

In 1996, Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall became the first woman ever elected to a statewide, executive branch office in North Carolina. Secretary Marshall was a former member of the N.C. State Senate before rising to statewide office. Growing up on her parents' farm, Ms. Marshall learned at an early age the value and importance of strong families and communities. She became active in her local 4-H organization and eventually went on to receive state and national 4-H honors. Teaching Home Economics in the public school system and community college system was her first career after college. Her talents with fabric, design and color led her to start a successful decorating business.

Believing she needed additional education to meet business challenges, Secretary Marshall returned to school, receiving a Law Degree from Campbell University in 1981. While a business owner and attorney in Harnett County, Ms. Marshall came to realize there were some major civic needs right around her. She served on her county's United Way Board of Directors for 10 years, directing a wide range of aid to families in that area. She became a founder of the Harnett County Rape Crisis Center, now a safe house, in the late 1980s and later helped to found Harnett HelpNet for Children. Secretary Marshall served as one of the nine board members to the National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council, a group charged with spreading "best practices" in electronic commerce to government agencies across the United States and she has won many awards for her work to modernize the N.C. Secretary of State's Office.

These awards included the North Carolina Electronics and Information Technology Association's top honor for Public Leadership in Technology and the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers' Special Achievement Award. Secretary Marshall also won two national awards from the Center for Digital Government in 2002. She was honored with its "In The Arena" award for her department's interactive database system; and its "Best of Breed Programs" award for her personal leadership in opening up state government through Internet-based public access. In 2003, *Government Technology* magazine named her as one of its "Top 25 Doers, Dreamers & Drivers" in its list of successful government information technology officials and *Business Leader* magazine named her one of its 10 "Women Extraordinaire." In 2004, she received the "Distinguished Attorney Award" from the N.C. Association of Women Attorneys and the "Leadership in Government" Award from Common Cause.

Secretary Marshall is married and has five stepchildren and seven grandchildren.