

Note: In every 2013 issue of the *Educator* we will be highlighting a portion of CTA's proud history in a timeline. Collect all 9 and put them together for a big look at all we've accomplished over the past 150 years. To get started just cut out the timeline from this page. Your next installment will be coming to you in April.



# 1920s

**Continuing Contract. Tenure. Due process.**  
**Whatever the name, it is not a benefit or privilege of teaching but an important right that CTA has fought for since founder John Swett first decried arbitrary and capricious firings of teachers back in 1863.**

**W**hat educators now call due process was known as a "continuing contract law" when it was first passed by the state Legislature in 1912. That first law said a teacher would automatically be reemployed unless he is notified by June 15 that his services would not be required. During the '20s, that law would be fought over, but ultimately strengthened through the efforts of CTA, and particularly then-President Mark Keppel.

Keppel shepherded a flurry of teacher rights laws through the Legislature. In 1921, the due process law was extended to include school districts with seven or more teachers. After two years of service teachers could not be dismissed except for "good and sufficient cause."

The law was tested in 1925 when a school board refused to employ an experienced teacher because she

had the audacity to get married. A Superior Court ruled the due process law was unconstitutional, but for three years, CTA carried the fight through to the state Supreme Court to win reemployment rights for the teacher.

In 1927, the law was extended to all districts, regardless of size. When an attempt was made to limit mandatory due process, CTA fought back. It is said that in 1928 Keppel's dying words to CTA Executive Secretary Roy Cloud were, "Don't let them repeal the tenure law, Roy."

Roy didn't.

There were numerous changes to the law since then, but throughout, CTA continued to maintain that teachers must be held to the highest standards and will continue to uphold a teacher's right to a fair hearing during dismissal proceedings.



**1919**

CTA led the fight for state funding of junior colleges. Fresno City College opened in 1910, and by 1919 there were 21 colleges serving 1,800 students.



**1920**

To call public attention to postwar school and teacher shortages and low teacher salaries, the Masonic Lodge and CTA sponsored the first Public Schools Week in April. NEA followed suit with American Education Week in 1921.



**1927**

CTA won a "radical" victory when the State Supreme Court ruled that a school board could not fire a female teacher simply because she had the nerve to actually get married.



**1928**

CTA president and Los Angeles county superintendent of schools Mark Keppel is credited with enacting a longer school year, free textbooks, free rural transportation for children, compulsory school attendance, and teacher rights laws.

**1929**

The stock market crash and Depression years drained school funds. Teacher salaries were reduced and building programs were canceled.