



**Annette Abbott Adams** (1877–1956) was an American lawyer and judge. She was the first woman to be the Assistant Attorney General in the United States.

Born Annette Grace Abbott in Prattville, California, Adams was educated at the Chico State Normal School and the University of California, Berkeley, where she obtained her undergraduate degree in 1904, and her law degree in 1912. She was a member of Delta Delta Delta. Before beginning her legal career, she taught grammar school and was one of the first female school principals in California, at Modoc County High School, in Alturas.

In 1912, she was admitted to the State Bar of California. She campaigned for Woodrow Wilson in California, and was rewarded after his election with an appointment as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of California, 1914–1919. In 1918–1920 she was attorney in the same district. In 1920 she was

appointed as the first female Assistant Attorney General of the United States, an office which she resigned in 1921.

Adams ran unsuccessfully for a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1923. She had a successful private law practice until 1935, when she was appointed Assistant Special Counsel of U.S. Oil litigation. In 1942, California Governor Culbert Olson appointed her as Presiding Justice of the California Court of Appeal for the Third District in Sacramento. That court was, at the time, one of four intermediate appellate courts in California—intermediate, that is, between the trial courts located in every county, and the California Supreme Court. As the Presiding Justice for the Third District, Justice Adams was thus one of the four highest-ranking judges in the state after the Justices of the Supreme Court. She won election to a twelve-year term on the court of appeal later in 1942 but retired in 1952 for health reasons. In her time on the court, she wrote over 350 opinions. In 1950, she served by special assignment on one case in the California Supreme Court, becoming the first woman to sit on that court (*Gardner v. Jonathon Club* (1950) 35 Cal.2d 343).

On August 13, 1906, Annette Abbott married Martin Houston "Mart" Adams by Judge J.D. Goodwin of Plumas County. Mr. Adams was two years younger than Mrs. Adams. Friends say that they married primarily because Annette wanted a "Mrs." in front of her name. Although they lived apart, they never divorced. Annette A. Adams died in Sacramento in 1956.