

### Societal changes to the use of "Mrs."



Tradition held that a married woman should use the title *Mrs.* only in conjunction with her husband's name, not her own--"Mrs. Arthur Reynolds" rather than "Mrs. Susan Reynolds." The latter was acceptable only in the event of divorce. But societal changes gradually made this practice seem a relic from another time. Today it is acceptable for both married and divorced women to be referred to by their first names after the title

*Mrs.*

--as in "Mrs. Mary McGowan."

A married woman can choose to be addressed as either "Mrs. Mary McGowan" or "Mrs. John McGowan." In the case of a divorce woman, *Mrs.* [or *Ms.*] is correct only if she has retained her former husband's last name and she uses

*her*

first name, not his. (Many women retain their married name so that the surname won't differ from their children's.) Otherwise, she is referred to as

*Ms.*

or

*Miss.*