



# SARA

*Maynar*

## Sara Maynar Escanilla

*First women law professor at a Spanish university and early woman lawyer*

**Zaragoza, 1906 - Burbáguena (Teruel), 1986**

In 1929, Sara Maynar Escanilla was the first woman to earn a bachelor's in Law in Zaragoza, the first woman member of the Bar Association of Aragon and the first woman in the Legal-Practice Academy of Aragon. Her role as a pioneer includes being the tenth female member of the Bar Association of Spain, in the same decade as Victoria Kent, Clara Campoamor, Matilde Huici and Concha Peña. Furthermore, she was the first woman professor –assistant in practical classes– at a Law faculty in Spain in academic year 1930-1931, affiliated with International Public and Private Law, as well as the first woman professor in Administrative Law in 1940-1941.

The daughter of a famous civil law expert from Aragon, her large family's wealth, the legal and pro-Esperanto ambiance in which she grew up and the early death of her elder brothers may have spurred her career in law. Although some sources attribute her Bachelor's in Law to the sole motive of satisfying her father's desire, claiming that it was in no way her vocation, the facts point to a much more complex reality:

Her brilliant academic career, with her two Bachelor's degrees (Law and Humanities) was particularly notable in the Faculty of Law, where she earned an academic record full of honours and ended with an extraordinary Bachelor's award first and then assistantships; she attended for years the board meetings of the Real e Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Zaragoza (Royal and Illustrious Lawyers' Association of Zaragoza, RelCAZ), of which she was a member –although she did not practise after 1930– until her death.

In 1979 she was distinguished as an Honorary member of RelCAZ. The press from the 1930s contains her statements that she wanted to practise Law. She started her doctoral studies in Madrid, in contact with the intellectual milieu of the Ladies' Residence. In 1939, she went with her father, at that time the dean of RelCAZ, to the Provincial Prison of Zaragoza, where

a civil servant forbade her from entering because she was a woman, even though she was a RelCAZ member. After several letters of complaint from the dean and the board, the last one addressed to the Minister of Justice, it was clarified that the regulatory ban did not extend to women lawyers.

The social-juridical reality must not have been easy for young women pioneers with a practical mindset in terms of their professional performance, like Maynar Escanilla, who ended up earning a Bachelor's in Philosophy and Humanities in 1942 and redirecting her career to secondary education, where she became a renowned, award-winning professor, chair and secondary school headmistress.

A city councillor and lieutenant mayor in her older years, Sara Maynar earned merit upon merit which make her an essential part of the *other story* about Law in Spain.

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