address the Mothers of the World at the Brussels International Exposition. Abel died on July 30, 1966 in Lincoln, Nebraska and is buried in Wyuka Cemetery.



## Primary Sources

Congressional Record

## Secondary Sources

*A Minority in Congress: Women in the U. S. Congress* by Hope Chamberlin