

November 13, 2015  
By Vicki Clark Gourley

## The historic rise of the Metro and Meg

# Most Powerful Women



OKLAHOMA CITY COUNCILWOMAN Meg Salyer was voted No. 1 in the 2015 Most Powerful Women Poll. She is shown at City Hall in her office after council meeting. Vicki Clark/okcFRIDAY



2. Mary Fallin  
Governor  
State of Oklahoma



3. Christy Everest  
Community Volunteer  
Philanthropist



4. Judy Love  
Love's Travel Stops  
Philanthropist



5. Polly Nichols  
Community Volunteer  
Philanthropist



6. Tricia Everest  
Attorney  
Community Volunteer



7. Debby Hampton  
President, CEO  
United Way, Central OK

Oklahoma City Councilwoman Meg Salyer captured the top spot in the 2015 OKC FRIDAY Most Powerful Women poll ranking No. 1 by a substantial margin.

Governor Mary Fallin, who has held that position since the inception of the poll, ranked No. 2 this year.

“The city is a community that touches people’s lives every day,” Salyer said, “You can’t be any closer to things that impact people.”

Dissatisfaction with the federal government, disarray in the state Republican party, and a Republican majority legislature which repealed Fallin’s signature education legislation, may be the reason the 250 city leaders who vote in the FRIDAY poll elevated the councilwoman over the Governor this year.

In his book *The Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Metros* author Bruce Katz says, “The United States is on the verge of a historic re-sorting, in which responsibilities once reserved for higher levels of government are being fully shared with, even shifted to, cities, metropolitan areas, and the networks of leaders who govern them.”

The Oklahoma Legislator did just that when it tried to dump the unfinished Native American Cultural Center on the City of Oklahoma City last session with insufficient funding to complete it.

Oklahoma City is still studying whether it can afford to accept it.

“The City Council has been generally consistent in being fiscally responsible while pursuing economic development and job creation. We tried to build a city which would attract young people and have a great quality of life. It started with Mayor Ron Norick and MAPS. We did it. Oklahoma City has experienced a renaissance,” said Salyer.

Another real concern at the city level, according to Salyer, is the state taking over or thwarting the city’s efforts in several areas.

“We started compiling a registry of vacant and abandoned buildings. These cost every tax payer and we wanted to levy fines on the owners to recover the costs which the city incurs from them,” Salyer said. “The state passed legislation which prevented the registry and fines on the owners.”

Another area Salyer cited, where the city staff and council spent copious amounts of time studying was regulations on car sharing drivers (Uber and Link).

“We passed an ordinance that drivers would have to register with the city and show proof of insurance,” Salyer said.

The state passed a law which did not require it and the city council had to rescind the ordinance.

For the first time a mother and daughter were both in the top ten. Christy Gaylord Everest and her daughter, Tricia Everest, ranked No. 3 and No. 6, respectively.

Dynamic fundraiser and philanthropist Judy Love captured fourth place.

Community volunteer Polly Nichols, who has spearheaded many nonprofit fundraising drives ranked No. 5.

United Way CEO Debby Hampton, who has had far too many tornados and other disasters on her watch, moved up to No. 7.

Oklahoma State University women did well on this year's Most Powerful Women list.

Natalie Shirley is president of OSU-OKC and joined the Governor's Cabinet in 2015 as Secretary of Education and Workforce Development. She is the first woman president in the OSU system and ranked No. 8 in the poll.

Ann Hargis, First Lady of Oklahoma State University, ranked No. 11.

Marnie Taylor, president and CEO of the Center for Nonprofits placed ninth

Number 10 is Cathy O'Connor, president of the Economic Development Alliance.



OKC's Most Powerful Women: Nos. 8-25

# Most Powerful Women



OKC's Most Powerful Women: Nos. 26-43

**Tie votes round out the top 50 women**

# Most Powerful Women



Tie votes filled the last few places in the 50 Most Powerful Women poll conducted by OKC FRIDAY. Only two votes separated the fifteen women pictured on this page. Most are women who have ranked in the top 50 in previous years, but there are four newcomers to the list.

Cyndi Munson, Democrat candidate, won the Oklahoma State House District 85 seat previously held by the late David Dank.

Jeanette Elliott, Executive Vice President of ad agency Ackerman McQueen moved up into the top 50.

Brenda Jones Barwick received the national Women in Communications 2015 Headliner Award and Mary Pointer is chairing the national Prevent Blindness awards in Chicago.