

## THANK YOU!

### The speakers

Brian Schoenjahn  
Jacquie McTaggart  
William Sherman

### The family of May Francis

Children of Margaret J. (Francis) Fuller

### The stone provider

White Funeral Home

### The concrete work

Matt Mensching

### The contributors

Littleton and Chatham Historical Society  
Littleton Cemetery Association  
Buchanan County Supervisors

If self government is to continue as a successful form of government, we must present an ever increasing intelligence and devotion to duty at the ballot box and must show an increased respect for the duly elected and constituted officers of our government; who in turn must show a deep devotion to duty, rather than a mere shallow camouflage at duty for the purpose of a continuation in office.

MAY E. FRANCIS

*An Analysis of The Constitution of the United States and The Constitution of Iowa*

## **MAY E. FRANCIS Ph. D.**

Commemorative Grave Marker Dedication

Littleton Cemetery

Sunday September 15th, 2013 1:30 PM



Nov. 2, 1880-Apr. 3, 1968

State Superintendent of Public Instruction 1923-1927

Iowa Women's Hall of Fame 2003

Educator, Scholar, Author

May E. Francis, Ph.D., a nationally recognized educator, author, scholar, and historian, was born November 2, 1880 in rural Mapleton, Minnesota. May's father passed away when she was four and in 1895 her mother and siblings moved to Sumner Twp., Buchanan County, Iowa. May completed high school in three years and in 1899 received her first teaching certificate at the age of 18 while residing in Independence. Her family then moved to the farm in Fairbank Township north of Littleton and Chatham. She attended Normal School training at the Iowa State Teacher's College receiving a Bachelor of Didactics in 1907 and a Natural Science B.A. in 1910. May became Superintendent of Schools in Denver, Iowa and went on to become the Bremer County Superintendent, then Inspector of Rural Schools. She drafted the Standard School Law and developed the regulations to implement the law, which was designed to improve educational programs in one-room schools. In 1922, May became the first woman to be elected to statewide public office in Iowa, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Her one term as State Superintendent was marked by controversy: she advocated high school teachers must complete at least two years of college, opposed school dress codes, and championed the one-room school and spending restraint. In 1923 Francis received her M.A. degree from Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York. She lost the republican primary in 1926. May received a Ph.D. from the University of Texas in 1934. She also translated from the German, *Ein Verstehtes Leben*, "A Wasted Life", to the adaptation, *The Hermit of the Cavern*. Following her education, she undertook a varied career of teaching, government work, writing, and a final unsuccessful run in 1942 for State Superintendent. She returned to Iowa, settling in Waterloo. Miss Francis taught in total 15 ½ years. Her popular historical novel, *Bowie's Lost Mine*, changed to *Jim Bowie's Lost Mine*, had five printings; the final edition was published in 1970. She also authored elementary spelling textbooks. May Francis died April 3, 1968 and is buried in the Littleton Cemetery outside of Littleton and Chatham, Iowa. Due to the efforts of William Sherman, May was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 2003.

[http://www.women.iowa.gov/about\\_women/HOF/iafame-francis.html](http://www.women.iowa.gov/about_women/HOF/iafame-francis.html)  
Additional research by Anthony A. Bengston

#### Speeches by-

**Brian Schoenjahn-** Speaking on May's political career.  
Iowa State Senator, District 32

**Jacque McTaggart-** Speaking on May's writing career.  
Author and Teacher

**William Sherman-** Speaking on May's career in rural education.  
Iowa Country School Preservationist &  
founding member of Country School Association of America

#### Commemorative marker unveiling by-

The family of May Elizabeth Francis-  
Great nieces and nephews of May Elizabeth Francis are  
the children of Margaret J. (Francis) Fuller, daughter  
of Ralph and Floe Francis