Jane Yelvington McCallum (1877–1957) was a leader in the women's suffrage movement. As an established political figure in Texas, she focused her attention on addressing political and civic issues in the state.

Jane McCallum was born on December 30, 1877, in La Vernia, Texas. She was educated in Wilson County before studying at Dr. Zealey’s Female College in Mississippi from 1923 to 1924. She later took classes at the University of Texas but never received her degree. She married Arthur Newell McCallum, Sr., on October 29, 1896. They settled in Austin, where they had a daughter and four sons. Arthur McCallum served as school superintendent in Austin from 1903 to 1942.

**Entering Politics** Jane McCallum first became active in politics by campaigning for prohibition and women’s suffrage. In 1915 she was elected president of the Austin Woman Suffrage Association. She delivered speeches throughout Texas and wrote a column on suffrage for the Austin newspaper. Her titles included State Manager of Press and Publicity for the state constitutional amendment on full suffrage, and State Chairman of the ratification committee for the Nineteenth Amendment. During World War I, McCallum led a fundraising organization that helped Austin women raise nearly $700,000 for the war effort.

**The Petticoat Lobby** Once suffrage had been won, McCallum focused on political reforms. She served as state publicity chairman for the Education Amendment to the Texas Constitution. She continued her work with women’s organizations as well, serving as the first vice-president for the League of Women Voters. From 1923 to 1925 McCallum served as executive secretary for the Women’s Joint Legislative Council, also known as the Petticoat Lobby, a coalition of six Texas women’s organizations. The group directed its efforts toward addressing education bills, prison reform, stronger prohibition controls, maternal and child health funds, illiteracy, and child labor.

**The Texas Declaration of Independence** In January 1927, McCallum was appointed secretary of state by Governor Daniel J. Moody. She retained the position under Governor Ross Sterling from 1931 to 1933. During her term, she found an original copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence in a vault in the capitol building. She made sure the document was restored and displayed, which she considered one of her biggest contributions to the state.

After her term ended, McCallum stayed active in politics and civic affairs. She worked with many committees and organizations and in 1954 became the first female grand jury commissioner in Travis County. She wrote articles for newspapers and for other publications, and she participated in many other nonpolitical organizations, including the Texas Fine Arts Association and the Colonial Dames of America. On August 14, 1957, Jane McCallum died. She is buried at Oakwood Cemetery in Austin.

**Review Questions**

1. What was the first position that McCallum was elected to?
2. In what famous Texas coalition was McCallum active?
3. What did McCallum find in a vault in the Texas Capitol?

**Critical Thinking**

4. **Making Inferences** Do you think it was difficult for McCallum to get involved in politics? What challenges did she face?
5. **Summarizing** What were some of the highlights of McCallum’s life?