



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

# Championing the Women of New York State

Senator Patty Ritchie

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Throughout time, women have played a major role in our nation's history. First celebrated in 1987, Women's History Month—observed every March—is when America comes together to pay homage to those women who have blazed trails and made our world a better place.

New York State has an exceptionally strong connection with women's history. Our state set the stage for the women's rights movement with instrumental events, like the first Women's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls. There, influential change makers, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony fought for the right of women to vote. In addition, others—like Oswego's own Mary Edwards Walker, who is the only woman to ever receive the Medal of Honor—continue to inspire women of all ages.

While during Women's History Month we honor the women of the past, it is also a great opportunity to recognize those who are still making an impact today. From achievements in medicine, science, business and more to contributions that have shaped our culture and made our world a better place, the impact of women on society has been tremendous, and will continue to be for many years to come.

Here's a look at how women are excelling in today's world:

- Women own more than 9.4 million businesses in the United States, generating \$1.5 trillion in sales;
- In 2018, 1,871 of the 7,383 state legislators in the United States are women. In addition, since 1971, the number of women serving in state legislatures has more than quintupled;
- Almost 210,000 women now serve as active duty personnel. In 2008, General Anne Dunwoody—who served at Fort Drum—was the first female to be promoted to a four-star general. In 2015, for the first time ever, two women successfully graduated from the Army Ranger School; and
- Here in New York State, there are nearly 20,000 women working on farms. Nearly 6,500 of those women are the principal operators of their farm.

In addition, here locally, I am proud to host an annual 'Women of Distinction' event where I honor dozens of local women and highlight the tremendous contributions they are making in our communities, workplaces, schools and more. Soon, I will be seeking nominations for this year's 'Women of Distinction' program. Be sure to visit my website—[www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov)—for more information in the near future.

The work women do every day, in the field of their choice, only continues to shine. However, they are opportunities that, without those who came before, may have never come. I sincerely hope you will join me in celebrating Women's History Month this month, and proudly recognize the contributions of women all year long.