



Gertrude Poe was a pioneer for women in law and journalism. Known as “Maryland’s First Lady of Journalism,” she was editor of *The News Leader*, now *The Laurel Leader*, for 41 years.

Gertrude graduated from Laurel High School in 1931, at the young age of 15, and took a job as legal secretary for George McCeney. Poe graduated in 1939 from the Washington College School of Law and returned to work for the law offices of Bowie McCeney at 357 Main Street in Laurel. However, McCeney handed her control of the local newspaper, which he had recently acquired. At the helm of the *Leader*, Gertrude reversed the decline in readership and the publication thrived. She wrote a weekly column called “Pen Points,” which was like a personal note to her readers addressing local and national issues.

Laurel Historical Society Celebrates Women’s History Month and Salutes Contributions and History Makers in Our Community

Gertrude covered the news of a changing world with passion and professionalism. During World War II, Poe also managed *The Bowie Register*, *The College Park News*, and *The Beltsville Banner*, and became a broadcaster at the WLMD radio station in Laurel. In 1958, she became the first woman president of the Maryland Press Association. She received the Patriotic Civilian Service Award in 1963, for bringing attention to the base issues at Fort Meade. Her exacting standards resulted in many local and national journalism awards, including for her coverage of the George Wallace shooting in 1972. Poe retired from the *Laurel Leader* in 1980. In 1987, Gertrude was the first living person and first woman inducted into the Maryland-Delaware-DC Press Association Hall of Fame. She was also inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame in 2011.

Gertrude Poe was a published author, patron of local arts and culture, and dedicated supporter of the Laurel Historical Society. In 2004, the Laurel Historical Society honored her at our annual Gala, themed as *The Wizard of Oz*. Known for her chic sense of style, the beaded emerald-green gown she wore to this event was one of her two dresses displayed at the Maryland Historical Society’s exhibit *Spectrum of Fashion* in 2019. LHS has several of her personal and iconic items in our collection, including her electric typewriter and small oak desk. Gertrude Poe passed away at her home in Ashton in 2017, at the age of 101. In a 2016 *Laurel Leader* article, a year before her passing, Gertrude wrote that hers had been “a good life and a good livelihood.”

Information and photograph pulled from LHS collection and exhibit files. ~Updated 2021