

Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins

Born and reared in Duncan, Oklahoma, Jari Askins was sworn in as Oklahoma's 15th Lieutenant Governor in 2007, giving her the rare distinction of being involved in public service in all three branches of state government.

After graduating from Duncan High School, Askins received her BA in Journalism from the University of Oklahoma and earned a Juris Doctorate from the OU College of Law. Askins served as Special District Judge for the District Court of Stephens County for eight years, from 1982-1990. In 1991, the Governor appointed her to the Pardon and Parole Board, which elected her as its first woman Chairman. She later served as Executive Director of the Pardon and Parole Board and as Deputy General Counsel to the Governor. These experiences helped develop criminal and juvenile justice issues as her special expertise.

Askins was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1994 from District 50 (Stephens, Comanche and Cotton Counties) and served for twelve years. In her last term (2005-2006), she earned the position of Democratic House Leader, becoming the first woman to lead a caucus in the Oklahoma Legislature. She won statewide election as Lieutenant Governor in November 2006, becoming the first Democratic woman to attain that position.

Lieutenant Governor Askins has received numerous awards during her career in public service. Honors include "outstanding legislator" awards from more than two dozen organizations, the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation President's Award, the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women Kate Barnard Award, and the "Commitment to Excellence Award" from the Oklahoma Academy. She was inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 2001.

Askins is a Director of Arvest Bank in Duncan and a member of the Duncan Noon Lions Club, the Duncan Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Academy of State Goals, and the First Christian Church.

As Lieutenant Governor, Askins is President of the State Senate. She also serves on numerous boards and commissions and chairs the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission and the Oklahoma Film and Music Advisory Commission. The Lieutenant Governor is an advocate for children and for greater efficiency in government. Governor Brad Henry has appointed her "Oklahoma's Small Business Advocate," tasked with providing assistance to small business owners throughout the state. She also participates in and promotes various economic development projects and supports legislation and innovative means of providing greater hope and opportunity for Oklahoma's citizens.