



1211 West 22nd Street, Suite 900 • Oak Brook, IL 60523 USA  
T: +1 (630) 928-1400 • F: (630) 928-1559 • [www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org)

---

**Emma L. Conlon**  
**Past International President**  
**1956 – 1958**



Emma L. Conlon, retired textile executive, civic leader, and member of Zonta International since 1944, died on 3 August 1995 in New Jersey, USA. Ms. Conlon served as president of her club (Paterson Area) and governor of District 3, prior to assuming her role as President of Zonta International in 1956. As President of Zonta International from 1956 to 1958, Ms. Conlon traveled more than 200,000 miles while in office (before jet passenger service became generally available) and oversaw the creation of 50 new Zonta clubs bringing the total number of clubs worldwide to 380. Following her term of office, she focused much of her work on young people, especially through the Z Club program. She conceived and funded the Emma L. Conlon Service Awards, established in 1961, to encourage and recognize promising youngsters.

Mrs. Conlon entered the textile industry at age 20 as a clerical worker; and, before her retirement in 1964, rose to become Chairman of Colonial Piece Dye Works. In addition, she was a leader in several textile and fabric professional organizations over the years. Her late husband, Frank, was also an executive in the industry. Mrs. Conlon's professional interests after the Second World War ventured into the experimental and futuristic temper of the times; she spoke with enthusiasm of new easy-care fibers that might someday be permeated with breathable medications; disposable travel garments; and a future demand for high-grade synthetic furs.

Emma Conlon could claim many "firsts" among her considerable achievements. She was appointed Paterson's Commissioner of Fire and Police services, the first woman to hold that office in any New Jersey city; first woman board member of the Greater Paterson Chamber of Commerce; and first woman on the Paterson Board of Finance. In 1951, an all-male civic club voted her Paterson's Outstanding Citizen. In 1954, President Eisenhower appointed her to the National Board of Field Advisers for the U.S. Small Business Administration. From 1958 to 1960, she traveled and did research for the United Nations as Chairman of the Refugee Camp Study Committee. In addition to her Zonta and civic commitments, she gave generously of her energies to charitable enterprises with an emphasis on hospitals and the nursing profession.

Friends, family and sister Zontians of Mrs. Conlon will continue to think of her with fondness and admiration. We are reminded of the journalists who often sought her out for interviews and features. In 1958 one reporter wrote, "All of her achievements Mrs. Conlon credits to Zonta where her active public life first started."