



Isabella Greenway: An Enterprising Woman

Kristie Miller

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She was at home on the western range and in New York salons. An energetic entrepreneur who managed a ranch, an airline, and a resort. A politician who became a key player in the New Deal. Isabella Greenway blazed a trail for remarkable women in Arizona politics today, from Janet Napolitano to Sandra Day O'Connor. Now Kristie Miller offers an intimate view of this extraordinary woman.

Isabella Greenway's life was linked with both Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Her infancy was spent on a snow-swept ranch in North Dakota, where young TR was a neighbor and a friend. In her teens, she captivated Edith Wharton's New York as a glamorous debutante. A bridesmaid in the wedding of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, Isabella was the bride of Robert Ferguson, a Scottish nobleman and one of TR's Rough Riders. They went west when he developed tuberculosis; after his death, she married his fellow Rough Rider, Arizona copper magnate John Greenway.

In Tucson, the energetic Isabella ran an airline, worked with disabled veterans, and founded the world-famous Arizona Inn. When the Great Depression brought hard times, Eleanor Roosevelt recruited Isabella to work for the Democratic Party. Isabella played a decisive role in Franklin Roosevelt's nomination to the presidency in 1932; the *New York Times* called her "the most-talked-of woman at the National Democratic Convention." She was elected to Congress as Arizona's only US Representative, and again drew national media attention when she challenged FDR for not being sufficiently progressive.

Miller's meticulous biography captures a life of adventure and romance, from southern tobacco country to the ballrooms of New York, from western ranches to the dome of the US Capitol. She shows national politics played out behind the scenes, Isabella's lifelong friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, and the drama of a loyal wife caring for a dying husband despite having fallen in love with a younger man. The book also shows Greenway's considerable influence on the development of Arizona's business and politics in the early decades of statehood. Although Isabella Greenway died in 1953, the Arizona Inn—a tribute to her enterprise—remains a premier resort hotel, celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2005. This book, too, celebrates Isabella's energy, vision, indomitable spirit, and love of life.

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