



Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Senator Robert G. Ort

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 28th annual Women of Distinction exhibit, where we recognize and honor exceptional and groundbreaking New York women who came before us.

This year, joining the 122 New Yorkers previously inducted into this annual exhibit, the New York State Senate has selected the following five women for their tremendous achievements:

- Justice Dorothy Chin Brandt, the first female Asian American judge and first Chinese American elected to public office in New York State, was elected to the New York City Civil Court in 1987 and appointed as an acting New York State Supreme Court Judge in 2001.
- Dr. Hazel N. Dukes, a civil rights icon, was President of the NAACP New York State Conference, a member of the NAACP National Board of Directors, and a member of the Executive Committee and of several board subcommittees, in addition to serving as President of the Hazel N. Dukes & Associates Consultant Firm, specializing in public policy, health, and diversity.
- Tonya Gonnella Frichner, Esq., legal counsel for the Iroquois Confederacy, educator and activist, was known for her contributions to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and founding of the American Indian Law Alliance.
- Dr. Marilu Maria Galván, a Dominican-born educator and advocate for empowerment of the Dominican community in New York City, served as Director of the Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano.
- Congresswoman Nita Lowey, a U.S. Representative from New York (1989 to 2021), was the first woman to chair the House Appropriations Committee and helped secure \$20 billion in federal funding for 9/11 recovery efforts in New York City.

It is essential that we celebrate, support, and honor women whose impact shapes our communities, our State, and our Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Stewart-Cousins".

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and
NYS Senate Majority Leader

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert G. Ort".

Senator Robert G. Ort
Minority Leader



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LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE
2026 NEW YORK STATE SENATE WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge and celebrate individuals and events of historic significance which add vitality, sensitivity, understanding and inspiration to the diversity and value of the people of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Women of every economic, ethnic and religious background have made significant contributions that are reflected in our cultural, social, educational, industrial and economic diversity, and have contributed in many ways, including as writers, educators, scientists, heads of state, politicians, civil rights crusaders, artists, entertainers, businesswomen, military personnel, aviators, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, health professionals, engineers, religious leaders, judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, athletes, mothers, nurturers and the building blocks of our communities; and

WHEREAS, It is the purpose of this Legislative Body to induct five new honorees for the year 2026: New York State Supreme Court Judge Dorothy Chin Brandt (1946-2025); civil rights icon Dr. Hazel N. Dukes (1932-2025); founder of the American Indian Law Alliance, Tonya Gonnella Frichner (1947-2015); advocate for the Dominican community, Dr. Marilu Maria Galván (1946-2024); and U.S. Representative Nita Lowey (1937-2025); and

WHEREAS, Women who have become part of New York's lasting heritage by fighting against stereotypes, prejudice and seemingly insurmountable obstacles include: Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), former slave and famous activist; Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), best-known "conductor" of the Underground Railroad and promoter of Black education and women's rights; suffragettes Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902); world-renowned folk artist Grandma Moses (1860-1961); famed reporter Nellie Bly (1867-1922); Sybil Ludington (1761-1839), known as the "female Paul Revere"; Barbara McClintock (1901-1992), Nobel Prize-winning genetic scientist; and "First Lady of the World," Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962); and

WHEREAS, New York State has been and continues to be the home to many distinguished women who have made their mark in history as the first in their field to succeed; representative of these "firsts" are contributions by women such as: Lady Deborah Moody (1586-1659), first woman grantee for land ownership in the New World; Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), first female physician; America's first trained nurse, Linda Richards (1841-1930); Emma Willard (1787-1870), founder of the first endowed institution of education for women; hairdressing entrepreneur Madam C.J. Walker (1867-1919), Harlem leader and first self-made female millionaire in the U.S.; Buffalonian Louise Blanchard Bethune (1856-1913), first professional female architect in the Nation; Lucille Ball (1911-1989), actor and president of Desilu Productions, the first woman to lead a major Hollywood production company; Katharine Bement Davis (1860-1935), New York City Correction Commissioner, first woman to head a major City agency; Winifred Edgerton Merrill (1862-1951), the first American

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woman to receive a Ph.D. in Mathematics; Dr. Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919), the first and only woman to be presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor; and Belva Lockwood (1830-1917), the first woman to practice law before the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body recognizes that New York State is the home to countless women who are strong and colorful threads, vital to the fabric of our rich heritage, who have contributed and continue to add to the advancement of our culture through their traditional and nontraditional roles in society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the induction of five new inductees into the New York State Senate's Historical Women of Distinction 2026 exhibit; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the National Women's Hall of Fame and the New York State Division for Women.





Women of DISTINCTION

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2026 Inductees

Justice Dorothy Chin Brandt - Dr. Hazel N. Dukes - Tonya Gonnella Frichner, Esq.
Dr. Marilu Maria Galván - Congresswoman Nita Lowey

Arts & Entertainment

Alice Austen	Charlotte Pruyin Hyde	Maureen Stapleton
Lucille Ball	Emma Lazarus	Maria Tallchief
Margaret Bourke-White	Mary Edmonia Lewis	Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney
Julia de Burgos	Toni Morrison	
Celia Cruz	Shirley Muldowney	
Gertrude Caroline Ederle	Eve Rabin Queler	
Ella Fitzgerald	Anna "Grandma Moses" Robertson	
Annette Joanne Funicello	Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman	
Althea Gibson	Joanne Lynn Shenandoah	
Billie Holiday	Barbara Stanwyck	

Education

Pura Belpré	Winifred Edgerton Merrill	Emma Hart Willard
Sarah J. Smith Tompkins Garnet	Ruth Nichols	
Margaret Leech	Virginia L. Radley	
Anna Caroline Maxwell	Uma SenGupta	

Government & Law

Jane Bolin	Belva Lockwood	Katherine Stoneman
Bessie Allison Buchanan	Sybil Ludington	
Shirley Chisholm	Olga A. Méndez	
Katharine Bement Davis	Constance Baker Motley	
Mary Donlon	Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis	
Ruth Bader Ginsburg	Frances Perkins	
Rhoda Fox Graves	Charlotte Ray	
Judith S. Kaye	Eleanor Roosevelt	
Mary Anne Krupsak	Ida B. Sammis	

Heroes 9/11/2001

Kathy Mazza	Moira Smith
Yamel Merino	

Labor & Business

Leonora Marie (Kearney) Barry	Lady Deborah Moody	Madam C. J. Walker
Louise Blanchard Bethune	Rose Meta Morgan	
Kate Gleason	Kate Mullany	
Martha Matilda Harper	Mary Pinkett	
Rose Knox	Norma Merrick Sklarek	
Estee Lauder	Mary "Mollie" Sneden	

Medicine & Health

Virginia Apgar	Mary Putnam Jacobi	
Clara Barton	Linda Richards	
Elizabeth Blackwell	Helen Rodríguez-Trías, MD	
Mother Marianne Cope	Susan Smith McKinney Steward	
Dr. Elizabeth Gillette	Lucy Hobbs Taylor	
Susan E. Hall	Adah Belle Samuels Thoms	

Military

Faye Glenn Abdellah	Betsy Doyle	Crescencia Joyce Garcia
Mary Clarke	Florence Finch	Olivia J. Hooker, Ph.D.
Margaret Cochran Corbin	Juliane Gallina	Dr. Mary Edwards Walker

Science & Technology

Katharine Burr Blodgett	Grace Brewster Murray Hopper	Giuliana Tesoro
Eileen M. Collins	Barbara McClintock	
Charlotte Friend	Maria Mitchell	
Winifred Goldring	Pan American Exposition — 1901	
Anne LaBastille	Blanche Stuart "Betty" Scott	

Social Reformers

Susan B. Anthony	Ann Lee	Sojourner Truth
Antoinette Brown Blackwell	Audre Lorde	Harriet Tubman
Amelia Jenks Bloomer	Lucretia Mott	Victoria Woodhull
Inez Milholland Boissevain	Antonia Pantoja, Ph.D.	
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini	Mable Ping-Hua Lee	
Mary Wiltsie Fuller	Susan Wu Rathbone	
Matilda Joslyn Gage	Sylvia Ray Rivera	
Clara Hale	Elizabeth Cady Stanton	
Mary Shotwell Ingraham	Mary Burnett Talbert	
Rosalie Jones	Kateri Tekakwitha	



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2026 Inductees

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



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Government & Law

Justice Dorothy Chin Brandt

1946 – 2025

2026 INDUCTEE

Dorothy Chin Brandt was an attorney who became the first female Asian American judge in New York State. She was also the first Chinese American elected to public office in New York State.

Judge Chin Brandt was born in Manhattan on April 9, 1946. Her father, Henry Chin, was an American-born doctor who served as an Army Captain, and her mother, Hsui (Ling) Chin, was a registered nurse who was born in Beijing, China. She grew up in Queens and graduated from Hunter College High School in Manhattan. She received a Bachelor's degree in Math from the University of Chicago and attended Brooklyn Law School, where she graduated in 1974. Ms. Chin Brandt also received a Master of Laws from Harvard Law School.

She served as an Assistant Dean of Legal Studies at Harvard and taught at Boston College Law School. Ms. Chin Brandt worked at Shearman & Sterling in New York and Dilworth Paxson in Washington, D.C. She decided to run for public office after hearing a racist comment by a retired judge. Judge Chin Brandt was elected to the New York City Civil Court in 1987. In 2001, she was appointed an acting New York State Supreme Court judge. Judge Chin Brandt retired from the bench in 2017. She received a lifetime achievement award from the Organization of Chinese Americans in 2019.

Text Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/19/nyregion/dorothy-chin-brandt-dead.html?searchResultPosition=1>
<https://www.brooklaw.edu/news-and-events/news/2025/02/hon-dorothy-chin-brandt-74-pioneering-asian-american-judge-dies-at-79/>

Photo Source: <https://www.brooklaw.edu/news-and-events/news/2025/02/hon-dorothy-chin-brandt-74-pioneering-asian-american-judge-dies-at-79/>





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Social Reformers

Dr. Hazel N. Duker

1932 – 2025

2026 INDUCTEE

Dr. Hazel N. Duker was President of the NAACP New York State Conference, a member of the NAACP National Board of Directors, a member of the NAACP Executive Committee, and an active member of various NAACP Board subcommittees.

Dr. Duker was a woman of great strength and courage. Her dedication to human rights and equality was exemplified by her role in linking business, government, and social causes. She was an active and dynamic leader who was known for her unselfish and devoted track record for improving the quality of life in New York State.

Dr. Duker was President of the Hazel N. Duker & Associates Consultant Firm, specializing in the areas of public policy, health, and diversity.

Dr. Duker was a member of the Assembly of Prayer Baptist Church, where she served as Executive Assistant to the Pastor, was a member of the Board of Trustees, and taught Adult Sunday School.

Dr. Duker received a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Adelphi University in Garden City, New York and completed postgraduate work at Queens College. In 1990, she was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Law from the City University of New York Law School at Queens College, and in 2009, she was conferred the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, New York. In 2012, Dr. Duker was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harlem, New York.

Dr. Duker had many organizational affiliations; she was former President of the Metro-Manhattan Links Chapter, was appointed the National Links NGO Representative in 2010, and was a former trustee of the State University of New York and Stillman College. Dr. Duker was a member of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. and National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc. She received numerous awards for her outstanding leadership activities, including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, YWCA City of New York John LaFarge Memorial Award for Interracial Justice, and the Guy R. Brewer Humanitarian Award. She was an active member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Northern Manhattan Alumnae Chapter and was selected to receive the Sorority's Althea T.L. Simmons Social Action Award in August 2010. Dr. Duker was incorporated in 2007 as a Pi Eta Kappa Fellow.

Photo Source: <https://naacp.org/people/hazel-n-duker>





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Social Reformers

Tonya Gonnella Frichner, Esq.

1947 – 2015

2026 INDUCTEE

Tonya Gonnella Frichner was an attorney and activist who was known for her contributions to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She was the niece of a Chief of the Onondaga Nation, and she founded the American Indian Law Alliance.

Ms. Frichner was born in Syracuse, New York on September 19, 1947. Her father, Henry, was an Italian-American construction worker, and her mother, Maxine, was a member of the Onondaga Nation and sat on the school board, where she promoted a Native American curriculum. Ms. Frichner received her Bachelor of Science from St. John's University in 1980 and her Juris Doctor from the City University of New York School of Law in 1987.

She was of legal counsel to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy at the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights' Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1987. Ms. Frichner also served on the Board of Directors to the Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse Project. In 1989, she became the President and Founder of the American Indian Law Alliance, a nongovernmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Ms. Frichner later taught Native American History, Law and Human Rights at City College of the City University of New York (CUNY), CUNY Hunter College, Manhattanville College, and New York University. She was appointed as the North American Regional Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) from 2008 to 2010 by the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Ms. Frichner received numerous awards, including the Drums Along the Hudson Award, the Harriet Tubman Humanitarian Award, the Thunderbird Indian of the Year Award, the Ellis Island Congressional Medal of Honor, the American Indian Community House International Service Award, the SilverCloud Singer Outstanding Service Award for Advancing Indigenous Youth, and the Ms. Foundation Female Role Model of the Year.

She also served on several boards of directors, including as the Chairperson of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, the City University of New York School of Law Board of Visitors, the Interfaith Center of New York, the Connie Hogarth Center for Social Action, the Seven Eagles Corporation, the Flying Eagle Woman Fund for Peace, Justice and Sovereignty, the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, and the Boarding School Healing Project.

Tonya Gonnella Frichner passed away in 2015 at age 67. She was survived by her husband, Herbert Frichner, and her son.

Text Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/us/tonya-gonnella-frichner-advocate-for-indigenous-peoples-dies-at-67.html>

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/syracuse/name/tonya-frichner-obituary?id=30674148>

<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/members/member-frichner.pdf>

Photo Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/us/tonya-gonnella-frichner-advocate-for-indigenous-peoples-dies-at-67.html>





Women of DISTINCTION

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Social Reformers

Dr. Marilu Maria Galván

1946 – 2024

2026 INDUCTEE

Dr. Marilu Maria Galván was an educator and advocate who devoted her career to the education and empowerment of the Dominican community in New York City. She was born in the Dominican Republic and immigrated to the United States with her parents in 1959.

Dr. Galván attended the Jesus & Mary Academy in Massachusetts and the Joan of Arc School in Manhattan. She obtained a Bachelor's degree from City College, a Master's degree in Education from NYU, and a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School.

As an educator, Dr. Galván taught all age groups from kindergarten to college. She taught social studies at L. D. Brandeis High School from 1975 to 2002. She also worked as an Assistant Principal at George Washington High School and as an adjunct professor at John Jay College and Brooklyn Law School. Dr. Galván later served as Director of the Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano, where she worked to empower young adults to play active roles in their community.

Besides her career in education, Dr. Galván was also a community activist. She was involved in numerous civic, cultural, and charitable organizations, including the Dominican Women's Coalition, the National Organization for Women, the New York State Governor's Dominican Advisory Committee, and the Highbridge Lioness Club. Dr. Galván won numerous awards for her advocacy work, including the Marquis Who's Who, the Outstanding Dominican in the USA awarded by the Dominican Republic President and Governor, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dominican Day Parade, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dominican Bar Association, NYC Council Citation Award, La Serenisima Gran Loggia Recognition Award, NYC Dominican Consulate Recognition Award, NY Dominican Officers/Police Organization Milestone Award, Dominican Medical Association Professional and Community Award, Melvin Jones Fellowship Award, and the Order of Merit of Duarte, Sánchez and Mella in the Degree of Knight, D.R. Gov.

Dr. Galván passed away in June 2024. She was survived by her two children, her husband, Dr. Manuel Acevedo, and five grandchildren.

Text Source: <https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/2024-07/Passing%20of%20Marilu%20Maria%20D.%20Galván.pdf>

<http://www.cccdominicano.com/about.html>

<https://www.ccnycuny.edu/dsi/dominican-blue-book-marilu-galvan>

Photo Source: <http://www.cccdominicano.com/about.html>





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Government & Law

Congresswoman Nita Lowey

1937 – 2025

2026 INDUCTEE

Nita Lowey was a United States Representative from New York who served from 1989 to 2021. She was also the first woman to chair the House Appropriations Committee and was influential in enacting government spending laws.

Ms. Lowey was born in the Bronx, New York on July 5, 1937, to Jack and Beatrice Melnikoff. She graduated from Bronx High School of Science in 1955 and Mount Holyoke College in 1959, where she studied political science. Ms. Lowey took a job in advertising after college and married Stephen Lowey, an attorney. They raised two daughters and a son, living in Queens, New York and later Harrison, New York.

Representative Lowey worked on Mario Cuomo's campaign for New York State Lieutenant Governor in 1974 and in the New York State Department of State's office on economic development and neighborhood preservation. She served as Deputy Director of the New York State Division of Economic Opportunity from 1975 to 1985 and was the New York State Assistant Secretary of State from 1985 to 1987. Ms. Lowey was also active with women's political groups and ran for Congress representing Westchester County in 1988. She won 53 percent of the vote in the general election, defeating incumbent Joseph J. DioGuardi. Representative Lowey never had a primary opponent and won by wide margins in reelection campaigns.

While in the House of Representatives, she championed women's rights and health care legislation. Ms. Lowey also supported greater funding for homeless programs, as well as childcare and early education programs.

She negotiated with President George W. Bush's administration for \$20 billion in federal funding to help New York City recover after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Ms. Lowey supported environmental protections and urged federal regulators to start shutting down the Indian Point nuclear power plant in Westchester County. She also fought against revisions to the Clean Water Act due to concerns it might obstruct the cleanup of the Long Island Sound.

Representative Lowey served on the House Appropriations Committee for 28 years and rose to become Chair of the Committee in 2019. She decided not to run for reelection in 2020 and retired from Congress after serving for 32 years.

Nita Lowey died of metastatic breast cancer on March 15, 2025, in Harrison, New York. She was 87 years old.

Text Source: <https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/1000480>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/16/us/politics/nita-m-lowey-dead.html>
<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/03/16/nita-lowey-new-york-congress-dies-00232445>
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/news/news-stories/nita-lowey-59-1937-2025>
Photo Source: <https://westfaironline.com/combined/nita-lowey-dies-at-age-87/>



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Arts & Entertainment

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

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Arts & Entertainment

Alice Austen

1866 - 1952

Born on Staten Island, Alice Austen was one of America's earliest and most prolific female photographers. Self-taught, she used her mother's surname, Austen, because her father had left her mother before she was born.

Ms. Austen started her interest in photography at age 10 when her uncle gave her a camera. After she began her hobby and her interest increased, her camera equipment rarely left her side, though at times it weighed more than 50 pounds.

During the course of her life, Ms. Austen captured thousands of images featuring a multitude of subjects. Her photographs are especially valuable and provide a window into daily life during the time in which she lived. Though she is best known for her documentary work, Ms. Austen was an artist with a strong aesthetic sensibility.

In 1950, Ms. Austen's photographs were rediscovered by chance when Picture Press was looking for images for a new project on the history of American women. Oliver Jensen of Picture Press published several of her photos in the book *Revolt of Women*, wrote an eight-page story in *Life* magazine, and published six pages of Ms. Austen's travel photos in *Holiday* magazine.

Ms. Austen lived an astonishing life. In addition to her photography, she was one of the first female tennis players in America, a sailor, a musician, a horseback rider, one of the first American women to own a car, a sheriff in Staten Island, an ambulance driver in the first World War and a world traveler.

The Alice Austen House Museum on Staten Island has a large collection of photographs on display. A rebel who broke away from the ties of her Victorian environment, Alice Austen created her own independent life.

Text source: <http://www.amazingwomeninhistory.com/alice-austen-photographer/>

Photo source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Austen





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Lucille Ball

1911 - 1989

Born in Celeron, Chautauqua County, Lucille Ball left high school at the age of 15 and enrolled in a New York City drama school where she was repeatedly told she had no talent.

Her job as the Chesterfield Cigarette poster girl led to her selection as a Goldwyn Girl, and off she went to Hollywood. By the late 1940s, she had appeared in over 60 films. During the 1940 musical, "Too Many Girls," she fell in love and eloped with co-star Desi Arnaz.

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz formed Desilu Productions, and in October 1951 launched the television series "I Love Lucy." An outstanding vehicle for Ms. Ball's comedic genius, the show was at the top of the television ratings for over seven years and won five Emmy awards.

In 1962, she succeeded Arnaz as president of Desilu, making her the first woman in history to hold such a position. Her next television show, "The Lucy Show," ran for six years. After selling Desilu for a \$10 million profit, she formed Lucille Ball Productions and produced another series, "Here's Lucy," which ran through 1974.

In 1986, Lucille Ball was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, and in 1989 she passed away. Her career spanned more than 50 years and, with her shows syndicated throughout the world, Lucille Ball will forever make us laugh.

Text and photo sources:

Lucy in the Afternoon: An Intimate Memoir of Lucille Ball, by Jim Brochu
Love, Lucy, by Lucille Ball





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NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Margaret Bourke-White

1904 - 1971

Margaret Bourke-White is best known for pioneering in documentary photography. She was the first foreign photographer permitted to take pictures of Soviet industry, the first female war correspondent and the first female photographer for *Life* magazine, where her photograph appeared on the first cover.

Born in the Bronx, Ms. Bourke-White's interest in photography began as a child. She graduated from Cornell University, where she contributed a photographic study of the rural campus for the school's newspaper. A year later, she moved to Cleveland, Ohio and began a commercial photography studio. She focused on photographing machines and industrial buildings, which brought her to the attention of some of the biggest industrial tycoons. Her successful shoot of the Otis Steel Company earned her national attention. She had an innate ability to see beauty in everything, which resulted in some of the best steel factory pictures of that era.

In 1930, Ms. Bourke-White became the first Western photographer allowed to take pictures of Soviet industry. During World War II, she became the first female war correspondent and the first woman to be allowed to work in combat zones. Her passion to chronicle images from the war put her in several near death situations, including being stranded on an Arctic island, being bombarded in Moscow and torpedoed in the Mediterranean. To her, it wasn't just snapping a photograph, it was capturing life on film, and she took her role very seriously.

Ms. Bourke-White is equally famous in India and Pakistan for her photographs of Gandhi at his spinning wheel. She was the last person to interview him in 1947 before he was assassinated.

In 1953, Ms. Bourke-White developed her first symptoms of Parkinson's disease. Forced to slow her globetrotting career, she wrote a bestselling autobiography, *Portrait of Myself*. She succumbed to the disease in 1971, yet throughout her life, Ms. Bourke-White was dedicated to documenting both ordinary and extraordinary images, bringing light to dark places and capturing true beauty on camera.

Today her photographs and books can be found in many museums. She is also represented in the collection of the Library of Congress. Among her many tributes were doctorates from the University of Michigan and from Rutgers University in 1950. In 1997, Ms. Bourke-White was designated a Women's History Month Honoree by the National Women's History Project.

Text sources:

www.squidoo.com/margaret-bourke-white

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Bourke-White

Photo source: <http://womenshistory.about.com/>





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Arts & Entertainment

Julia de Burgos

1917 - 1953

A much-loved icon in Puerto Rican/Hispanic literature, Julia de Burgos' life and work continues to inspire readers 50 years after her death. De Burgos' impoverished upbringing and deep sensitivity to social injustice formed the basis of her lyrical and revolutionary poetry.

De Burgos overcame numerous obstacles during her lifetime, not the least of which was the prevailing standard of behavior for women. Hers was a clear and audible voice that transcended the norm for women. According to *Publishers Weekly*, "Writing in the 1930s through the 1950s, de Burgos was ahead of her time in grasping connections between history, the body, politics, love, self-negation and feminism that would later prove to be the foundations for writers like [Adrienne] Rich and [Sylvia] Plath."

De Burgos joined a literary protest against European colonialism and its denigration of African culture, and was an ardent supporter of Puerto Rican independence.

De Burgos died in a Harlem hospital in 1953. Almost immediately after her death, de Burgos was honored by esteemed Hispanic writers and political figures, and her final collection of original poems, *El mar y tu y otros poemas*, was published in 1954.

Text source : *Notable Hispanic American Women*, Gale, 1998; *Biography Resource Center*, Gale, 1999.

Photo source: Curbstone Press.





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Arts & Entertainment

Celia Cruz
1925-2003

Celia Cruz, known as "The Queen of Salsa," is one of the most important figures in salsa music and Cuban culture in America.

A legendary singer and dancer, Ms. Cruz was born in Havana, Cuba, where she was exposed to diverse performers who influenced her future singing career. Originally attending school to become a teacher, she put her education on hold after winning a talent contest. Her breakthrough happened in 1950, when she replaced the lead singer in Cuba's most popular band, La Sonora Matancera, becoming the ensemble's first Afro-Latina front person since its founding.

After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Havana's nightlife all but disappeared. Ms. Cruz, along with other members of the band, left Cuba for Mexico. La Sonora Matancera renounced Fidel Castro's socialist regime during their 1960 Mexican tour, resulting in the band's exile from Cuba. An outspoken advocate against the regime, this became a great source of pain for Ms. Cruz because of her deep love for her country and her family still residing there.

After years of performing with the band, Ms. Cruz struck out on her own and settled in the United States. Living in the Bronx, she brought her Cuban culture and big personality to New York's music scene.

Ms. Cruz's music and style constantly evolved. Best known for her salsa music, she also performed rumba and reggaeton, and starred in films and made appearances on television shows. She was popular with all generations with her energizing rhythm influencing everything from fashion to music. In addition to her voice, Ms. Cruz was known for wearing dazzling costumes, varicolored wigs and sequined dresses.

Always singing in her native Spanish, she is one of the most popular Afro-Latina artists of the 20th century. Ms. Cruz recorded over 80 albums, earned 23 gold records, won five Grammy Awards, received the President's National Medal of Arts, and was awarded a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Grammy. Ms. Cruz is ranked No. 18 in *Rolling Stone's* list of the 200 Greatest Singers. She is one of five women who the United States Mint will feature on the quarter in 2024, making her the first Afro-Latina to appear on the coin.

Text source: https://www.azquotes.com/author/24040-Celia_Cruz
<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-latin/celia-cruz-first-afro-latina-us-quarter-1234675690/>
<https://www.newyorklatiniculture.com/celia-cruz/>
Photo source: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/ivy-queen-celia-cruz-tribute-1311828/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Gertrude Caroline Ederle

1906 - 2003

Gertrude Caroline Ederle, a famous American swimmer, was among the first real sports heroines to prove that women were not physically inferior to men or incapable of strenuous activity. In 1926 at the age of 19, Ederle was the first woman to swim the English Channel from France to England.

Only five men had successfully completed the Channel swim, and Ederle battled bad weather which forced her to swim the equivalent of 35 miles to cover the 21-mile distance, reaching Kingsdown on the English coast for a time of 14 hours, 31 minutes. This shattered the existing world record, held by a man, by more than two hours.

Following her historic swim, New York City Mayor James J. Walker called for a ticker-tape parade to honor Ederle, a native of New York City. Nearly two million people lined lower Broadway to celebrate America's newest sporting hero, who was considered to be Johnny Weissmuller's female counterpart. Together, they were two of the greatest swimming figures of the 1920s, and idols of the "Golden Age of Sport."

From 1921 to 1925, Ederle set 29 U.S. and world records for swimming races ranging from the 50-yard to the half-mile race. In the 1924 Summer Olympics, Ederle won a gold medal as part of the U.S. 400-meter freestyle relay team, and bronze medals for finishing third in the 100-meter and 400-meter freestyle races. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1965.

Text source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude_Ederle

Photo source: <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com>, <http://www.economist.com>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Ella Fitzgerald

1917 - 1996

Ella Fitzgerald is considered the quintessential female jazz singer. Orphaned in early childhood, Fitzgerald moved to Yonkers, New York, to attend an orphanage school. She was "discovered" in 1945 in an amateur contest sponsored by New York City's Apollo Theatre.

Ella Fitzgerald soon became a celebrity of the swing era, her career beginning with an engagement with Chick Webb's band. She was known for songs such as "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" (1938) and "Undecided" (1939) and took over the direction of the band when Webb died in 1939. Embarking on a solo career in 1942, Fitzgerald recorded both commercial and jazz music, and became involved with Norman Granz's "Jazz at the Philharmonic," which brought her a broad international following. Fitzgerald eventually joined Granz's Verve record label, and succeeded in attracting a large non-jazz audience due to her use of jazz-inflected arrangements written by such composers as Nelson Riddle.

Fitzgerald issued many recordings for Granz's record labels and frequently appeared at jazz festivals with Oscar Peterson, Duke Ellington, Tommy Flanagan, Count Basie, and Joe Pass. She produced a series of 11 songbooks dedicated to major American songwriters, and her collection of scores and photographs is housed in the library of Boston University. Among her many honors, Fitzgerald received a Grammy Award in 1980.

Text source: Oxford University Press.

Photo source: <http://www.ellafitzgerald.com>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Annette Joanne Funicello

1942 - 2013

Well-known for her engaging smile and voice, Annette Funicello's professional career as an actress and singer began when she was just 12 years old.

Born in Utica, New York, Ms. Funicello's parents moved to southern California when she was four. A shy child, Ms. Funicello took music and dance lessons – which paid off when she was discovered by Walt Disney as she performed at a 1955 dance recital. Cast as one of the original "Mouseketeers," Ms. Funicello was a very popular member of The Mickey Mouse Club, which paved her way as an actress and singer.

In addition to television success, Ms. Funicello branched out into movie acting, "The Shaggy Dog" (1959) and "Beach Party" (1963), and singing "Train of Love" (1960) and "No Way To Go But Up" (1966). Later in her career, she became the primary spokesperson for Skippy Peanut Butter, producing a host of commercials. Ms. Funicello largely phased out her career as she raised her three children with first husband Jack Gilardi, before divorcing in 1983.

Ms. Funicello married Glen Holt in 1986 and, within a year, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She became the most famous spokesperson for the disease, and in 1993, opened the Annette Funicello Fund for Neurological Disorders at the California Community Foundation. The Foundation's mission is dedicated to funding research into the cause, treatment and cure of multiple sclerosis and other neurological diseases.

Through personal challenges and struggles, and before passing away from complications related to multiple sclerosis in 2013, Annette Funicello was a force in raising awareness of this debilitating disease.

Photo source:

<https://www.nydailynews.com/resizer/76XdIOCAOaeuLKM4ibbm7vptVKM=/800x812/top/arc-anglerfish-arc2-prod-tronc.s3.amazonaws.com/public/ZRTPAF16XAISWK5QB2HPYYNB4.jpg>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Althea Gibson

1927 - 2003

Althea Gibson was the first African-American of either sex to play tennis at Forest Hills and Wimbledon. The "Jackie Robinson" of tennis, Ms. Gibson broke down racial barriers 40 years before anyone heard of the Williams sisters. She is the quintessential example of how superior athletic prowess turned a street kid into an outstanding role model and an inspiration to African-American women everywhere.

Before she ever picked up a tennis racquet, Ms. Gibson was a truant and frequent runaway. Born in a sharecropper's shack in Silver, S.C., she grew up in Harlem. Public programs brought tennis to children in poor neighborhoods and Ms. Gibson was taken to the Harlem River Tennis Courts, where she quickly mastered the game. In 1942, she won the New York State girl's championship sponsored by the American Tennis Association (ATA), the oldest African-American sports organization in the United States. She went on to win 10 straight ATA national championships beginning in 1947.

Tournaments outside the ATA, however, remained off limits until 1950, when an article in *American Lawn Tennis* magazine noted that Ms. Gibson was not able to participate in the better-known championship for no reason other than "bigotry."

Later that year, Ms. Gibson entered the National Grass Court Championships at Forest Hills, the precursor of the United States Open, the first African-American player to compete in the national tennis championship. This was nearly 20 years before Arthur Ashe became the first African-American man to win the U.S. Open in 1968.

The following year, Ms. Gibson was the first African-American invited to enter the all-England tournament at Wimbledon. In 1956, she won the French Open. In 1957, she won the women's single and doubles at Wimbledon. In celebration of this win, New York City greeted her with a ticker-tape parade up Broadway.

Ms. Gibson won 11 major titles in the late 1950s, including singles titles at the French Open (1956); Wimbledon (1957, 1958); and the U.S. Open (1957, 1958) as well as three straight doubles at the French Open (1956, 1957, 1958).

After touring with the Harlem Globetrotters, where she played tennis at halftime, Ms. Gibson worked as a tennis teaching pro. She later became the New Jersey State Commissioner of Athletics in 1975, a position she held for 10 years.

Text source: womenshistory.about.com

Photo source: altheagibson.com





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Billie Holiday

1915 - 1959

Eleanora Fagan, better known as Billie Holiday, was a groundbreaking jazz singer with a career spanning nearly 30 years. Her unique vocal style, delivery, and improvisational skills forever changed the genres of jazz and pop music.

Ms. Holiday endured a difficult childhood in Baltimore, shuffled between relatives while her mother worked as a maid. She was twice committed to a reformatory school for colored girls. After dropping out of school in 5th grade, she discovered the music of Louis Armstrong when she heard him playing on a victrola in a neighborhood brothel.

She began singing at jazz nightclubs in Harlem for tips at 14, quickly becoming an active participant in what was then the most vibrant jazz scene in the country, the Harlem Renaissance movement. At 18, she was spotted by producer John Hammond with whom she cut her first record as part of a studio group led by Benny Goodman. She went on to record hit after hit with Teddy Wilson. Nicknamed "Lady Day" by Lester Young, she began a string of collaborations and is considered one of the greatest jazz vocalists of all time.

She joined the Count Basie Orchestra for tours in 1937 and in 1938 was invited by Artie Shaw to front his orchestra, making her the first black woman to work with a white band. While on tour, she was subjected to insults and discrimination, particularly in the South, where some restaurants and diners refused to serve her. At one hotel, management demanded that she use the freight elevators so as not to offend white clientele.

She penned "God Bless the Child" and "Lady Sings the Blues," among many others. Her interpretation of the anti-lynching poem "Strange Fruit" was included in the list of Songs of the Century by the Recording Industry of America and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Her autobiography was made into the 1972 film *Lady Sings the Blues*, and in 2000, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She was awarded with numerous Grammy Awards and *Time Magazine's* "Song of the Century" Award. A statue of her was erected in Baltimore in 1985 and in 1994, the U.S. Postal Service honored Ms. Holiday with a stamp.

Ms. Holiday's music and life continue to inspire and influence other performers who follow her example.

Text sources: <https://billieholiday.com/bio/>
<https://www.biography.com/musician/billie-holiday>
<https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/billie-holiday/>

Photo source: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/489/billie-holiday>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Charlotte Pruyn Hyde

1867 - 1963

Charlotte Pruyn Hyde was a true lover of the arts. While her considerable wealth and well-developed aesthetic resulted in an impressive collection of fine art, her dedication and generosity to the community are worthy of distinction.

Charlotte Pruyn was born in 1867 to Eliza Jane and Samuel Pruyn, the owner of the Finch Pruyn paper mill in Glens Falls. She was educated in private schools in Glens Falls and Albany, New York. In 1887 she moved to Boston, the center of cultural life in the United States, and enrolled in finishing school. She was exposed to a thriving artistic and intellectual community, which served as the springboard for the creation of her own version of the American Renaissance ideal in Glens Falls.

While in Boston, Charlotte met Louis Hyde, who, after a 14-year courtship, would become her husband in 1901. They remained in the Boston area until 1907, when the couple relocated to Charlotte's hometown. Mr. Hyde, having left his law practice, took the position of vice president at the family company, Finch Pruyn.

Although Charlotte had developed a deep appreciation of art during her time in Boston and on trips to Europe before and during her marriage, she began in 1912 to acquire art in earnest. She and her husband continued to visit Europe as well as New York City, where they obtained works by noted artists, including Rembrandt, Ingres and Degas; they also acquired antiques to furnish their home. By 1938, Mrs. Hyde enlisted the services of a curator, and the collection took on the hallmarks of The Hyde Collection.

In 1952, 18 years after Louis' death, Charlotte Hyde established a public trust. She bequeathed her magnificent Italian Renaissance style home in Glens Falls, along with its extensive collection of fine and decorative arts, to the community. The Hyde Collection opened its doors in 1963, and has grown in stature to become one of the preeminent art museums in New York.

Text source:

Hyde Art Museum web site, www.hydeartmuseum.org and curatorial department.

Photo source: Hyde Art Museum, collections department





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Emma Lazarus

1849 - 1887

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." These famous words from *The New Colossus* were written by Emma Lazarus. Although best known for penning this sonnet, Ms. Lazarus was one of the first successful Jewish American authors who was also a novelist, playwright, teacher and translator.

Born in 1849 and raised in New York City and Newport, Rhode Island, Ms. Lazarus was an enthusiastic student who immersed herself in many subjects, including the study of literature, languages and the arts. As a teenage author, Ms. Lazarus enjoyed the emotional and financial support of her father, a successful sugar merchant.

With her growing position as part of New York's literary elite, Ms. Lazarus was afforded the opportunity to interact with notable authors such as George Eliot and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In fact, she viewed Emerson as a mentor throughout much of her early career.

Ms. Lazarus used her writings to advocate against anti-Semitism and for the creation of a Jewish homeland. In the 1880s, Ms. Lazarus published *Songs of a Semite: The Dance to Death and Other Poems*. It was celebrated by many as her best work and consisted of Jewish-themed poems and a lyric drama. Through her 1882-1883 essays in *The Century*, Ms. Lazarus put forth the notion of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. She was an important forerunner of the Zionist movement, having argued for the creation of a Jewish homeland 13 years before the term Zionist was even coined.

In 1883, Ms. Lazarus wrote *The New Colossus* for an auction to raise money for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal. It was later inscribed in bronze beneath the statue and has come to symbolize a universal message of hope and freedom for immigrants coming to America.

Text source: National Womens Hall of Fame

Photo source: University of Virginia Library





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Mary Edmonia Lewis

1844 - 1907

Mary Edmonia Lewis was the first woman of African-American and Native American heritage to achieve international recognition as a fine art sculptor. Born in Greenbush (Rensselaer), New York, Edmonia overcame immense obstacles to become a respected artist. Orphaned at an early age, her father was a free African-American and her mother a Chippewa (Ojibwee) Indian. She was named Wildfire during her early years spent living with her mother's nomadic tribe, where life revolved around fishing, swimming, and making and selling crafts.

In 1859, with the support and encouragement of her older brother, Edmonia attended Oberlin College. Her life at Oberlin was formidable and complicated. After she was falsely accused of poisoning two white classmates, she was abducted, badly beaten, and left for dead. After her recovery, she was cleared of the charges. However, a year later, she was accused of stealing art supplies, and although she was again acquitted, Edmonia was not permitted to register for her last term and was unable to graduate. Despite these experiences, Edmonia emerged as a talented young artist.

Inspired by the lives of abolitionists and Civil War heroes, Edmonia's subjects included some of the most famous abolitionists of her day. When she met Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, she was inspired to create a bust of his likeness. It impressed the Shaw family and they immediately purchased her piece. From there, Edmonia created plaster casts of the bust and sold 100 of them at \$15 dollars apiece (approximately \$240 in today's market). The money she earned from these, along with popular medallion portraits of abolitionists John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison, allowed her to move to Italy.

Now an established artist, Edmonia lived and perfected her craft in Rome. Frederick Douglass visited her. Ulysses S. Grant sat for her. She made busts of John Brown, Abraham Lincoln and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. One of her most famous works, *The Death of Cleopatra*, was shown at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 and received universal critical acclaim.

In recent decades, Edmonia's life and art have received increased attention and posthumous acclaim. Her pieces are part of permanent collections at Howard University's Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. In 2002, the scholar Molefi Kete Asante named Edmonia Lewis on his list of 100 Greatest African Americans.

Text sources:

<https://americanart.si.edu/artist/edmonia-lewis-2914>

<https://www.biography.com/people/edmonia-lewis-9381053>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmonia_Lewis

Photo source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmonia_Lewis#/media/File:Motto_edmonia_lewis_original.jpg





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Toni Morrison

1931-2019

Toni Morrison's plays, children's books, and novels earned her several prestigious awards, including the Nobel Prize, the Pulitzer Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 1949, she attended Howard University, where she joined the University's theatrical group touring the segregated South. After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in English, she attended Cornell University, obtaining a Master of Arts in English.

After establishing a distinguished career as an English professor, she moved to Syracuse to become an editor for Random House. Within two years, she transferred to the New York City branch, becoming the first female Black editor in fiction.

Ms. Morrison developed the story of her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, by getting up every morning at 4 am to write, while raising two children on her own. Three years later, she published her second novel, *Sula*, nominated for the National Book Award. By her third novel in 1977, she became a household name. *Song of Solomon* earned critical acclaim as well as the National Book Critics Circle Award.

In 1987, she released *Beloved*, based on the true story of an African-American enslaved woman. A *New York Times* bestseller, it won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

Ms. Morrison became the first Black woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature and was chosen by the National Endowment for the Humanities to give the Jefferson Lecture. She received the National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

In 1998, Oprah Winfrey co-produced and starred in the film adaptation of *Beloved*. Her books were featured four times as selections for Oprah's Book Club. She was a professor in the Creative Writing Program at Princeton University, earning an honorary Doctorate from the University of Oxford, and was a guest curator at the Louvre. In 2000, she was named a Living Legend by the Library of Congress.

Ms. Morrison collaborated with her son, writing children's books until his death at 45. Two years later, she published the last book they were working on together and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Text source: <https://www.biography.com/authors-writers/toni-morrison>
<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/biographical/>
Photo source: Photograph by Sara Krulwich / NYT / Redux





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Shirley Muldowney

1940 - Present

Shirley Muldowney was the first woman to be licensed by the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) to drive a Top Fuel Dragster. She was also the first woman to win a national event, and the only driver — male or female — to win the Winston World Championship title three times.

Shirley Muldowney was born Shirley Roque on June 19, 1940, and grew up in Schenectady. Her father, Belgium Benedict Roque, was a taxicab driver and a professional boxer. At the age of 16, she quit school and married Jack Muldowney, a racing enthusiast. Muldowney's "fighting spirit" would serve her well, as she constantly battled chauvinism from those in the racing world, who nicknamed her "Cha Cha" early in her career. However, she chose to embrace a feminine image rather than downplay it, defiantly choosing to paint her cars hot pink.

Among her many honors, Muldowney was the first motorsports personality to receive an "Outstanding Achievement Award" from the U.S. Congress and the first woman to be inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame. She was also inducted into the *Hot Rod Magazine* Hall of Fame.

After a life-threatening racing accident in 1984, the NHRA prescribed new rules that made the sport safer. With the release of *Heart Like A Wheel*, a successful biographical feature film, Shirley Muldowney's name is now among the most recognized in all of motorsports.

Text and photo source:

Jon Asher Enterprises; National Hot Rod Association; and Current Biography Yearbook, 1997.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Eve Rabin Queler

1936 - Present

A New York City native, Eve Rabin Queler is the founder, music director, and guiding spirit of the Opera Orchestra of New York. OONY's mission, as crafted by Ms. Queler, is to uncover neglected operas by great composers and to introduce important singers and works to New York audiences. She began piano lessons at five years of age. She attended the New York City High School of Music and Art, the Mannes College of Music, and Hebrew Union School of Education and Sacred Music.

Among her accomplishments, Eve Queler was the first woman to conduct at a major European opera house. She has commanded the respect of some of the greatest musicians in the world, including Nicolai Gedda, Renata Scotto and Placido Domingo. Ms. Queler gave her premiere performance at Carnegie Hall on March 16, 1972. Since then, she has conducted over 75 operas at Carnegie Hall. Wagner's "Rienzi" and Strauss' "Die Liebe der Danae" are among her successes.

Eve Queler continues her work for the Opera Orchestra of New York, celebrating over 30 years of success. She has also served as conductor or guest conductor for many orchestras in the U.S., Canada and Europe.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Anna "Grandma Moses" Robertson

1860 - 1961

Anna Robertson loved to draw as a child. For years, she painted rich landscapes from memory as a hobby. At the age of 79, Anna, known as "Grandma Moses," became a celebrated American folk artist.

Anna was born on a farm in Greenwich, as one of 10 children. She left home at age 12 to work as a hired houseworker. After marrying a farmer named Thomas Moses, she lived in Virginia before moving back to New York and settling in Eagle Bridge.

She ran the family farm with her sons until old age prevented her from continuing. To keep active, Moses turned to painting landscapes of her rural, upstate New York childhood memories. She often gave them away as gifts or sold them for a few dollars after mounting them in old mirrors and picture frames acquired from friends' attics.

In 1939, Lewis Caldor, an art collector from Manhattan, stopped at a drug store in Hoosick Falls, where he purchased four of Moses' paintings on display in the window. He put her work on display in the Museum of Modern Art, lifting her from obscurity to the center of the American folk art movement. Within 10 years, her paintings had been displayed in more than 65 exhibitions at galleries and museums throughout the United States. Grandma Moses continued to paint until her 101st birthday, shortly before her death.

Text source: *Prominent Women of the 20th Century*, by Peggy Saari

Photo source: *Hoosick Township Historical Society, The Miller Museum*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman ("Nellie Bly")

1864 - 1922

Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman had little formal schooling, but began a career in journalism in 1885 under the pen name "Nellie Bly," which was taken from a popular Stephen Foster song.

The most famous woman journalist of her day, she made her mark while working for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* in New York City. She had herself committed to a mental asylum by pretending to be insane, and afterwards published an expose of conditions that led to a grand jury investigation of the asylum and improvements in patient care. She similarly exposed conditions in slums, sweatshops and jails.

From November 1889 to January 1890, Nellie Bly took a famous trip. She traveled alone around the world by steamer, train, ricksha and other commercial conveyances in the record time of 72 days, 6 hours and 11 minutes in a highly publicized attempt to beat the time of Phileas Fogg, the hero of Jules Verne's novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

She wrote a book about her adventure, published in 1890, called *Nellie Bly's Book: Around the World in Seventy-Two Days*.

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Joanne Lynn Shenandoah
(1957 – 2021)

Joanne Lynn Shenandoah was a groundbreaking Native American singer, composer, and multi-instrumentalist. She is the most critically acclaimed and honored Native American musician of her generation.

Ms. Shenandoah was born in Syracuse, New York to Maisie Shenandoah, Wolf Clan Mother of the Oneida Indian Nation, and Clifford Shenandoah, an Onondaga Nation Chief from the Beaver Clan. Both Nations are part of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy). She had four sisters: Wanda, Vicky, Diane (her twin), and Danielle, as well as a brother, Jerry. As the Oneida have a matrilineal kinship system, the siblings were all considered to be born into their mother's Wolf Clan.

Ms. Shenandoah grew up on the Oneida Reservation near Oneida, New York. She learned many traditional songs and music styles, and played many instruments, including piano, guitar, flute, and cello. She was given the name Tekaliwhakwah, which translates as "she sings." She attended Andrews University and Montgomery College.

Before launching her career in music, Ms. Shenandoah spent many years in the Washington area, where she had a computer consulting business and found occasional jobs singing for commercials and as a backup vocalist.

In 1989, she released the first of over a dozen albums, and the next year she moved back to Oneida territory. She sought out elders to learn more about the history and languages of the Oneida people and other groups in the Iroquois Confederacy, which also includes the Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora Nations.

Ms. Shenandoah gained a following that spread far beyond the world of Native American music. She reshaped American Indigenous music by taking ancient songs and blending them with her own accompaniment on flute, piano, cello, and guitar. Her songs were featured in the 1990s television series *Northern Exposure*, and she performed several times at the White House and at inaugural events for Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Ms. Shenandoah was also a Grammy Award winner. She received 14 Native American Music Awards, more than any other Native artist. She was presented with the prestigious Rigoberta Menchu, which was the highest award by the Native Film Festival in Montreal, Quebec, for her soundtrack in the documentary, *Our Land Our Life*.

In 2012, Ms. Shenandoah was honored with the Atlas Award for her work with the climate change movement, both in the U.S. and globally.

Text sources:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/30/arts/music/joanne-shenandoah-dead.html>
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/obituaries/2021/12/05/joanne-shenandoah-dies/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joanne_Shenandoah

Photo source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/30/arts/music/joanne-shenandoah-dead.html>



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Barbara Stanwyck

1907 - 1990

With a legendary film career that spanned five decades, Barbara Stanwyck made nearly 90 movies for the Silver Screen and was a four-time Academy Award nominee. Stanwyck took the coveted statue home in 1982, when she was given an honorary Oscar. She also won three Emmy Awards, as she parlayed her considerable talents into a successful television career in the 1950s and 1960s. Most notably, she played the powerful matriarch on the TV western, "The Big Valley," from 1965-69.

A self-described "tough Brooklyn broad," Stanwyck was born Ruby Stevens in 1907. Orphaned at an early age and raised by an older sister, Stanwyck began supporting herself through menial jobs, but all the while she remained intent on pursuing an acting career. Her fierce determination would become her trademark. Stanwyck began as a Broadway dancer and moved to Hollywood with her husband in 1929. Stanwyck was mentored by the legendary director Frank Capra and co-starred with many of Hollywood's leading men, including John Wayne, Kirk Douglas, Gary Cooper, Humphrey Bogart and Henry Fonda. In 1944, the government listed her as the highest paid woman in America.

Her Oscar nominations were for diverse roles: the melodramatic *Stella Dallas* (1937), the screwball comedy *Ball of Fire* (1941), the femme fatale in *Double Indemnity* (1944), arguably her best performance, and a fourth nomination for the thriller, *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948). Her western roles included *Annie Oakley* and Cecille B. DeMille's epic, *Union Pacific*.

Stanwyck won Emmys for *The Big Valley* and the 1983 mini-series *The Thorn Birds*. Listed as #11 on the American Film Institute's 100 Years 100 Stars - Greatest Screen Legends, Barbara Stanwyck died in 1990, and her ashes were spread over the California Sierras.

Text sources:

www.imdb.com

"Women in American History," Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1999

Photo source: www.doctormacro.com





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Maureen Stapleton

1925 - 2006

At the age of 17, with \$100 in her pocket, Maureen Stapleton left her blue-collar neighborhood of Troy, NY, to pursue her dream of stardom. The year was 1943, and over the next four decades, she would win an Oscar, two Tonys, an Emmy and even a Grammy nomination.

Ms. Stapleton parlayed her indomitable spirit and tremendous talent into a career that established her as one of America's greatest supporting actresses. She studied at the renowned Actor's Studio in Manhattan, where she became and remained friends with Marlon Brando and Marilyn Monroe. This upstate girl from a strict Irish-Catholic family first became a Broadway success playing an earthy, Italian widow in Tennessee Williams' *The Rose Tattoo*, for which she won a Tony in 1951. In all, she was nominated six times for a Tony, winning a second time in 1971 for Neil Simon's *The Gingerbread Lady*.

Ms. Stapleton's first film role earned her an Oscar nomination in 1958 for *Lonely Hearts*. She was nominated twice more (in 1970 for *Airport* and 1978 for Woody Allen's *Interiors*) before winning in 1981 for Warren Beatty's *Reds*. In television, Ms. Stapleton earned an Emmy in 1967 for *Among the Paths to Eden* and was nominated three more times over the next 25 years.

Ms. Stapleton could play the comedic and the dramatic with equal deftness. Both her fiery spirit and subtle vulnerability gave her an uncanny ability to connect, which made her memorable to audiences and respected by her colleagues. She had a down-to-earth persona, yet counted among her many friends Liz and Larry — Elizabeth Taylor and Sir Laurence Olivier!

With all of her success, Ms. Stapleton never forgot from where she came. Whether as a guest on the "Johnny Carson Show" or in her Academy Award acceptance speech, she always acknowledged her hometown, Troy, which in turn acknowledged her by naming the Hudson Valley Community College's theater after her. Maureen Stapleton died in Lenox, Massachusetts, on March 13, 2006.

Text source: www.nytimes.com; www.nndb.com/people

Photo source: *The Record*, Troy, New York





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Arts & Entertainment

Maria Tallchief

1925 - 2013

Maria Tallchief, born Elizabeth Marie Tall Chief, was the first Indigenous American woman to break into ballet, eventually becoming prima ballerina of the New York City Ballet. She is credited with breaking ethnic barriers in a field long dominated by Russian and European dancers.

Ms. Tallchief was born in Oklahoma; her father was a member of the Osage Nation. When she and her sister showed interest in music and dance, her mother chose to enroll them in lessons, where Ms. Tallchief excelled. She moved with her family to California in hopes of securing a significant role in Hollywood musicals. However, those opportunities were slow to come, and upon graduating from high school, Ms. Tallchief moved to New York City to pursue ballet full time.

She was selected as an understudy in the Ballets Russes, the premier Russian ballet company in the United States. When one of the lead ballerinas stepped down, Ms. Tallchief was called to step in. Her performance earned her rave reviews by top critics of the time. As her career began to take off, she was encouraged to change her last name to avoid being rejected or discriminated against for top roles because of her ethnicity. She refused and continued to perform as Maria Tallchief, staying true to her Native American heritage.

In 1947, she became the first American to dance with the Paris Opera Ballet. One of Ms. Tallchief's best-known roles was as the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, with her performance transforming the work into an annual Christmas classic and a reliable box-office draw for the industry. She performed at the infamous Bolshoi Theater in Moscow in 1960, making her the first American to do so.

Ms. Tallchief appeared on several television shows including *The Ed Sullivan Show* and the musical movie *Million Dollar Mermaid* where she portrayed Anna Pavlova. One of her last performances was a 1966 title role in Peter van Dyk's *Cinderella*. Not wishing to dance beyond her prime, she retired from dancing. During her career, she danced throughout Europe and South America, Japan, and Russia, and made guest appearances with symphony orchestras.

After her retirement, she went on to serve as director of ballet for the Lyric Opera of Chicago from 1973 to 1979 and founded a dancing school in 1974. She and her sister founded the Chicago City Ballet in 1981.

A ballerina, dance instructor and artistic director, she has received numerous recognitions, including a Kennedy Center Honor for lifetime achievements, the American National Medal of Arts, and was twice named "Woman of the Year" by the Washington Press Club. She is depicted on a mural at the Oklahoma State Capitol and was an inductee in the first ceremony held by the National Native American Hall of Fame.

Ms. Tallchief was called "one of the most brilliant American ballerinas of the 20th century" by *The New York Times*. She has been the subject of numerous biographies and documentaries on her remarkable life and career. Her artistic style and excellence continues to inspire dancers worldwide.

Text sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Tallchief

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/maria-tallchief>

<https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/maria-tallchief/>

Photo source: *The Washington Post*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Arts & Entertainment

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney

1875 - 1942

In 1931, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney was the first woman to found a major art museum: The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. The daughter of wealthy railroad baron Cornelius Vanderbilt II, Gertrude Whitney was a highly regarded sculptor whose works include the Titanic Memorial and the Aztec Fountain, both in Washington, D.C., the El Dorado Fountain in San Francisco, and the St. Nazaire War Memorial in France.

In addition to her own works, Gertrude Whitney sponsored the greatest number of non-academic, aspiring artists in the United States. She supplied them with studio space and purchased and exhibited many of their pieces. In 1929, she offered to build a new wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, along with the donation of her 500-piece personal art collection. When the offer was rejected, she established the Whitney Museum of Art in 1931, the first museum to exhibit exclusively American Art. The Whitney also was the first museum to display American abstract art and was instrumental in reviving interest in 19th century American artists such as Winslow Homer and Robert Feke.

In 1954, The Whitney moved from its original location at West 8th St. to Madison Ave. & 75th Street. In 1967, The New York Studio School saved the West 8th St. building from demolition, and it is now a National Historic Landmark.

Text sources: *The Book of Women's Firsts, Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women*, by Phyllis Read and Bernard Wittleb and www.cr.nps.gov

Photo source: *Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute*

Photographer: *Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute*



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Education

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Pura Belpré
(1899 – 1982)

Pura Teresa Belpré y Nogueras was an Afro-Puerto Rican educator who served as the first Puerto Rican librarian in New York City. She was also a writer, collector of folktales, and puppeteer.

Ms. Belpré was born in Cidra, Puerto Rico. Originally planning to become a teacher after graduating from the University of Puerto Rico, Ms. Belpré paused her studies to attend her sister's wedding in New York City. She immediately fell in love with the energy and opportunity of the City and took a job as a seamstress in the City's garment district.

Soon after, she became greatly interested in a public library's effort to hire young women from ethnically diverse backgrounds. It was this first job, as a Hispanic assistant at the 135th Street Branch in Harlem, that began a remarkable and unique career. Ms. Belpré remained in New York City for the rest of her life, establishing a shining legacy of education, storytelling, and public service.

Eventually, Ms. Belpré became a librarian and later transferred to the 115th Street Branch that was home to a growing Puerto Rican population. It was here that her storytelling skills and puppeteering became major community attractions that showcased her grandmother's folktales. Her puppeteering sessions were so beloved that the stories were eventually published as children's books, including *Perez and Martina* and *Juan Bobo*.

Ms. Belpré received many awards and accolades over the course of her career, including the New York Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture. In the Bronx, New York, Public School 64 on Walton Avenue is named after her. In 2022, 109th Street and Lexington Avenue in East Harlem was named "Pura Belpré Way." Her papers are held at the Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, Center for Puerto Rican Studies – an important source for scholars and educators to study the relationship between the Puerto Rican community and the New York Public Library.

Established in 1996, the Pura Belpré Award is a prestigious annual award, presented to a Latino or Latina author and illustrator whose work best portrays the Latino cultural experience in a work of literature for children or youth. George Ancona, Yuyi Morales, and Duncan Tonatiuh have all received the Pura Belpré Award.

Text sources:

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/books-authors/pura-belpr%C3%A9-her-life-and-legacy>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pura_Belpr%C3%A9

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pura_Belpr%C3%A9_Award

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2020/11/12/pura-belpr%C3%A9-library-storyteller>

Photo source: <https://exhibits.domains.uflib.ufl.edu/purabelpre/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Sarah J. Smith Tompkins Garnet

1831 - 1911

Sarah J. Smith Tompkins Garnet was the first African-American female principal in New York City's public school system. Ms. Garnet was also a pioneer in the suffrage movement, founding the first black suffrage league in New York City to advocate for voting rights for women of color.

Ms. Garnet, a native of Brooklyn, had a long and distinguished career as an educator. In 1845, when she began as a teacher's assistant at age 14, public schools were racially segregated. In 1854, Ms. Garnet was hired as a teacher at the African Free School of Williamsburg, which is now part of Brooklyn. In 1863, she was appointed principal of Grammar School Number Four and Public School Number Eighty. She remained in that dual position until she retired in 1900, the year New York repealed a law allowing separate schools for African-Americans and whites.

During her career, Ms. Garnet fought racial discrimination against African-American teachers by advocating for equal pay for equal work and by removing racial barriers to teacher assignments. She even testified before the Legislature in Albany on these issues.

An active supporter of women's suffrage and African-American civil rights, Ms. Garnet was also a businesswoman; she owned a seamstress shop in Brooklyn from 1883 to 1911. In the late 1880s, Ms. Garnet helped found the Equal Suffrage Club, a Brooklyn-based club for black women. As a member of the Equal Suffrage Club, Ms. Garnet supported the Niagara Movement, a predecessor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She also served as Superintendent of the Suffrage Department of the National Association of Colored Women.

In 1911, Ms. Garnet accompanied her sister, Susan Smith McKinney Steward – the first African-American woman in New York State to earn a medical degree – to London, England for the first Universal Races Congress. Just weeks after returning from Europe, Ms. Garnet died peacefully at home at age 80.

Text sources:

Jessie Carney Smith, *Notable Black American Women* (Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1992)

Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in America*

<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/garnet-sarah-j-smith-tompkins-1831-1911>

Photo source: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/51479943/sarah-j._tompkins-garnet





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Margaret Leech

1893 - 1974

A native of Newburgh, Margaret Leech was the first woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for history and the only woman to gain that recognition twice. The Pulitzer Prize, named after the Hungarian-born journalist Joseph Pulitzer, was first established in 1917 as an incentive to achieve excellence.

Ms. Leech's first Pulitzer came in 1942 for *Reveille in Washington*, her book on the Nation's capital during the Civil War period. This widely acclaimed tome viewed the war from the most sensitive point of all during the conflict: the Nation's capital. Her second Pulitzer was awarded in 1960 for *In Days of McKinley*. Described as a "first-rate book about a second-rate president," this book also won the coveted Bancroft Prize from Columbia University.

A 1915 graduate of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, Margaret Leech was not only an esteemed historian, but also a prolific author. Her other works include the novels *Tin Wedding*, *The Back of the Book*, and *The Feathered Nest*, a biography, *The Garfield Orbit*, and a play, *Divided by Three*.

Text sources: *The Book of Women's Firsts, Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women*, by Phyllis Read, Bernard Witlieb;
Current Biography from Vassar College;
Thor.prohosting.com

Photo source: *Alumnae and Alumni Vassar College*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Anna Caroline Maxwell

1851 - 1929

Born in Bristol, New York, Anna Caroline Maxwell was one of America's early nurse leaders, devoting her career to elevating educational standards for nursing. At age 23, Maxwell entered the Boston City Hospital Training School for Nurses, studying nursing and completing the requirements for her diploma in 1880. She went on to work supervising nurses in Montreal, Boston, and New York, and then took on the challenge of organizing the new training school for nurses at Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. The course of study, which originally began as a two-year program of classroom instruction and clinical practice in medical/surgical nursing and obstetrics, expanded to three years, with the addition of contagious disease nursing to the curriculum. By 1917, the program's affiliation with Teachers College provided the impetus for the establishment of a five-year Bachelor of Science degree from Columbia University along with a nursing diploma from Presbyterian Hospital.

Maxwell was recognized by her colleagues as a nursing pioneer, dedicated to improving nursing education, increasing public acceptance of nursing as a profession, and standardizing nursing procedures. She helped found the American Journal of Nursing, and was a charter member of the International Council of Nurses, the American Red Cross Nursing Service, and the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses. Maxwell was recognized by the French government, from whom she received a medal, for her contributions to nursing throughout the world.

Maxwell worked to achieve military rank for nurses in the armed forces and was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery upon her death in 1929.

Text source:

American Nurses Association, <http://www.nursingworld.org/hof/maxwac.html>

Photo sources:

<http://c250.columbia.edu/c250>

<http://c250.columbia.edu/c250celebrates/remarkablecolumbians>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Winifred Edgerton Merrill

1862 - 1951

Born in Ripon, Wisconsin, Winifred Edgerton Merrill moved east to pursue her true love: mathematics. The first American woman to receive a Ph.D. in mathematics, Winifred Merrill's portrait now hangs at Columbia University with the inscription: "She Opened the Door."

Initially denied a doctorate from Columbia University — despite earning a bachelor's degree from Wellesley, studying at Harvard, and having written an original thesis — Winifred Merrill personally petitioned each university trustee for acceptance. In 1886, the board of trustees voted unanimously to grant her a Ph.D. with highest honors. Merrill's significant contributions include the first-ever computation of the orbit of a comet.

Dr. Merrill was also among those who petitioned Columbia to found Barnard College, New York's first secular institution to award women a degree in liberal arts. After graduating from Columbia, Dr. Merrill taught mathematics at various institutions and, in 1906, she established the Oaksmere School for Girls, which became respected for its high academic standards.

Dr. Merrill was a writer and popular lecturer on educational topics. A female pioneer in the "masculine" fields of math and astronomy, Winifred Merrill also blazed the trail for women in pursuit of higher education. According to her *New York Times* obituary, "All those interested in educational progress owe a debt of gratitude to the late Mrs. Winifred Edgerton Merrill...in the old battle for their higher education, in which she played so notable a part."

Text source: Agnes Scott College, Dept. of Mathematics.

Photo source: Nation Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. 41, page 113.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Ruth Nichols

1901 - 1960

Born and raised in New York City, Ruth Nichols was the first woman to be granted a pilot's license by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Defying her parents' wishes to follow the so-called "proper life" of a young woman, in 1924, she flew non-stop from New York City to Miami with Harry Rogers in a Fairchild FC-2 — shortly after graduating from Wellesley College.

In 1932, she was hired as a pilot by New York and New England Airways, becoming the first woman to work as a commercial pilot. In 1939, she started a flying school for women at Adelphi College. Ruth Nichols established numerous records, including the women's altitude, speed and world distance records.

In 1940 she organized Relief Wings, a civilian air ambulance service that made assets available to the U.S. government during World War II. Those assets financed the establishment of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), of which Nichols was a director from 1940 to 1949. After World War II, she organized a mission in support of UNICEF and became an advisor to CAP on air ambulance missions. In 1958, she flew a Delta Dagger at 1,000 mph at an altitude of 51,000 feet. Nichols' autobiography is entitled *Wings for Life*.

Text source:

Adelphi College. *The Book of Women's Firsts, Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women*, by Phyllis Read and Bernard L. Witlieb.

Photo source: Adelphi College





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Virginia L. Radley

1927 - 1998

Virginia L. Radley made history on March 22, 1978 when she became the first woman college president in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. Born in Marion, New York, she was an expert in 19th-century poetry, and taught throughout her years as an administrator. Majoring in English, Dr. Radley earned four college degrees: a Bachelor of Arts from Russell Sage College in 1949; a Master of Arts from the University of Rochester in 1952; a Master of Science from Syracuse University in 1957; and a PhD from Syracuse University in 1958.

She was Dean at Russell Sage College and Nazareth College in Rochester before moving to Oswego as Executive Vice President, Provost and Professor of English in 1974. Dr. Radley was named acting president of the State University College at Oswego two years later, and in 1978, accepted a permanent appointment, serving as president for 10 years.

During her tenure as president, Dr. Radley founded the honors college, advocated for languages in the curriculum, created a general education division, promoted the enrollment of minority group members and oversaw a marked increase in the number of women in faculty and staff positions. From 1975 to 1985, the percentage of all women employed at SUNY Oswego rose from 34.4 percent to 45 percent, increasing by well over one-third for faculty and more than doubling at the executive level. Incoming student test scores rose during Dr. Radley's tenure, despite an overall decline in scores statewide and nationwide. "Excellence" was Dr. Radley's battle cry, and she was known for her commitment to quality throughout her career.

Dr. Radley was a tireless advocate for women and was acclaimed for her advancement of women in education and in the workforce. Dr. Radley was particularly sensitive to the needs of female students – their safety, academics and need for strong role models. Dr. Radley gave presentations at a number of conferences on women's advocacy, issues in higher education and nineteenth century English literature. She authored two books, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, in 1972 and *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, in 1966, as well as numerous articles.

Her honors are too numerous to mention individually but include: an honorary doctorate from her alma mater, Russell Sage College; the Trailblazer in Education Award; the Pathfinder Award for her outstanding contribution to the advancement of women in administration; and recognitions in *The World's Who's Who of Women*, *Directory of American Scholars* and the *International Who's Who in Education*.

Text sources: <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/24/nyregion/virginia-l-radley-71-a-suny-president.html>

Remarkable Women in New York State History/Virginia L. Radley, 2013

Photo source: <https://www.oswego.edu/president/our-presidents>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Education

Uma SenGupta
1935 – 2022

Uma SenGupta promoted education, healthcare, elder care, women's rights, and environmental protection. Known as the "Mother of the Community," Ms. SenGupta received numerous national and international awards.

She immigrated to the United States from India in 1970 with her husband, Suprabhat SenGupta, and their three children. Soon after arriving in the United States, she founded the Rainbow Montessori School in Flushing, Queens, serving as its educational director. She worked as an educator for over 30 years and became an advocate for the Indian community in Queens, New York. She believed in providing high-quality early education to children.

Ms. SenGupta encouraged the activism of new immigrants, women, and marginalized communities to become more involved in the political process, including running for public office. In January 2004, she became the first Indian American woman elected as the Democratic Party District Leader of the 25th Assembly District, Part B, in Queens. Ms. SenGupta became an icon for social change through her roles as an educator, activist, and community leader. Her work led to an increase in the number of women, immigrants, and those in underserved communities who became involved in local politics.

She was a staunch advocate for clean water and academic programs that aimed to improve the quality of life for families in the United States and India. Ms. SenGupta worked with lawmakers to pass legislation to stop hate crimes against immigrants, especially when they wore cultural and religious attire.

She created a project to provide fresh drinking water to communities in West Bengal, India called the "Give Me Water Project." The aim of this project was to decrease mortality rates, especially among children, as well as to improve life in villages. She advocated for more healthcare programs for immigrants, especially the senior population.

Her daughter, Dr. Sumita SenGupta, is also an educator and community leader who has continued her mother's vision and vital humanitarian work.

Ms. SenGupta passed away on March 9, 2022. In October 2023, she was honored in Queens with a street that was co-named "Uma SenGupta Way."

Text sources : <https://qns.com/2023/10/uma-sengupta-briarwood-street-co-naming/>
<https://www.congress.gov/117/crec/2022/04/27/168/69/modified/CREC-2022-04-27-pt1-PgE420-3.htm>
<https://newsindiatimes.com/uma-sengupta-woman-of-substance-jan-1-1935-march-9-2022/>
https://www.qchron.com/editions/eastern/honoring-those-who-help-recent-immigrants/article_0534e985-09e3-52ce-8695-f65b1af0ca6d.html

Photo source: <https://x.com/NYSCivilService/status/1790725820010373628/photo/1>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Education

Emma Hart Willard

1787 - 1870

Emma Hart Willard was the organizer of the first higher education institution for women, which eventually became the Emma Willard School in Troy. Her pioneering efforts to equalize the education available to women and men attracted the support of Presidents James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.

Emma Hart was born in Connecticut in 1787, and raised by her father who encouraged her to read and think for herself. At the time, educational opportunities for women were extremely limited. Emma Hart's thirst for knowledge led her to become a teacher and later sparked her interest in opening schools for women.

In 1807, she went to Middlebury, Vermont to head a female academy there, marrying a local doctor in 1809. At age 27, Willard founded the Middlebury Female Seminary in Vermont in 1814. Her plans to expand educational opportunities for women led her to New York State where, with the support of Governor DeWitt Clinton, she opened the Waterford Academy. When this Academy was threatened by financial hardship, the Troy Common Council provided the support necessary for Willard to open the Troy Female Seminary in 1821. Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage, the first woman to establish a philanthropic foundation and a loyal graduate of the Emma Willard School, donated \$1 million for its relocation. Willard ran the school until 1838, and traveled in her later years to promote education for women. In 1895, the school was renamed in her honor.

Text sources:

The Book of Women's Firsts, Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women, by Phyllis Read and Bernard Witlieb;

The Conservationist, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; *Hutchinson's Biography Database*; *Fund Raising Management*, Nov. '94, Vol. 25, Issue 9, p. 28.

Photo source: Emma Willard School



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Government & Law

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Jane Bolin

1908 - 2007

Jane Bolin was a trailblazing attorney who became the first African-American female judge in the United States. She served on New York's Family Court for four decades, advocating for children and families via outside institutions as well.

Born in Poughkeepsie, New York on April 11, 1908, Ms. Bolin was a superb student, graduating from high school in her mid-teens and enrolling in Wellesley College. Facing overt racism and social isolation, she graduated at the top of her class with a Bachelor of Arts. She went on to Yale Law School, contending with further social hostilities, and graduating as the first African-American woman to do so.

Ms. Bolin worked at her family's practice in her home city before marrying and relocating to New York City. At the age of 31, Ms. Bolin was called to appear at the World's Fair before Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, who, unbeknownst to her, had plans to swear her in as a judge. Ms. Bolin then made history again as the first African-American female judge in the United States.

Ms. Bolin was a thoughtful, conscientious voice on the bench, confronting a range of issues on the domestic front and taking great care when it came to the plight of children. She also changed segregationist policies that had been entrenched in the system, including skin-color based assignments for probation officers. She went on to serve as a judge for 40 years before retiring at the age of 70.

Photo source:

<https://loredanacrupi.wordpress.com/2014/07/22/americas-first-black-female-judge-jane-matilda-bolin/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Bessie Allison Buchanan

1902 - 1980

The first African-American to hold a seat in the New York State Legislature, Bessie Allison Buchanan paved the way for women in State government. Born in Manhattan in 1902, Ms. Buchanan's parents had moved to New York City from Petersburg, Virginia, around the turn of the 20th century.

From a young age, Bessie Allison had an interest in singing and dance, appearing in the original "Shuffle Along" in 1921 – the first successful musical comedy with an all African-American cast. She was in the 1925 edition of "Plantation Revue" and in the integrated cast of "Lucky" in 1927, later performing with the "Show Boat" road company, recording for Black Swan Records and dancing in the chorus line of the famed Cotton Club.

Bessie Allison met Charlie Buchanan, director of the Savory Club, while she was working as a dancer and singer in Harlem. They later married, at which point she retired from the stage.

Ms. Buchanan's interest in politics was piqued when she campaigned for Governor Herbert A. Lehman's election to the United State Senate in 1949. After Lehman was elected, she stayed involved with community and political organizations in Harlem, and in 1954 was approached about running as the Democratic Party candidate for the New York State Assembly to represent Harlem's 12th District. In the General Election, Buchanan easily won over her opponent, Lucille Pickett, another African-American woman - 22,401 to 6,177 votes in a district heavily dominated by Democrats. Buchanan was reelected three more times and served a total of eight years.

While in the Legislature, Assemblywoman Buchanan served on the Cities, Institutions, Printing, and Social Welfare Committees. She was assigned to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Problems of the Aging, and in 1960, was selected by Governor Nelson Rockefeller to be a delegate to the White House Conference on the Aged. In 1962, Buchanan did not run for reelection, instead crossing party lines to support Republicans Governor Rockefeller and Senator Jacob Javits in their reelection bids.

On April 30, 1963, Gov. Rockefeller appointed Buchanan to be New York State Commissioner of Human Rights, where she served for five years. She remained active in community activities long after leaving public office, and her efforts on behalf of all women in politics are long-lasting.

Text source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bessie_A._Buchanan

Photo source: Photo courtesy of the NYS Archives.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Shirley Chisholm

1924 - 2005

Brooklyn native Shirley Chisholm made history by becoming the first African-American woman elected to the United States Congress in 1968. Popular with her constituency, she went on to represent New York State in the United States House of Representatives for seven terms, serving until 1982.

Prior to entering politics, Ms. Chisholm graduated from Brooklyn College in 1946 and began her career as a teacher; she went on to earn a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Columbia University. Ms. Chisholm served as Director of the Hamilton-Madison Child Care Center from 1953 to 1959, and as an educational consultant for New York City's Bureau of Child Welfare from 1959 to 1964.

In 1964, Ms. Chisholm won her first elected post as part of the New York State Legislature. Then, in 1968, she won the congressional seat representing the 12th District, marking her in the history books. During her first term in Congress, Ms. Chisholm employed an all-female staff, and spoke out against the Vietnam War as well as women's rights and civil rights. After initially being assigned to the House Forestry Committee, she caused a stir by demanding reassignment. She was placed on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, eventually graduating to the Education and Labor Committee.

In 1969, Ms. Chisholm became one of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus. She went on to make history yet again, becoming the first major-party African-American candidate to make a bid for the United States presidency, when she ran for the Democratic nomination in 1972. After leaving Congress in 1983, she taught at Mount Holyoke College and was popular on the lecture circuit.

Throughout her career, Ms. Chisholm was a champion of minority education and employment opportunities. She fought tirelessly for social justice for all, speaking on behalf of those less fortunate. She authored two books during her lifetime, *Unbought and Unbossed* (1970) and *The Good Fight* (1973).

In 1993, Shirley Chisholm was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Text sources:

<http://www.biography.com/people/shirley-chisholm-9247015>

<http://newsone.com/2911800/person-of-the-day-shirley-chisholm/>

Photo source:

http://www.npr.org/blogs/visibleman/2007/10/the_courage_of_shirley_chishol.html





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Katharine Bement Davis

1860 - 1935

In the midst of the women's suffrage movement, Katharine Bement Davis was appointed the New York City Correction Commissioner. The year was 1914, and a woman had been named to run a major municipal agency overseeing more than 5,000 inmates in nine prisons and jails operated by 650 employees. Previously, during her 13 years as Superintendent of the New York State Bedford Hills Reformatory for Women, she was recognized for her progressive approach to the treatment of prisoners, believing that education was the key to reform.

Born in Buffalo and raised in Dunkirk, Ms. Davis' father laid the groundwork for her emphasis on education, finding Katharine a teaching job where she earned the money needed to attend Vassar College.

As City Correction Commissioner, she implemented many prison reform measures, including the transfer of adolescent male inmates from Blackwell Island to a farm in Orange County, halting public sightseeing tours, and abolishing striped prison clothing.

In addition to her responsibilities as Commissioner, Ms. Davis took an active role in the Woman Suffrage Party. She was chosen as the Progressive candidate to a State Constitutional Convention — the first woman to run for statewide office in New York. Planning ahead to when the vote would be won, Ms. Davis helped establish the Women's City Club of New York and the League of Women Voters. Ms. Davis' life and career were dedicated to serving society. Her contributions to prison reform, women's rights, and social causes are deserving of great tribute and recognition.

Text source:

Correction's Katharine Bement Davis: New York City's Suffragist Commissioner, by Thomas C. McCarthy

Photo source:

Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries, Poughkeepsie, NY





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Mary Donlon

1894 - 1977

A native of Utica, Mary Donlon was the first woman from New York State to be appointed to the federal bench. Ms. Donlon attended the Utica Free Academy and Cornell University Law School, where she was the first woman to serve as editor-in-chief of a law review, the *Cornell Law Quarterly*.

In 1928, she began practicing law in New York City as a partner in the firm of Burke and Burke. In 1940, running on the Republican ticket, she was defeated in a race for the U.S. Congressman-at-large from New York State. After that, she became active in National and State Republican campaigns. Ms. Donlon was the first woman to head a resolutions subcommittee at a Republican National Convention.

In 1955, she received a lifetime appointment as a U.S. Customs Court Judge. For 29 years, she served as a trustee of Cornell University, which named a dormitory in her honor. Ms. Donlon received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1947 from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Text source:

The Book of Women's Firsts, Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women, by Phyllis J. Read and Bernard L. Witlieb

Photo source: Cornell University





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

1933-2020

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, often referred to as RBG, was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She became the second woman and first Jewish woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court.

Two years after becoming a mother, she attended Harvard Law, where she was one of nine women in a class of 500. She served on both the Harvard and Columbia Law Reviews, respectively, and graduated first in her class at Columbia.

Even with all of her academic accomplishments, it was difficult for her to find employment after graduation. She explained, "In the fifties, the traditional law firms were just beginning to turn around on hiring Jews. ... But to be a woman, a Jew, and a mother to boot, that combination was a bit much." She was able to land a position as a law clerk for the Honorable Edmund L. Palmieri, Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in 1959.

She became one of a handful of female law professors in the country in 1963, when she began teaching at Rutgers University School of Law. She was involved with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and central to the founding of their Women's Rights Project in 1971.

Judge Ginsburg returned to Columbia Law School in 1972, where she became the first woman hired to receive tenure. While teaching at Columbia, she served as the general counsel for the ACLU and on the National Board of Directors. She fought on behalf of the female maids to receive the same benefits as male janitors, as well as the female employees to receive the same retirement benefits as men.

She was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 1980, serving for thirteen years prior to her nomination as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 1993.

During her tenure as Justice, Judge Ginsburg fiercely advocated for gender equality and women's rights. She was a reliable vote in favor of defending abortion rights, expanding gay rights, preserving the Obamacare healthcare law, and advancing the rights of racial minorities and the poor and disenfranchised.

Text source: *Biographies of Associate Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Supreme Court of the United States (.gov)*

<https://www.supremecourt.gov/biographyginsburg>

Ruth Bader Ginsburg | National Women's History Museum, National Women's History Museum

<https://www.womenshistory.org/biographies/ruth-bader-ginsburg>

Photo source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ruth-Bader-Ginsburg>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Rhoda Fox Graves

1877 - 1950

A Republican from St. Lawrence County, Rhoda Fox Graves was the first woman to be elected to both houses of the New York State Legislature. Born in Fowler, Graves was a school teacher in Gouverneur who later owned and operated a farm before turning pioneer politician. In her first campaign for a seat in the Assembly, her opponent in the primary reportedly boasted that "anybody can beat a woman." Her subsequent victory was viewed as a triumph for women's rights, particularly because St. Lawrence County was one of the last in the State to accept women's suffrage. Graves served in the NYS Assembly from 1924 -1932.

Women have been serving in the New York State Assembly since 1919 — one year before passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing a woman's right to vote — but Graves was the first woman elected to the New York State Senate, serving from 1934 to 1948. Graves achieved a litany of other New York "firsts": she was the first woman to preside in the State Senate, the first woman to head a State Senate Standing Committee (Agriculture), and the first woman to be elected from a northern county to the State Legislature.

As a State legislator, Graves was a staunch advocate for dairymen's interests and worked tirelessly for the introduction of women jurors. She sought development of the St. Lawrence Seaway & Power Project, and secured passage of four bills regarding an international bridge between Canada and the United States. Initially shunned as an intruder in a man's world, Graves eventually won the support and the respect of her colleagues.

Text sources:

Women of Courage by The American Association of University Women, St. Lawrence County Branch;

www.northnet.org;

The New York Red Book, 1941.

Photo source: *The New York Red Book, 1941.*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Judith S. Kaye

1938 - 2016

Judith S. Kaye was the first woman named to New York State's highest court and the first to serve as the State's Chief Judge – a job she held longer than any other person in State history.

Born in Monticello, Judge Kaye graduated high school at age 15 and attended Barnard College. Ms. Kaye worked as a copy editor while attending night classes at New York University Law School. She graduated sixth in her class, and one of only ten women in a class of nearly 300.

Ms. Kaye began her legal career in New York City at the law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell before leaving to join IBM's legal department. While raising a family, Ms. Kaye worked as an assistant to the New York University Law School dean. She was later hired by Olwine, Connelly, Chase, O'Donnell & Weyher in New York, and there she became the first woman to be named partner.

Ms. Kaye's experience and accomplishments as a trial lawyer and her efforts on behalf of the Bar Association distinguished her from other lawyers. When a vacancy opened on the New York Court of Appeals for the second time, Ms. Kaye was one of two women on its list of seven candidates to fill the position. Governor Mario Cuomo appointed her to the bench for a 14-year term, making her the first female justice of the New York State Court of Appeals in its 150-year history. In 1983, she began as associate judge and then became Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals. In 1993, Ms. Kaye was appointed by Governor Cuomo as the first female Chief Judge of the State of New York.

Judge Kaye developed a national reputation as Chief Judge for groundbreaking decisions and court reforms. She wrote notable opinions on adoption rights for gay couples, education, the death penalty and the right of the public and press to attend judicial hearings. She also instituted New York court system reforms, including creating specialized courts to focus on drug addiction, domestic violence and mental health. Judge Kaye was awarded many honorary doctor of laws degrees at several universities and law schools. She also received numerous special awards and medals.

Judge Kaye served until 2008, when she reached the mandatory retirement age of 70. She continued to practice law, focusing on arbitration and youth issues. Until her death, Judge Kaye also chaired the State commission that recommends nominees to the Governor for openings on the Court.

Text sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/08/nyregion/judith-s-kaye-first-woman-to-serve-as-new-yorks-chief-judge-dies-at-77.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Kaye

<http://www.nycourts.gov/history/legal-history-new-york/history-legal-bench-court-appeals.html>

<http://www.nycourts.gov/history/legal-history-new-york/luminaries-court-appeals/kaye-judith.html>

Photo source: <https://nyiac.org/nyiac-news/nyiac-founding-chairperson/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Mary Anne Krupsak

1932 – 2024

Mary Anne Krupsak was the first woman to hold the office of Lieutenant Governor of New York from 1975 to 1978.

A trailblazing lawyer and politician, Ms. Krupsak worked at the New York State Department of Commerce as a Public Information Officer. She served in the New York State Assembly for two terms, from 1969 to 1973, and then in the New York State Senate from 1973 to 1975. She sought the Democratic nomination for Lieutenant Governor as a long-shot candidate in 1974, defeating both Mario Cuomo and Antonio Olivieri in the primary. In November 1974, Ms. Krupsak was the first woman elected to the lieutenant governorship in New York.

Ms. Krupsak served as Lieutenant to Governor Hugh Carey for one term, then challenged Carey for the Democratic nomination for Governor. She lost the primary to Carey, and after an unsuccessful run for Congress in 1980, she retired from politics.

In 1978, Ms. Krupsak fought to save Radio City Music Hall from demolition. Through hard work and determination, she was instrumental in ensuring that the theater was preserved as a National Landmark. Known as a fighter for what was legally right, she supported the abortion law, but later stated she was not pro-abortion. As a woman in a heavily Catholic district, this issue proved to be her most serious challenge in public life.

Ms. Krupsak was a Senior Partner at the law firm Krupsak & Mahoney, and she was a Senior Partner and Co-Founder of Krupsak, Wass de Czege & Associates, an economic development firm. She also served on the Board of Directors for several corporations, including the Cabbage Patch Kids toy manufacturer, Coleco. Alongside her friend, Dr. Konstantin Frank, she played a significant role in the development of the Finger Lakes' wine industry.

Born in Schenectady, New York, Ms. Krupsak grew up in Amsterdam, New York, where her parents, Ambrose and Mamie Krupczak, ran a pharmacy. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Rochester in 1953, a Master's Degree in Public Communications from Boston University in 1955, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Chicago Law School in 1962.

In 1970, Ms. Krupsak married Edwin Margolis, a law professor at Hunter College and counsel to Democratic members of the Assembly.

She died in Geneva, New York on December 28, 2024.

Text sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/02/nyregion/mary-anne-krupsak-dead.html>
<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1974/09/12/79877463.html?pageNumber=32>

Photo source: <https://www.newsweek.com/mary-anne-krupsak-new-york-lieutenant-governor-obituary-2009514>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Belva Lockwood

1830 - 1917

Born on a farm in Niagara County, Belva Bennett Lockwood was the first woman to practice law before the United States Supreme Court. A teacher at age 15, a widow at age 19, Belva did not study law until she was nearly 40.

When her husband's death left her with an infant to support, Belva noted that she earned only half the salary of the male teachers. Determined to continue her education, she graduated with honors from Genesee College (later to become Syracuse University) in 1857 and moved to Washington, D.C. She fought for admission to law school and was finally admitted to the bar of the District of Columbia in 1873.

When she was prohibited from practicing law before the Supreme Court, Belva lobbied Congress for five years and eventually drafted the law allowing women to do so. In 1879, Belva Lockwood became the first woman lawyer to practice before the court. An important Supreme Court case in which she participated was brought by the Cherokee people in 1906, in which they won \$5 million through her efforts.

A presidential candidate twice for the National Equal Rights Party, Belva Lockwood used her legal expertise to help women secure equal pay for equal work, suffrage and property law reforms. A feisty visionary, Belva Lockwood's battles continue to help women today.

Text source: National Women's Hall of Fame; and <http://encarta.msn.com>

Photo source: National Encyclopedia of American Biography, Vol.2





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Sybil Ludington

1761 - 1839

In 1777, 16-year-old Sybil Ludington rode 40 miles of countryside warning the colonists that British troops were burning Danbury, Connecticut.

Born in Fredericksburg (which has been renamed Ludingtonville) in Putnam County, Sybil Ludington was the daughter of noted New York militia officer Henry Ludington, who fought in the French and Indian War and then re-enlisted to defend the colonies from British tyranny.

On April 26, 1777, a messenger reached the Ludington house with news of a British attack on Danbury, Connecticut, 15 miles to the southeast, where the munitions and supplies for the militia of the entire region were stored. That messenger and horse were exhausted; 16-year-old Sybil made history when she volunteered to carry on with the order to muster and rouse the countryside. Throughout the night she rode nearly 40 miles on unfamiliar dirt roads, spreading the alarm of the impending British raid.

Sybil Ludington's courage and devotion to preserve freedom was virtually unknown to the country until a postage stamp commemorating her perilous ride was created during America's Bicentennial celebration.

Text sources:

Encyclopedia Britannica; and www.obrc.org/women/remarkable_women.html;

"In Search of Remarkable Women" by Susan Howard

Photo source: Putnam County Historian Richard Muscarella





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Olga A. Méndez

1925 - 2009

Olga A. Méndez was the first Puerto Rican woman elected to a state legislature in the United States mainland.

Olga Aran Méndez was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, on February 5, 1925, and moved to New York City in the 1950s. She became a doctoral candidate in educational psychology at Yeshiva University. She married Anthony Méndez, a politically active lawyer. He was the son of Antonio Méndez, who in 1954 became the first native-born Puerto Rican to become a district leader of a major political party in New York City.

In 1978, Senator Méndez was elected Senator to the New York State Legislature, thus becoming the first Puerto Rican woman New York State Senator. She represented the 28th Senate District and held this position for 26 years. Méndez was elected Delegate for the Democratic Conventions of 1980, 1984 and 1988. In 1984, she was elected Secretary of the Minority Conference. In 1993, Senator Méndez became the first Puerto Rican woman to be chosen Chairperson of the Minority Conference. At times Méndez offered her political support to Republicans when doing so would have been beneficial to her district. She was often criticized by her peers for this bi-partisanship.

Senator Méndez was defined as much by her pragmatism — some critics said opportunism — as by her ethnicity. In the 1989 Democratic primary battle between Mayor Edward I. Koch, who was seeking a fourth term, and David N. Dinkins, the Manhattan Borough President, Senator Méndez backed the incumbent despite Mr. Dinkins's strong support among minority voters. (Mr. Dinkins won the primary and the general election to become the City's first black mayor.)

Senator Méndez championed the issues important to her constituents, fighting for affordable housing, education, and Rockefeller drug law reform.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Constance Baker Motley

1921 - 2005

A brilliant lawyer and distinguished federal judge for over 40 years, Constance Baker Motley quietly helped change the course of American History. A legal advocate in the Civil Rights Movement, she became the first female African-American federal judge in 1966.

Ms. Motley earned her undergraduate degree in economics at New York University (NYU) in 1943. She enrolled next at Columbia Law School, graduating in 1946, and in that same year, joined the NAACP Legal Defense Fund under its leader, Thurgood Marshall.

Her work as a key strategist brought her into close association with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., where she played critical roles that helped desegregate southern schools, buses, and lunch counters. She fought fiercely, steadily and courageously for civil rights in the courts.

Ms. Motley was the first African-American woman to serve as a New York State Senator, and in 1965, stepped into her role as Manhattan Borough President. As the first African-American woman to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court, Ms. Motley won nine of her 10 cases, including the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

One case that received considerable notoriety was her ruling in 1978 to allow a female reporter into the New York Yankees' locker room. Ms. Motley went on to become Chief Judge of the district in 1982, and Senior Judge in 1986.

President Bill Clinton awarded Ms. Motley the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2001, and the NAACP selected her to receive the highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, in 2003. Ms. Motley died in New York in September 2005.

Text source: <http://www.biography.com/people/constance-baker-motley-9416520>

Photo source: <https://www.zip06.com/news/20170613/new-chester-land-trust-project-commemorates-civil-rights-hero>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis

1929 - 1994

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis was the First Lady of the United States from 1961 until 1963. She captivated the Nation and world with her intelligence, beauty and grace. With a deep sense of devotion to her family and country, she dedicated herself to her children and making the world a better place through art, literature, and public service.

Born in Southhampton, New York, her early years were spent in New York City and Long Island. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from The George Washington University, and then began her first job in 1951 as the "Inquiring Camera Girl" for the *Washington Times-Herald*. There she interviewed Richard M. Nixon and covered the first inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1953, she married John F. Kennedy, and in 1960 he announced his candidacy for the presidency. However, Mrs. Kennedy was pregnant and remained at home for most of the campaign, where she wrote a column, "Campaign Wife," mixing personal stories with Democratic Party policy views. She publicly participated in media interviews, and privately supplied her husband with literary and historical examples and quotations that he used in his speeches.

As First Lady, Mrs. Kennedy declared that her priorities were her children and maintaining her family's privacy. Nevertheless, she began redecorating the family quarters of the White House and historically restoring the public rooms. She created a committee of advisors and scoured government warehouses in search of displaced White House furnishings. She helped create a White House Historical Association, funded through the sales of her book, *The White House: An Historic Guide*. She was a strong supporter of the arts, inviting artists, writers, scientists, poets, and musicians to the White House to mingle with politicians. Mrs. Kennedy began the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum as a memorial to her husband after his death.

In 1968, Jacqueline Kennedy married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. When Mr. Onassis died in 1975, she became a widow a second time. She enjoyed a successful career in publishing until her death in 1994.

Throughout her life, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis sought to preserve and protect America's cultural heritage. The results of her work are still visible in Lafayette Square, in Washington, D.C. In New York City, she led a campaign to save and renovate Grand Central Station. Today, more than 500,000 people enjoy its restored beauty every day, thanks to her efforts.

Text sources:

www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=36;

www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/Life-of-Jacqueline-B-Kennedy.aspx?p=2en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Kennedy_Onassis

Photo source: <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/Life-of-Jacqueline-B-Kennedy.aspx?p=2>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Frances Perkins

1880 - 1965

Frances Perkins was a staunch advocate for workers' rights, who served as the U.S. Secretary of Labor from 1933 to 1945, the longest serving in that position, and the first woman appointed to the U.S. Cabinet.

Ms. Perkins graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1902, and Columbia University in 1910. After earning degrees in Economics, Sociology and Political Science, she became the head of the New York Consumer's League, lobbying for better working hours and conditions. She taught as a professor of Sociology at Adelphi College and witnessed the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, a pivotal event in her life which led her to become the Executive Secretary for the Committee on Safety of the City of New York. In 1933, Franklin Roosevelt appointed Ms. Perkins as his Secretary of Labor.

As the principal architect of FDR's New Deal, Ms. Perkins helped design a collection of far-reaching public policy initiatives which empowered the federal government to meet the needs of its citizens struggling to survive the Great Depression. Ms. Perkins spearheaded the fight to improve the lives of America's working people while juggling her own complex family responsibilities. She is credited with passage of the Social Security Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act which established unemployment benefits, pensions, welfare, workplace safety regulations, child labor laws, the first minimum wage, overtime restrictions, and the standard 40-hour work week.

Following her tenure as Secretary of Labor, in 1945, Ms. Perkins was asked by President Truman to serve on the United States Civil Service Commission. In her post as Commissioner, she spoke out against government officials requiring secretaries and stenographers to be physically attractive, blaming the practice for the shortage of these individuals in government.

Though largely forgotten, Ms. Perkins transformed Americans' expectations of their government. There is not a single U.S. citizen whose life has not been touched by her efforts in some way. Following her government service career, she remained active as a teacher and lecturer at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University until her death in 1965 at age 85.

In 1980, the U.S. Department of Labor named its headquarters building after her. In 2009, the Frances Perkins Center was established in Maine (her family home) to preserve and promote her work. Her undergraduate alma mater, Mount Holyoke College, offers a scholarship in her memory.

Text sources:

<https://www.politics-prose.com/book/9780385513654>

<https://legacyprojectchicago.org/person/frances-perkins>

<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/great-depression/perkins-frances-the-roosevelt-years/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Perkins

Photo source: <https://exhibitions.usmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/frances-perkins>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Charlotte Ray

1850 - 1911

Charlotte Ray became the first African-American woman in the United States to earn a law degree. Charlotte Ray was the daughter of a well-known abolitionist in New York City. Her father edited the *Colored American Magazine* and was the pastor of the Bethesda Congregational Church. Ms. Ray was of mixed racial ancestry, including Native American and European. As a child, she attended the Institution for the Education of Colored Youth in Washington, D.C., where she excelled as a student. By 1869, she taught at Howard University by day and studied law at night.

In 1872, she not only became the first African-American female lawyer; she also became the first woman admitted to the bar in the District of Columbia. Shortly afterward, Ray opened her own law practice. However, public prejudice worked against her and she closed the office, devoting her time to other organizations that were committed to the advancement of women and African-Americans. She attended the Annual Convention of the National Woman's Suffrage Association and became active in the National Association of Colored Women.

In 1879, she returned to New York to teach in Brooklyn. Although racial and gender prejudice stopped Charlotte Ray from achieving success as a lawyer, her many other accomplishments served to encourage many other African-American women to study law.

Text sources:

Book of Black Heroes: Great Women in the Struggle, by T. Igus, V.F. Ellis, D. Patrick, V. Wilson-Wesley;
www.womenshistory.about.com





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Eleanor Roosevelt

1884 - 1962

Born to a prominent family in New York City, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt married a distant cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in 1905. She was a strong partner to him during his years as Governor of New York and President of the United States.

In her 12 years as First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt set many precedents and made her position one of great influence. She cultivated an interest in social causes, politics and public affairs, held the first press conference as a First Lady, broadcast regular radio programs and wrote a syndicated newspaper column. Because her husband was disabled by polio, she performed much of the President's ceremonial and public relations work, which often involved travel around the country and abroad.

After her husband's death in 1945, President Harry Truman appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as a delegate to the United Nations. As Chairwoman of the UN Commission on Human Rights, she took a central role in drafting and securing the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. She was welcomed by heads of state around the world, and was widely acknowledged to be one of the world's most admired women of her time.

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Government & Law

Ida B. Sammis

1865 - 1943

Ida B. Sammis was the first woman elected to the New York State Legislature in 1918. The Long Island Assemblywoman was an industrious lawmaker who took her duties seriously and served with distinction.

As a girl, Ida sat on the front porch and yelled political slogans to people passing the family home in Cold Spring Harbor. This penchant for campaigning was either in her genes or in the environment – but it was pure Huntington. There was no denying the family tree or the talent and desire to accomplish something positive for her community.

On her first day on the job in the State Capitol, ladies crowded the galleries overlooking the Assembly Chamber. Though they had always been permitted to observe the proceedings, few exercised the privilege. For the first time in 142 years, women had broken into the lineup – just 12 short months since they became eligible to vote.

Mrs. Sammis introduced 15 bills and 10 were enacted. To satisfy her local constituency, she was instrumental in improving the opportunity to take scallops by bay fishermen. Another bill established a jitney bus service in Huntington, and still another gave the Town of Babylon authority to erect and run public bathhouses.

The most significant effort in Mrs. Sammis' legislative work, however, was her introduction of an Assembly appropriations bill relating to care of mentally ill patients in State hospitals. Despite speaking often about the difficulty in sponsoring legislation that spends money, passage of this bill achieved one very important new idea. It was landmark legislation that equalized the pay of men and women who worked in the same jobs – one of the main reasons Mrs. Sammis had taken the plunge and run for office. Additionally, the law raised the salaries of State hospital employees in her district, including doctors, nurses and attendants, and cut in half patient-personnel ratios.

Mrs. Sammis organized the first modern suffrage club in Suffolk County and became an outstanding captain in the County's Women's Suffrage Organization (WSO). She was the only woman candidate in the State to successfully meld two grassroots movements based around active women: suffrage and prohibition.

Text sources: <https://books.google.com/books?id=lg4UAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA203&lpg=PA203&dq=ida+b.+sammis-&source=bl&ots=V5XgdgcXEI&sig=JxSHVVsVfIyG59N6WdO0mrWsNY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjH15Pyr5LSAh-UPz2MKHYcsCjcQ6AEIMTAF#v=onepage&q=ida%20b.%20sammis&f=false>;
Assemblyman John J. Flanagan

Photo source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ida_Sammis#/media/File:IdaSammis1918.tif





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Government & Law

Katherine Stoneman

1841 - 1925

Paving the way for thousands, Katherine "Kate" Stoneman was the first woman admitted to practice law in the State of New York. She did so against enormous odds; supporting herself as a teacher, she worked nights, weekends, and summers as a clerk until she became the first female graduate of Albany Law School in 1898. She was also the first woman to receive a bachelor's degree from Union University.

Born in Lakewood, New York, Ms. Stoneman moved to Albany to pursue an education at the New York Normal College, the only State school at the time that was training teachers for the public schools. Following her graduation in 1866, she taught for 40 years. Taking an interest in women's suffrage early on in her career, Ms. Stoneman, along with others, formed the Woman's Suffrage Society of Albany, where they lobbied for the extension of school suffrage to women.

Ms. Stoneman's interest in law was piqued when she was designated executrix of her aunt's estate in Troy. After three years of studying law and clerking for a local attorney, in 1885, Ms. Stoneman became the first woman to pass the New York State Bar Examination. However, when she subsequently applied for admission to the Bar, she was denied due to her sex. After a long but ultimately successful lobbying campaign to secure the passage of a bill that would open up the Bar to both men and women, Ms. Stoneman reapplied for admission to the Bar and was accepted in 1886. Becoming New York's first female lawyer could now be added to the growing list of Ms. Stoneman's professional accomplishments.

Throughout her life, Ms. Stoneman continued to play a vital role in the women's suffrage movement, actively participating in efforts to secure suffrage legislation in New York State. All of her efforts paid off, when in 1918, as a poll watcher, she saw New York women vote for the first time.

Text source: *National Women's Hall of Fame, Albany Law School*

Photo source: <http://mcclurgmuseum.org/blog/2011/03/12/bicentennial-biographies-no-41-45/>



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



September 11, 2001 Heroes

NEW YORK STATE SENATE

Honoring Our Heroes

REMEMBERING 9-11-2001

The horrific events of September 11, 2001 shone a bright light on the heroic actions of emergency service workers. Working side by side, women and men worked tirelessly, many sacrificing their own lives to rescue and recover victims. This tribute to the heroes of 9-11 offers a closer look at the role that women have played in serving our communities as emergency and rescue workers.

WOMEN IN POLICING

The New York Police Department appointed its first Police Matrons in 1891, but historians agree that New York's first police woman was Genevieve Searles, who joined the Syracuse Police Department in 1914. "Matrons" lacked most powers of police officers, could not make arrests and often were unpaid.

It was only in the 1970s, prompted by the civil women's rights movements, that "policewomen" assumed the same duties as their male partners, including working patrols and carrying weapons.

WOMEN IN FIRE FIGHTING

The history of the United State's women firefighters spans more than 200 years - beginning as spontaneous, volunteer "bucket brigades" battling house and barn fires in the villages and cities of Colonial America to the 1st woman firefighter.

The first recognized female firefighter was a slave. Molly Williams was drafted in 1818 to work on New York City's Oceanus Engine Co. #11. During World War II, scores of women volunteered to take the place of male firefighters called to war.

Lt. Brenda Berkman became New York City's first female professional firefighter in 1982.

WOMEN IN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Modern emergency care evolved out of experiences from treating wartime casualties. The first volunteer ambulance squads were organized to care for the wounded during World War I.

In WWII, thousands of women rushed to fill the roles of men called to the front, and in Port Washington, Long Island, the local ambulance service was run entirely by women during the War.

The present day EMS system evolved from the growing number of trauma-causing car crashes on the Nation's highways. By law, certified Emergency Medical Technicians must complete 120 hours of training and paramedics 2,500 hours.

The first woman to gain certification in New York was Mary Hill of Freeport, Long Island, in 1969. African-American Barbara Johnson was the first female EMS driver, who recently retired after over 30 years of service.



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

9-11-2001 Heroes

Kathy Mazza

PORT AUTHORITY POLICE OFFICER

May 13, 1955 - Sept. 11, 2001

Capt. Kathy Mazza of Farmingdale, Long Island, was the first female Port Authority Officer killed in the line of duty. She died in the World Trade Center tragedy, along with 36 of her Port Authority Police Department (PAPD) colleagues — three percent of the entire force that is dedicated to patrolling the New York Metro area's airports, bridges, tunnels and railways. No police department in U.S. history lost more officers in a single incident as the PAPD on September 11.

Mazza was killed while evacuating people from Tower One of the World Trade Center. Her body was recovered exactly five months after the attack.

Mazza graduated from Nassau Community College with a nursing degree in the mid-1970s and joined the PAPD, which is the Nation's 26th largest law enforcement agency, in 1987, rising through the ranks to become the first female commandant of the PA Police Training Academy. With her unusual mix of medical and police skills, Capt. Mazza was an obvious choice to lead the Academy's emergency medical care training programs. She was named 1999 Basic Life Support Provider of the Year by the Regional Emergency Medical Services Council of New York City, and launched the portable defibrillators program at PA facilities, literally saving dozens of lives.

Raised in Massapequa, Capt. Mazza left behind a husband, NYPD Officer Christopher Delosh.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

9-11-2001 Heroes

Yamel Merino

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

Oct. 21, 1976 - Sept. 11, 2001

Emergency Medical Technician Yamel Merino of Yonkers was among the first rescue workers on the scene at the World Trade Center tragedy on September 11, 2001. A 24-year-old EMT for MetroCare Ambulance of Westchester County, Merino volunteered to enter the burning towers, displaying that day the compassion and courage she had shown throughout her short but admirable life.

Born to Dominican immigrants, Yamel Merino completed her EMT certification at Westchester Community College, where she received a Chancellor's Award from the State University of New York in recognition of scholastic excellence and extraordinary dedication to self-improvement.

Merino was chosen as MetroCare's EMT of the Year in 1999, and in 2001, she was honored as New York State's EMT of the Year. Merino was also recognized at *Glamour* magazine's Women of the Year ceremony.

She left behind an eight-year-old son, Kevin Villa.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

9-11-2001 Heroes

Moira Smith

POLICE OFFICER, NYPD

Feb. 14, 1963 - Sept. 11, 2001

Police Officer Moira Smith was among the first to respond to the September 11 attack at the World Trade Center and was last seen evacuating people out of Tower Two, saving hundreds of lives. Described by the *Daily News* as having "the face of an angel and the heart of a lion," Officer Smith was posthumously awarded the NYPD's Medal of Honor, the Department's highest honor.

Officer Smith began her police career in 1988 when she joined the New York City Transit Police Department. After the Department merged with the NYPD, Officer Smith was assigned to Manhattan's 13th Precinct in 1997. Throughout her police career, Officer Smith exhibited extreme valor, and among her awards was the Department's Distinguished Duty Medal, which she received in 1991 for saving dozens of lives after a subway crash. She was listed among *Glamour* and *Ms.* magazines' Women of the Year for 2001 and was named Woman of the Year by the NYPD's Policewomen's Endowment Association.

Born in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, Officer Smith lived in Queens Village with her police officer husband, James J. Smith, and their two-year-old daughter.





Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Labor & Business

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Leonora Marie (Kearney) Barry

1849 - 1930

Leonora Barry was the first female labor organizer in American history. An Irish immigrant, Barry faced many a family hardship, early on, including the death of her mother. She rose from her early life challenges to become a schoolteacher at age 15. After the death of her husband in 1880, Barry found herself with three children to support, and out of necessity began working for an Amsterdam clothing factory. Working conditions were abhorrent, and the pay was poor. Barry earned just 11 cents for her first day on the job and only 65 cents for her first complete week of work, but she continued at that job for two years.

In 1884, Barry joined the Knights of Labor, a national organization started by Philadelphia tailors in 1869 that welcomed women, blacks, employers and industrial workers alike. The union's goals were to abolish child and convict labor, require equal pay for equal work, establish an eight-hour work day, and eliminate private banks. Membership totaled 702,000 under union leader Terence Powderly in 1886, and Barry was one of 16 female delegates (of 660 total) sent to the national convention in Richmond, Virginia.

During her involvement with the Knights of Labor, Barry worked to improve the working conditions and the wages of women and children around the country. She traveled across the country to educate female workers and inspire them to form and join labor unions.

Following her resignation from the Knights of Labor in 1890, Barry continued to travel and speak on behalf of women's suffrage, temperance, and other social reform movements.

Text source:

Woman of Courage profile produced by the St. Lawrence County, NY Branch of the American Association of University Women, <http://www.northnet.org/stlawrencecaaww/barry.htm>

Photo source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/e/e7/Barry-Leonora-M-1890.pdf/page1-1200px-Barry-Leonora-M-1890.pdf.jpg>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Louise Blanchard Bethune

1865 - 1913

Louise Blanchard Bethune was the first American woman known to work as a professional architect. She also was the first woman to be elected a member of the American Institute of Architects, and the first woman to be named a fellow of that organization.

A native of Waterloo in Seneca County, Ms. Bethune made a significant mark on the streetscape of Buffalo. In 1888, she opened a Buffalo practice with her husband, Robert, and she designed many buildings, including schools, factories, hotels, housing developments, residences and a bank.

Ms. Bethune designed the Hotel Lafayette in Buffalo. A Buffalo music store she designed was one of the country's first structures with a steel frame and poured concrete slabs.

Text source:

The Book of Women's Firsts: Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women, by Phyllis Read and Bernard Witlieb

Photo source: American Institute of Architects





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Kate Gleason

1865 - 1933

Born in Rochester, Kate Gleason went to work at her father's machine-tool factory at age 11. She worked her way up the ladder to Secretary-Treasurer and Chief Sales Representative. Her innovative marketing strategies and tireless travel opened up huge global markets that helped Gleason Works become the leading U.S. producer of gear-cutting machinery.

Ms. Gleason was the first woman to enter Cornell University's engineering program, and was the first female to be elected to full membership in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

She left the family business in 1913, launching a new career that opened up more doors and career possibilities for women. In 1917, Kate Gleason became the first female bank president in the Nation, leading the First National Bank of East Rochester. As an outgrowth of this position, she became involved in building and real estate, and promoted the large-scale development of low-cost housing. She helped launch eight new businesses in the East Rochester area.

Kate Gleason's hard work and keen business sense helped her amass a large financial estate, which she used to set up the Kate Gleason Fund for charity and education. One of the beneficiaries is the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Text sources:

The Book of Women's Firsts: Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women, by Phyllis Read and Bernard Wittlieb;

Gear Technology Magazine, courtesy of the Rochester Institute of Technology

Photo source: *Gleason Works, Rochester, New York*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Labor & Business

Martha Matilda Harper

1875 - 1950

A Rochester-based entrepreneur extraordinaire, Martha Matilda Harper created modern retail franchising. Her groundbreaking business methods were a dynamic innovation that changed thousands of women's lives. Today, franchising is the major vehicle by which women become business owners in America.

After years of domestic service, Harper used her savings to open the area's first public hair salon. The demand for her products and services grew so quickly that she launched a new business model ("a franchise") in 1891, and by the 1920s there were 500 franchised Harper Shops worldwide. Harper Shops offered countless low- and middle-income women economic security. Harper is credited with other groundbreaking employment practices including paid personal time off, flexible financing and profit sharing. Harper was also a marketing innovator long before the phrase "customer service" came to be. Harper Shops offered evening hours and childcare for working women. She invented the reclining shampoo chair that is used throughout the world today, and produced her own natural hair and skin care products which she tested on her own floor length tresses. Harper customers included royalty, prime ministers, presidents, and social reformers, as well as working class men and women.

Recognized by her peers as a successful businesswoman, Martha Matilda Harper was the first woman member of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. Today, she is acknowledged as a model for such beauty industry women entrepreneurs as Estee Lauder, Mme. C.J. Walker, and Elizabeth Arden. For her contributions to the development of American entrepreneurship, Harper was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Text source: National Women's Hall of Fame; www.marthamatildaharper.com

Photo source: https://assets.atlasobscura.com/article_images/38583/image.jpg





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Rose Knox

1857 - 1950

Born on November 18, 1857, Rose Markward moved with her family to Gloversville, New York, met and married Charles Knox in 1883, and went on to run one of the most successful commercial enterprises in the United States, Knox Gelatin.

Mr. Knox, an aspiring entrepreneur who watched Rose prepare homemade gelatin, and who believed there would be a market for prepared gelatin, systematically saved money every year until the family finally accumulated \$5,000. The Knoxes then decided to go into business, moving to Johnstown in 1890 and setting up a gelatin business in a large, four-story 45' x 100' wooden factory building.

Rose Knox's husband died in 1908, at which point Mrs. Knox permanently closed the back door to the plant and issued a statement saying that, because she considered everyone who worked there to be ladies and gentlemen — and therefore equal — nobody would ever come in through the back door again. Before the first day was over, she also politely "requested" the resignation of one of her husband's top administrative executives who admitted to her that he absolutely would not work for a woman.

Within years, Mrs. Knox totally revamped her husband's sales campaign, built a new factory, instituted a revolutionary new five-day work policy with two-week paid vacations, and survived the Depression without having to lay off any employees.

As Mrs. Knox established herself in business, she decided to request permission of the president of the American Grocery Manufacturers Association (to which "The Charles B. Knox Gelatin Company" paid dues), to attend the group's annual convention in New York. While she was allowed to be present, the men were not quite ready to accept a woman into their fold. After 12 years, however, Mrs. Knox was invited into their inner circle, served as Director for three years, and was reelected for three more. Still attending the annual convention when she was 85, Mrs. Knox received a standing ovation that lasted four minutes. Rose Knox was the first woman to serve on the board of directors of the American Grocery Manufacturers' Association in 1929, and she stepped aside as the company's president only when she reached her 90th birthday, but she retained her position as chairperson.

Text source: <http://www.johnstown.com/roseknox.html>

Photo source: Johnstown Public Library





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Estee Lauder

1908 - 2004

Born Josephine Esther Mentzer on July 1, 1908 in Queens, New York, the cosmetics queen the world would later come to know as Estee Lauder grew up in a busy household. She was the youngest of nine children to parents who had immigrated from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Her father owned a hardware store in Queens, above which the family lived in a small apartment.

When she was 22, Lauder married – and subsequently separated and remarried – textile salesman Joseph Lauder. Together, the two continued to make creams in an old restaurant they had converted into a factory. Supportive of his wife, Joseph Lauder agreed to help form his wife's company, which they did in 1947. It was at that point that this life story would become one of national interest.

After winning a concession in Saks Fifth Avenue, Lauder's business took off. She traveled the entire country talking to managers of fine department stores in each state in an effort to get her products in their stores. With unmatched persistence that so typifies the Estee Lauder brand, she was able to grow her company at such a rapid rate that by the 1950s, Estee Lauder products were being featured in all of the major department stores, including Nieman-Marcus and Marshall Field's.

On April 26, 2004, the beauty tycoon passed away in her Manhattan home from cardiopulmonary failure. At the age of 97, Lauder's life may have been over, but her impact on the beauty industry the world over was not. She left behind a lasting legacy and a brand name that is recognized in more than 120 countries.

Today, the company employs more than 26,000 people, earns billions of dollars in revenue each year, and operates such other hugely popular brands as Tommy Hilfiger, Donna Karan, Donald Trump, Missoni, Tom Ford, and Sean John. William Lauder, grandson of the company's original founder, currently serves as CEO, President and Executive Director of Estee Lauder Companies, Inc.

Text source: Jewish Virtual Library

Photo source: https://hbswk.hbs.edu/PublishingImages/ArchivedImages/01_F_01_103000_prestigebrand_cp.gif





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Lady Deborah Moody

1580 - 1659

Lady Deborah Moody, an English widow who fled religious persecution first in her own country, and then from settlements in Massachusetts, became the first female grantee for land ownership in the New World. The land acquired was known as Gravesend, the only permanent settlement in early colonial America planned and directed by a woman.

Entitled to vote by virtue of the grant, she became the first woman to exercise the right to vote. Her substantial holdings, unheard of for a woman, extended along what is now Brooklyn's Atlantic shore, and included Coney Island, Bensonhurst, Sheepshead Bay, and Midwood.

The educated Lady Moody, who maintained a 57-volume library, proved to be a sensible town planner, laying out her village on a grid system that is still discernible in the street plan.

Lady Moody was also known as a "dangerous woman" for her belief in Anabaptism, a Protestant sect that rejected infant baptism in the belief that baptism should be administered only to adult believers. Lady Moody died at age 73, dubbed by historians, "The Grand Dame of Gravesend."

Text sources:

"A Brief History of Gravesend," by Eric J. Ierardi;

The Book of Women's Firsts: Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women, by Phyllis J. Read and Bernard L. Witlieb.

Photo source: <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/lady-deborah-moody-fb.jpg>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Rose Meta Morgan

1912 - 2008

Rose Meta Morgan was a trailblazing entrepreneur who owned and operated the largest beauty parlor for African American women in the world. She was also one of the founders of New York's only black-owned commercial bank, the Freedom National Bank.

One of nine children, Ms. Morgan was born in Mississippi. Her father, a successful sharecropper turned businessman, moved the family to Chicago. Following her father's business sense, at the age of 10, she made homemade paper flowers, selling them door-to-door with her friends. She would charge 5 cents a bunch, giving those who sold them one cent.

Her father encouraged her to forge her own path. At the age of 12, Ms. Morgan began styling hair for friends and neighbors, eventually earning money. Once her client base grew, she attended Morris School of Beauty and rented a booth in a neighborhood salon working full-time. In 1938, she styled the hair of singer/actress Ethel Waters and impressed her so much that she invited Ms. Morgan to New York City as her guest. Taken by the City's glamour, and with the blessing of her father, she accepted a job in NYC; within six months she had enough customers to open her own beauty shop.

Working out of a friend's converted kitchen, Ms. Morgan's business and popularity grew so rapidly that she hired and trained five stylists to work under her. She realized that she needed a bigger space and partnered with a friend and opened Rose Meta's House of Beauty in the famed Sugar Hill enclave of Harlem. Within three years, it became the biggest African American beauty parlor in the world. By 1946, she had a staff of 29, including 20 hairstylists, three licensed masseurs, and a registered nurse. Over time, she employed and trained over 3,000 people.

Her clientele came from all over the country and included Ella Fitzgerald, Diahann Carroll and Lena Horne, to name a few. Her salon was an oasis that signaled elegance and calm for black women in a world that was, for the most part, more accustomed to being pampered by black women than pampering them. When addressing clients, she insisted on formality and respect, where everyone was referred to using their last name. She made sure that those who walked through her doors were taken care of on all levels. These policies went a lot deeper than mere formality at a time when black people were purposefully not addressed with respect.

Despite her business success, including banking more than \$3 million in her first decade, she had challenges getting even a small business loan because of her race. These experiences led her to get involved in the banking business, and in 1964, Ms. Morgan became one of the founders of Freedom National Bank, a rare black-owned commercial bank in New York.

She was briefly married to boxing legend Joe Louis, an event covered by *The New York Times*. She created a cologne, "My Man," as a tribute to him. Ms. Morgan's drive and business prowess paved the way for women of color. She spent her career pointing out that beauty was inherent in everyone, and that people should be treated with respect and care regardless of race.

Text sources:

<https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/rose-morgan-39>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/10/obituaries/rose-morgan-overlooked.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Morgan

Photo source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/Le9nUwO4Rk/maxresdefault.jpg>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Labor & Business

Kate Mullany

1845 - 1906

As a young Irish immigrant in Troy, Kate Mullany worked 12 to 14 hours a day for \$2 a week in oppressive heat as a laundry worker to support her siblings and widowed mother. By the 1860s, Troy supplied most of America's detachable collars and cuffs, employing over 3,700 women as launderers, starchers and ironers.

In 1864, factory owners brought in new machinery that worsened the working conditions. At the age of 19, Kate Mullany organized 200 women to demand change. Ms. Mullany became the first president of the Collar Laundry Union, the first all-female union in the country. She later gained national recognition in 1868, when National Labor Union President William Sylvis made Ms. Mullany the first female appointed to a labor union's national office.

The Collar Laundry Union, unlike so many other unions, remained an organized force in the industries of Troy, more than five years after its inception. Kate Mullany's modest home at 350 Eighth Street in Troy, although not open to the public, has been designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Text source: www.cr.nps.gov

Photo source: The Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy, New York.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Mary Pinkett
1926 – 2003

Mary Pinkett was a labor advocate and the first Black New York City Councilwoman. She represented the 35th District, which included Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, parts of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, and Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Ms. Pinkett was a lifelong resident of Brooklyn and grew up in Crown Heights. She started out working for the New York City Department of Hospitals, Department of Social Services, and the Health and Hospitals Corporation, while attending night classes at Brooklyn College to earn a Bachelor's Degree.

Later, Ms. Pinkett worked for a labor union and became President of Social Service Employees Union, Local 371 and Vice President of District Council 37. Her interests grew in politics after attending the 1972 Democratic National Convention in Miami. A year later, she ran for New York City Council and won. She took office in 1974 and retired in 2001 due to term limits.

Known for her debate skills, Ms. Pinkett often had intense discussions with administration officials. She was a strong labor advocate and fought for social equality. Her knowledge of Brooklyn and the needs of her community was noteworthy. Ms. Pinkett worked toward revitalizing housing and fought to secure millions of dollars for projects, which included senior centers, Medgar Evers College, and the Atlantic Village Housing. She promoted cultural institutions within her district and was known to be a staunch supporter of the City University of New York.

Her accomplishments were many and included obtaining the right to Medicare Part B for retired New York City employees and the Whistleblower Law, which protects New York City employees who report corruption and abuse.

During her time on the New York City Council, Ms. Pinkett served on numerous committees, including Finance, Education, and Federal and State Legislation. She rose to become Chair of the Civil Service and Labor Committee, Chair of the Committee on Aging, and Chair of the Government Operations Committee.

Ms. Pinkett died in 2003 at the age of 72.

Text sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/05/business/mary-pinkett-first-black-councilwoman-72.html>
<https://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/newsletter/February2012.html>
<https://ourtimepress.com/passing-of-community-monarch-mary-pinkett-mourned-by-brooklyn-community/>

Photo source: <https://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/newsletter/February2012.html>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Norma Merrick Sklarek

1928 - 2012

Norma Merrick Sklarek was born on April 15, 1928. She was a world renowned architect and businesswoman.

From New York City, Sklarek graduated from Barnard College with a degree in architecture in 1950. Sklarek became the first African-American woman to be licensed as an architect in the United States with certification in New York State in 1954 and in California in 1962.

She was also the first African-American woman director of architecture at Gruen and Associates in Los Angeles. In 1966, she was the first woman to be elected Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

Some 20 years later, in 1985, she became the first African-American woman architect to form her own architectural firm: Siegel Sklarek Diamond Architects. At the time, this was the largest woman-owned and mostly woman-staffed architectural firm in the U.S.

Among Sklarek's designs are the City Hall in San Bernardino, California, the Fox Plaza in San Francisco, Terminal One at the Los Angeles International Airport, and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo.

From 1989 to 1992, Sklarek was a principal at The Jerde Partnership. There she was in charge of project management and review of the functional and technological aspects of projects. Norma Sklarek also served as Chair of the AIA National Ethics Council, where she conducted classes for the architectural building design and site licensing exams. In her honor, Howard University offers the Norma Merrick Sklarek Architectural Scholarship Award.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Labor & Business

Mary "Mollie" Sneden

1709 - 1810

Mollie Sneden was baptized in Tarrytown and, after her marriage to Robert Sneden, purchased a parcel of land with him in Rockland County in 1752.

The land they purchased included a ferry site. From "Sneden's Landing," the couple provided ferryboat cargo transportation down the Hudson River to New York City and a ferryboat service for people and wagons across the Hudson to Dobbs Ferry. In 1758, after Robert's death, Mollie Sneden began running the ferry service on her own. She also received permission to operate a tavern at the landing.

Hudson River ferries played a critical role in America's war for independence and shaped communities along the river. They also fostered the invention of the steam engine and carried millions of immigrants on the first leg of their journey west. However, Mollie Sneden and her family were Tories, a former British political party, during the Revolutionary War and were not allowed to operate the ferry. Thus, after the War, Mollie resumed ferrying people across the Hudson. She operated the ferry for almost 50 years and retired shortly before her death in 1810, at 101 years, a lifespan unheard of in the 1800s.

Text source: The Historical Society of Rockland County, www.hudsonriver.com

Photo source: Deborah Maher





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Labor & Business

Madam C. J. Walker

1867 - 1919

Madam C. J. Walker transformed herself from an uneducated farm laborer and laundress into America's first self-made woman millionaire, not to mention one of the 20th century's most successful entrepreneurs.

She was born Sarah Breedlove on a Louisiana plantation, the daughter of former slaves. She was orphaned at age six, and at the age of 14, she married C. J. Walker and bore a daughter A'Lelia. After suffering from a scalp ailment called alopecia (which causes hair loss), she began a business selling "Madam C. J. Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower," a scalp conditioning formula she had developed. Over the years, Madam Walker developed a line of cosmetics and hair care products specifically designed for African-American women. By 1910, she had built a factory, a hair salon, and a training school. Six years later, as a millionaire, Madam Walker moved her business to New York City. She built "Villa Lewars," a four-acre estate in Irvington-on-Hudson in Westchester County, as her country retreat.

As a supporter of the NAACP's anti-lynching movement, she was part of a delegation in 1917 that visited the White House petitioning President Woodrow Wilson to make lynching a federal crime. In addition to her business success, Madam Walker was known for her generous contributions to African-American causes and for building a "colored" YMCA.

Text source: Madam C. J. Walker by A'Lelia Bundles; and www.si.umich.edu

Photo source: A'Lelia Bundles/Walker Family Collection



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Medicine & Health

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Medicine & Health

Virginia Apgar

1909 - 1974

Virginia Apgar was an obstetrical anesthesiologist, a leader in the fields of anesthesiology and teratology, who introduced obstetrical consideration to the established field of neonatology.

A brilliant physician and professor, Dr. Apgar was one of the very few women admitted to Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in the 1930s. She was the first woman to head a department at Columbia, where she was named Director of Anesthesiology in 1938. Dr. Apgar was also the first woman to hold a full professorship in any discipline at Columbia.

Dr. Apgar is best known for her development of the Apgar Score, a system to determine whether a newborn infant needs special attention to stay alive. This examination has saved countless infant lives since 1952. Despite initial resistance, the score was eventually accepted and is now used throughout the world. She was also an outspoken advocate for universal vaccination to prevent mother-to-child transmission during the rubella pandemic of 1964-65.

In 1959, while on sabbatical leave, Dr. Apgar earned a Master's Degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. Deciding not to return to academic medicine, she devoted herself to the prevention of birth defects through public education and fundraising for research. Dr. Apgar became the Director of the Division of Congenital Defects at the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (now the March of Dimes), and received many honors and awards for her work. She was one of the first to bring attention to the problem of premature birth, now one of the March of Dimes' top priorities.

Located in Harlem, Columbia University was Dr. Apgar's home. She made many breakthroughs in her field and continues to earn posthumous recognition for her contributions and achievements. In 1994, she was honored by the United States Postal Service with a 20¢ Great American Series postage stamp.

Text sources:

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/changingthefaceofmedicine/physicians/biography_12.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Apgar

Photo source: <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/retrieve/Narrative/CP/p-nid/182/p-visuals/true>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Medicine & Health

Clara Barton

1821 - 1912

Clarissa "Clara" Harlowe Barton was a teacher, U.S. Patent Office worker, and an independent nurse during the Civil War. Her greatest achievement was founding the American Red Cross.

Clara was encouraged by her parents to become a schoolteacher, receiving her certification in 1839, at only 17 years old. She excelled and furthered her education by pursuing writing at the Clinton Liberal Institute. Her body of work was well-received and she was contracted to open the first free school in New Jersey. Eventually, Clara was replaced by a man elected by the school board as they viewed her position unfit for a woman.

In 1855, Clara moved to Washington, D.C. and began work as a clerk in the U.S. Patent Office, the first time a woman received a substantial clerkship in the federal government. She was a victim of abuse and slander from male clerks and eventually, under political pressure, her position was reduced to that of copyist.

In 1861, Clara acted upon her call to serve when wounded Civil War soldiers arrived at the railroad station in Washington, D.C. Here she provided crucial assistance to those in uniform. Clara, along with several other women, developed an organized system which provided clothing, food, and care. A self-taught nurse, she learned how to distribute medical supplies and offered emotional support to the soldiers. Further, she organized an Office of Correspondence with Friends of the Missing Men of the United States Army. Her group responded to more than 63,000 letters and identified more than 22,000 missing men.

After the War, Clara lectured around the country about her experiences. After her tour, she was both mentally and physically exhausted. Under doctor's orders to rest, she closed the Missing Soldier's Office and traveled to Europe. Here she was introduced to the International Red Cross. Upon her return to the United States, she began to lobby for an American branch.

Originally called the American Association of the Red Cross, the formal organization was established in Washington, D.C. in 1881. Clara served as its first president. Three months later, the Nation's first local chapter of the American Red Cross was organized in Dansville, New York.

After leaving the Red Cross, Clara continued to lecture and wrote her book, *The Story of My Childhood*. Through her work ethic, intellect, and vision, she devoted her life to others and created an organization that continues to assist those in need.

Text sources: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/clara-barton-founding-american-red-cross>
<https://dansvilleareahistoricalociety.wordpress.com/hall-of-fame/clara-barton-1821-1912/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clara_Barton

Photo source: <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=25583136-1DD8-B71C-0783E5DDA7FD1ECE>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Medicine & Health

Elizabeth Blackwell

1821 - 1910

On January 23, 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman in the United States to graduate from medical school. At age 24, Ms. Blackwell decided she wanted to go into medicine, despite much adversity. Lacking financial support, she found a position as a music teacher in an exclusive girls' school in North Carolina. After a year of saving her money, she accepted another teaching position in South Carolina because of its free access to a doctor's library. It was there that she studied medicine.

After much trying, this determined five-foot-one inch woman was admitted to Geneva Medical College, a forerunner of Hobart College in Geneva, New York. Her months there were extremely difficult. Townspeople and male students ostracized and harassed her, and even barred her from classroom participation at first. She persevered, and graduated first in her class.

While that degree was enough for a man, she knew that she would need more training to succeed, and thus, went overseas for further study. While working at a Paris maternity hospital, Blackwell had an accident in which she lost one eye and was forced to abandon her plans to study surgery. When she returned from Europe, Dr. Blackwell and two other women opened and operated the New York Infirmary for Women and Children in a slum district in New York City.

Although Elizabeth Blackwell was born and died in England, she spent much of her life in New York State. Dr. Blackwell continued lecturing and writing until her death at age 91.

Text source:

Merriam-Whitier, Inc.; *World Almanac & Book of Facts*, 2001, p. 39.

"Elizabeth Blackwell: The First Woman Doctor." *Child Life*. Apr/May 2000, vol. 79, Issue 3, p. 24.

Photo source: *The National Women's Hall of Fame*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Medicine & Health

Mother Marianne Cope

1838 - 1918

Marianne Cope, O.S.F., was a German-born American who was a member of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Syracuse, New York. In 1839, her family immigrated to the United States and settled in Utica, New York. As soon as she completed school, she supported her family from 1853 to 1862. She then entered the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Syracuse, New York, and became known as Sister Marianne. She held a variety of leadership positions in her religious community and in upstate New York schools.

In 1866, she helped found St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Utica, and in 1869 became the primary founder of St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse - two hospitals that were among the first 50 hospitals founded in the United States. Mother Marianne became the Administrator of St. Joseph's in 1870, and was a pioneering advocate for patients' rights, sanitation and hygiene, decreeing that no distinction should be made for patients due to their theological beliefs, nationality or color. The College of Medicine of Syracuse University was moved from Geneva to Syracuse because of the training opportunities available to doctors at St. Joseph's Hospital, and Mother Marianne admitted the medical students and initiated their clinical instruction.

In 1883, Mother Marianne, by then herself Superior General of the congregation, received a plea for help in caring for leprosy sufferers from King Kalākaua of Hawaii. More than 50 religious congregations had already declined his request for Sisters to do this. Mother Marianne, along with six other Sisters from Syracuse, traveled to Honolulu to answer this call, arriving on November 8, 1883. The following year, at the request of the government, Mother Marianne set up Malulani Hospital, the first general hospital on the island of Maui.

Known for her charitable works and virtuous deeds, she spent many years caring for lepers on the island of Molokai in Hawaii. Despite direct contact with the patients over many years, she was not afflicted by the disease, which some faithful consider miraculous.

On December 19, 2011, Pope Benedict signed and approved the promulgation of the decree for her sainthood, and she was canonized on October 21, 2012. Mother Marianne is the second person, after Father Damien, who had served in the Hawaiian Islands to be canonized. She has the unique distinction of being both the first Beatification and the last Canonization under Pope Benedict XVI.

Text sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marianne_Cope
<http://blessedmariannecope.org/biography.html>

Photo source:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/de/Mother_Marianne_Cope_in_her_youth.jpg/250px-Mother_Marianne_Cope_in_her_youth.jpg





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Medicine & Health

Dr. Elizabeth Gillette

1874 - 1965

Elizabeth Van Rensselaer Gillette was the first female surgeon in Schenectady County, New York, studying medicine at New York Medical College and Hospital for Women, and receiving her license to practice in 1899.

Born in 1874 in Granby, Connecticut, to a family of doctors and politicians, Ms. Gillette was the daughter of Albert H. Gillette and Mary P. Jewett. It was no small accomplishment for a woman to become a medical doctor in the 19th century, but Dr. Gillette persevered despite the odds and naysayers and began practicing in 1900, the year she moved to Schenectady.

Dr. Gillette also had politics in her blood. She was the first woman from an upstate county elected to the New York State Assembly (District 2, Schenectady County), running in 1919, and winning by only 247 votes. Dr. Gillette's one-year tenure in the Assembly came at a time of political turmoil. While she concentrated her efforts on legislation related to medical issues, including regulation of drugs and mandating physicals for children who worked in factories, she could write laws, but as a woman could not actually vote for them in a general election. Women were not given the right to vote until the 19th Amendment was passed on August 26, 1920.

In November 1920, Dr. Gillette was defeated for re-election and continued the practice of medicine in Schenectady until 1959. She spent her final years working on her favorite causes that included the Schenectady Humane Society, the Schenectady County Historical Society, and the DAR.

Gillette's simple philosophy can be summed up by one of her quotes from a newspaper interview where she advised women to: "Vote in every election, go to every political meeting possible, learn all you can about political affairs – and always be a lady."





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Medicine & Health

Susan E. Hall

1826 - 1912

Susan E. Hall was one of the first women from New York State to be accepted as a nurse in the Civil War. Born in Orange County in 1826, Ms. Hall moved with her parents to the Town of Ulysses, Tompkins County. At the age of 32, following her father's death, she moved to New York City to study medicine and attend medical school at Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell's Women and Children's Hospital. She attended the woman's mass meeting at Cooper Union following the first shots of the Civil War on Fort Sumter in April 1861 and attended special training to become a war nurse.

After passing an examination and receiving additional practical training, Ms. Hall was one of the first women sent south to assist the Union cause. She served in field hospitals on numerous Civil War battlefields, including Bull Run and Gettysburg. Historians note that Civil War field nurses not only tended wounded and dying soldiers and cared for the many physical needs of their patients, but played an equally important emotional and spiritual role as well. Ms. Hall served for the duration of the Civil War, leaving in 1865 exhausted from her work. She then spent time at a sanitarium in Dansville, New York to recoup her strength.

In 1866, she married Robert E. Barry, who had served in the Union Army's famous Chicago Board of Trade Battery, a light artillery battery, and the couple settled in California. Susan Hall Barry received her Civil War pension in 1887, recognizing her four years of work as a hospital nurse during the War. She died in Los Angeles in 1912, at the age of 86.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Medicine & Health

Mary Putnam Jacobi

1842 - 1906

A female physician, Mary Putnam Jacobi is known for her work to improve education for women and to advance the status of women in the medical profession. Born in England, Mary Putnam grew up in Staten Island, Yonkers, and Morrisania, now part of the Bronx.

The daughter of a publisher, she was headed for a literary career when she had a story published at age 18 in *The Atlantic Monthly*. However, her gift in science led her to a medical career. She graduated from the New York College of Pharmacy and the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania.

Mary Putnam battled to become the first woman to be admitted to L'Ecole de Medicine in Paris, from which she graduated with a prize-winning thesis. She returned to the States frustrated at the meager educational opportunities for women in America, and thus organized the Association of the Advancement of the Medical Education of Women (later the Women's Medical Association of New York City).

Settling in New York City, she married a renowned pediatrician, and they both led a social reform movement that equated healthy children with national progress and power. Dr. Jacobi led a strand of women physicians caring for children throughout the City. Her literary roots were always evident, as she wrote several books and over 100 medical essays, including one that received the Boylston Prize from Harvard University.

Text sources:

Viner, Russell. "Politics, Power, and Pediatrics." *The Lancet*. January 16, 1999;

Merriam-Webster, Inc.;

www.women.eb.women

Photo source: National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Medicine & Health

Linda Richards

1841 - 1930

A native of Potsdam, Linda Richards became the first professionally trained American nurse. Credited with establishing nurse training programs in the United States and Japan, she is also recognized for creating the first system for keeping individual medical records for hospitalized patients. The system she created was widely used in the United States and England.

The deaths of her parents from tuberculosis and her husband from Civil War battle wounds provided the young Ms. Richards with the opportunity to see first-hand the ravages of human suffering. Inspired by these personal losses, she moved to Boston to become a nurse. She was one of five women to sign up for a nurse training program at the New England Hospital for Women and Children, and she was the program's first graduate in 1873.

After working in Bellevue Hospital in New York City, Ms. Richards returned to Boston in 1874, where she was named Superintendent of the Boston Training School. Under her guidance and managerial acumen, she was able to turn the program around, and it became regarded as one of the best nursing programs in the country.

Ms. Richards traveled to England to participate in an intensive nurse training program. She studied at St. Thomas' Hospital in London, where she was able to spend time with Florence Nightingale, who is widely regarded as the founder of modern nursing. At Nightingale's suggestion, Ms. Richards studied at King's College Hospital and the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in Scotland.

Ms. Richards returned to America in 1878 to help set up a training school at Boston City Hospital. Named matron of the hospital and superintendent of the school, she stayed there until 1885. Later that year, she traveled to Japan to help establish that country's first nurse training program. Ms. Richards supervised the school at Doshisha Hospital in Kyoto for five years before returning to the United States.

Ms. Richards worked in the field of nursing for another 20 years, establishing and directing nurse training programs in Philadelphia, Massachusetts, and Michigan. Ms. Richards retired in 1911 to write her autobiography, *Reminiscences of Linda Richards*. Following a severe stroke in 1923, she returned to the New England Hospital for Women and Children where she remained until her death on April 16, 1930. Linda Richards was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1994.

Text sources:

Linda Richards Biography (1841-1930)

<http://www.faqs.org/health/bios/0/Linda-Richards.html#ixzz1FZeMtFwE>

Photo source: northnet.org





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Medicine & Health

Helen Rodríguez-Trías, MD

1929 - 2001

Helen Rodríguez-Trías, MD, was a pediatrician, educator and fierce advocate for women's rights. She was the first Latina President of the American Public Health Association (APHA), a founding member of the Women's Caucus of the APHA, and a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Born in New York in 1929, she spent her early years in Puerto Rico and returned to New York when she was 10. As a Puerto Rican in New York City at that time, she experienced discrimination and racism. In school, despite her good grades and her ability to speak English, she was placed in a class with students with learning disabilities. Upon graduation from high school, she decided to pursue a career in medicine.

She returned to Puerto Rico and obtained her medical degree with highest honors in 1960, and gave birth to her fourth child. During her residency, she established the first center for the care of newborn babies in Puerto Rico. Under her direction, the hospital's death rate for newborns decreased 50 percent within three years.

Dr. Rodríguez-Trías returned to New York in 1970 and went to work at Lincoln Hospital. There, she headed the Department of Pediatrics, at this community-based hospital which served a largely Puerto Rican section of the South Bronx. She lobbied to give all workers a voice in administrative and patient-care issues and fought to raise awareness of cultural issues in the Puerto Rican community.

Throughout the 1970s, Dr. Rodríguez-Trías became aware that unsuspecting Puerto Rican women were being sterilized by the United States during the development of birth control technology. She was a founding member of both the Committee to End Sterilization Abuse and the Women's Caucus of the American Public Health Association. In 1979, she testified before the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for passage of federal sterilization guidelines and helped draft the guidelines which require a woman's written consent to sterilization, offered in multiple languages.

In the 1980s, Dr. Rodríguez-Trías served as Medical Director of the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute, where she worked on behalf of women with HIV.

In the 1990s, she focused on reproductive health as Co-director of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health. She was a founding member of both the Women's Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus of the American Public Health Association.

A lifelong public servant, Dr. Rodríguez-Trías was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal, in 2001, for her work on behalf of women, children, people with HIV and AIDS, and the disenfranchised. A statue honoring her will be placed in St. Mary's Park, near Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, in 2022.

Text sources:

<https://www.nps.gov/people/dr-helen-rodriguez-trias.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Rodríguez-Trías

Photo source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Rodríguez-Trías#/media/File:Helen_Rodríguez-Trías.JPG





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Medicine & Health

Susan Smith McKinney Steward

1847 - 1918

Dr. Susan Smith McKinney Steward was the first African-American woman to earn a medical doctorate (M.D.) in New York State and the third in the United States. Though her early education was musical, Susan Smith entered the New York Medical College for Women in 1867. She earned her M.D. in 1870, graduating as valedictorian.

In 1871, she married Reverend William G. McKinney, with whom she had two children. Dr. Smith McKinney's professional accomplishments were numerous. She established her own private practice in Brooklyn that she ran from 1870 to 1895. During this time she co-founded the Brooklyn Women's Homeopathic Hospital and Dispensary, which served the African-American community. Dr. Smith McKinney also completed post-graduate education at the Long Island Medical College Hospital in Brooklyn, practiced at the Brooklyn Home for Aged Colored People, where she also served as a board member, and practiced at New York Medical College and Hospital for Women in Manhattan. Dr. Smith McKinney specialized in prenatal care and childhood diseases and presented papers on both these topics.

Rev. McKinney died in 1892, and in 1896 Dr. Smith McKinney married Theophilus Gould Steward, an ordained minister and U.S. Army chaplain. She traveled with him for several years throughout the West, earning medical licenses in Montana and Wyoming. In 1898, Dr. Smith McKinney Steward was hired by Wilberforce University in Ohio as a resident physician and faculty member to teach health and nutrition.

Dr. Smith McKinney Steward's activities included local missionary work and women's suffrage advocacy. She was President of the Brooklyn Women's Christian Temperance Union (No. 6). She was an accomplished public speaker, and in 1911 addressed the first Universal Race Congress at the University of London. Her presentation was entitled "Colored Women in America." In 1914, she gave a speech, "Women in Medicine," at the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs Convention.

Dr. Smith McKinney Steward practiced medicine for 48 years. When she died in Brooklyn in 1918, W.E.B. DuBois gave the eulogy at her funeral. In 1974, Brooklyn Junior High School was renamed Dr. Susan Smith McKinney Junior High School in her honor. Two years later, black women physicians in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut area named their society after her to honor her life and work.

Text sources:

Robert C. Hayden, "Steward, Susan Maria Smith McKinney," *American National Biography Online*, February 2000;
Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
www.blackpast.org/?q=aah.steward-susan-smith-mckinney-1847-1918





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Medicine & Health

Lucy Hobbs Taylor

1833 - 1910

The first woman in the world to earn a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS), Lucy Hobbs Taylor was born in Ellenburg, Clinton County in 1833. Her quest to become a dentist was arduous and frustrating, yet her persistence never wavered. Orphaned at age 12, Lucy toiled as a seamstress and later became a school teacher at age 16, graduating from the Franklin Academy in Malone. After working 10 years as a teacher, her growing interest in medicine led her to Cincinnati, Ohio, where she applied for — and was promptly denied — admission to medical school. When she applied to dental college, she was again rejected solely because of her gender.

As was the common practice of the day, many men learned dentistry not in school but through apprenticeships. After repeated rejection and ridicule, Lucy Hobbs finally found a recent graduate of Ohio College of Dental Surgery who would apprentice her. She opened her own practice in 1861 and the next year moved to Iowa, where she gained acceptance as “the lady who pulls teeth.” She was also admitted to the Iowa State Dental Society, the first woman to be admitted to a professional dental organization.

Finally, after five years of incessant perseverance, she was accepted to the Ohio College of Dental Surgery, and earned her DDS after only four months of study in 1866. While practicing in Chicago, she married James M. Taylor, whom she taught to be a dentist as well. They moved to Kansas where they had a lucrative joint practice for 20 years. Today, nearly half of all dental students are female, and they owe a great deal to this native New Yorker who paved the way.

Text sources:

Journal of the History of Dentistry, March 1999; www.aawd.org/LHT;
www.ohiohistorycentral.org

Photo source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucy_Hobbs_Taylor





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Medicine & Health

Adah Belle Samuels Thoms

1870 - 1943

Adah Belle Samuels Thoms was a crusader and pioneer for equal opportunity in nursing. Born and educated in Richmond, Virginia, Ms. Thoms advocated for African-American women as a teacher and later as a nurse.

After graduating from Lincoln School for Nurses in New York, Ms. Thoms went on to serve as the school's Assistant Superintendent for 18 years. From there, she became Acting Director, at a time when both women and African-Americans rarely held high-level positions. In addition to working as Acting Director, Ms. Thoms added a course to the school's curriculum and was among the first to recognize public health as a new field of nursing.

Ms. Thoms later became the President of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, crusading for the acceptance of African-American nurses as members of the American Red Cross during World War I. She was instrumental in increasing the number of African-American nurses in public health nursing positions and campaigned for equal rights for African-American nurses in the United States Army Nurse Corps.

For her work in her field and for her innovative thinking, Ms. Thoms was the first recipient of the Mary Mahoney Award and was an original inductee of the American Nurses Association Hall of Fame. In addition to her career as a nurse, Ms. Thoms wrote the book, *The Pathfinders*, a novel detailing the first history of African-American nurses.

Ms. Thoms' leadership is significant; she was an author, educator and a crusader for all women who strive to bring promise of better relationships between people of all races.

Text sources:

www.library.vcu.edu/tml/speccoll/vnfame/thoms.html

<http://www2.oxfordaasc.com/article/opr/t0003/e0436>

Photo source: <http://www2.oxfordaasc.com/article/opr/t0003/e0436>





Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Military

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Military

Faye Glenn Abdellah
(1919 – 2017)

Faye Glenn Abdellah, an American pioneer in nursing research, was the first nurse and woman to serve as the Deputy Surgeon General of the United States.

Born in New York City in 1919, it was in 1937 that an 18-year-old Ms. Abdellah witnessed the explosion of the German passenger airship *Hindenburg* in Lakehurst, N.J., which became a turning point in her life. In an interview years later, she said, "I could see people jumping from the zeppelin and didn't know how I would take care of them, so I vowed that I would learn nursing."

Propelled by her passion, Ms. Abdellah earned a nursing diploma from Ann May School of Nursing in Neptune, N.J., and undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees from Columbia University. She wrote more than 153 publications, including her seminal works *Better Patient Care Through Nursing Research* and *Patient-Centered Approaches to Nursing*, which revolutionized the focus of nursing theory from disease-centered to patient-centered. Her "21 Nursing Problems Theory" is still studied and applied today as an approach that addresses specific problems that arise during patient care, viewing each patient as an individual with unique needs.

Ms. Abdellah was the first nurse and the first woman to serve as Deputy Surgeon General, and was the first nurse to hold the rank of rear admiral. Her leadership resulted in many accomplishments, including development of the first tested coronary care unit, saving thousands of lives.

Furthermore, Ms. Abdellah was renowned as an expert in health policies related to long-term care, the developmentally disabled, aging, hospice, and AIDS.

In 1989, she retired from the PHS and went on to serve as Founding Dean of the Graduate School of Nursing at USUHS. In 2002, she retired with almost 50 years of government service.

Over the course of her illustrious career, Ms. Abdellah received 11 honorary degrees and more than 50 academic awards. In 2000, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Text sources:

<https://circulatingnow.nlm.nih.gov/2017/03/24/faye-glenn-abdellah-nurse-officer-educator/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faye_Glenn_Abdellah

<https://nihrecord.nih.gov/2017/03/24/nursing-icon-abdellah-mourned>

<https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/nursing/nursing-theories/faye-glenn-abdellah>

Photo source: <https://circulatingnow.nlm.nih.gov/2017/03/24/faye-glenn-abdellah-nurse-officer-educator/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Mary Clarke

1924 - 2011

In 1978, Mary Clarke was the first woman named to the rank of major general in the U.S. Army. Born and reared in Rochester, Mary Clarke began her military career in 1945 as an enlisted woman in Fort Des Moines, Iowa.

She initially enlisted in the Woman's Army Corps (WAC) during World War II only for the duration of the War; however, when a male commander said she couldn't survive the officers' training camp, she decided to stay. And stay she did: Mary Clarke served in the Army for 36 years, the longest Army career of any woman.

She became the Commander of the WAC, and when it was absorbed into the regular Army in 1978, she was promoted to Major General. She then assumed command of the U.S. Army Military Police School/Training Center in Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Over the course of her career, she received many decorations and honors. She also received a doctorate in military science from Norwich University in Vermont, and was named Director of Human Resources Development for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel in Washington, D.C.

After she retired in 1981, she was appointed to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

Text sources:

The Book of Women's Firsts: Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1000

American Women by Phyllis J. Read & Bernard L. Witlieb;

Mary Clarke

Photo source: *Mary Clarke*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Margaret Cochran Corbin

1751 - 1800

"The first American woman to take a soldier's part in the War for Liberty." So reads the bronze plaque commemorating Margaret Cochran Corbin in Fort Tryon Park in upper Manhattan. When her husband joined the Army, Margaret Corbin became a "camp follower" and she fought alongside him as a "half-soldier" in the American Revolutionary War. In 1776, in Fort Washington, New York (now Fort Tryon Park), her husband was killed. Without missing a beat, Margaret continued loading and firing the cannon by herself until she was seriously wounded. She never recovered fully from her injuries and was left without use of her left arm for the rest of her life. The Continental Congress granted her a pension ("half the pay and allowances of a soldier in service") due to her distinguished bravery, and thus, she was also the first woman to receive a military pension from the United States government.

For the next 20 years, until her death in 1800, "Capt. Molly" (not to be confused with Molly Pitcher) lived in the West Point area. In 1926, the Daughters of the American Revolution had her remains re-interred with full military honors at the cemetery of the United States Military Academy at West Point.

In the wake of the 1976 Bicentennial, Corbin's story resurfaced and Fort Tryon Park's plaza and drive were renamed for her. Subsequently, local schools developed a curriculum about Corbin, and a plaque honoring the heroine was placed at 190th Street & Fort Washington Avenue, Manhattan. She is also commemorated by several bronze plaques within Fort Tryon Park and a bronze statue at West Point.

Text sources:

www.distinguishedwomen.com; www.nycgovparks.org;

www.washington-heights.us/history/"Margaret Cochran Corbin" by James Renner

Photo source: www.washington-heights.us/history/archives





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Betsy Doyle
c.1750 - 1819

Betsy Doyle was a heroine of the War of 1812 whose bravery was much admired in her own time. Though her husband, Andrew, was captured by the British at the Battle of Queenston and later held prisoner in England, Ms. Doyle remained at Fort Niagara with her children and played an integral role in the struggles that took place there.

In November 1812, during a terrifying and prolonged artillery duel with the British forces across the Niagara River at Fort George, Ms. Doyle gallantly carried red-hot cannonballs to guns positioned on the roof of Fort Niagara's "French Castle" for immediate firing. She instantly became a local celebrity for her singular daring acts of bravery and her willingness to repeatedly risk her life in defense of the Fort.

A year later, just before the crushing British attack on Fort Niagara in December 1813, Ms. Doyle donned a soldier's uniform and stood guard through a dark and rainy night in an attempt to motivate the militia. Although the British ultimately captured the Fort after an intense and bloody fight, Ms. Doyle survived and managed to escape to the east. She fled with her children across the trails of Upstate New York in the middle of winter to the Army's Greenbush Cantonment, a distance of some 300 miles, where she found refuge. Although her husband was ultimately paroled before her at the cantonment site in 1819, it is unlikely she saw him again.

Contemporary reports reveal that Ms. Doyle was a patriotic, industrious, and worthy woman. One admirer, the commander of Fort Niagara during the War of 1812, compared her fortitude to that of Joan of Arc. Many years later, her legend having grown, the Daughters of 1812 installed a plaque commemorating Ms. Betsy Doyle's heroism on the third floor of the French Castle.

Text and photo source:

A Heroine's Saga: The True Story of a Very Real Betsy Doyle by Catherine Emerson, Niagara County Historian





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Florence Finch

1915 – 2016

Florence Finch was a Filipino American who aided United States military intelligence and the Philippine resistance movement against the Japanese during World War II. She was a highly decorated United States Coast Guard veteran and former prisoner of war.

Hired as a stenographer, Ms. Finch worked at the Army Intelligence headquarters in Manila after graduating from high school. During this time, she met an American sailor named Charles Smith, and they were married in August 1941; the following year, he was killed in action.

Ms. Finch took a job with the Philippine Liquid Fuel Distributing Union writing gas rationing vouchers. However, she used her position to divert fuel supplies to help the Philippine resistance movement and sabotage shipments to the Japanese. She also smuggled food, medicine, soap, and clothing to prisoners of war until she was caught.

After her arrest, Ms. Finch was confined to a two-by-four-foot cell, interrogated and tortured. However, she did not give away any information to the Japanese military. She was tried and sentenced to three years of hard labor at the Women's Correctional Institution in Mandaluyong. When Ms. Finch was freed by American soldiers in February 1945, she weighed only 80 pounds.

Once home, she relocated to Buffalo, New York and joined the Coast Guard Women's Reserve. Ms. Finch was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon after her superiors learned of her wartime work; she was the first woman to receive this honor. She was also awarded the Medal of Freedom.

After her discharge from the Coast Guard as a Seaman Second Class in 1946, Ms. Finch enrolled in secretarial school in New York City, where she met and married Army veteran Robert Finch. Shortly after, she and her husband moved the family to Ithaca, New York for work.

In addition to raising her children, Ms. Finch worked as a secretary at Cornell University. After completing a government questionnaire, she was rediscovered by the military in the 1990s, leading the Coast Guard to name a building on Sand Island in Hawaii in her honor in 1995.

Ms. Finch passed away at the age of 101 on December 8, 2016. She was given a funeral with full military honors.

Text sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/28/us/florence-finch-dead-coast-guard-war-hero.html> <https://www.ithacajournal.com/story/news/local/2015/10/19/life-well-lived-includes-service-country/74217118/>

Photo source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/28/us/florence-finch-dead-coast-guard-war-hero.html>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Juliane Gallina

1970 - Present

Juliane Gallina, a native of Pelham, New York, in Westchester County, was the first woman to be named Brigade Commander by the United States Naval Academy in 1991.

Established in 1845, the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland did not admit women during its first 146 years. When it finally did, in 1976, many midshipmen, as well as faculty, still did not believe women had a place there.

In 1991, after a rigorous screening and interview process with top Academy officials, Ms. Gallina was appointed Brigade Commander, making her responsible for the daily military activity of the Academy's 4,300 midshipmen. She was the second woman ever to hold such a prestigious and powerful position at a military service academy, the first one being at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

As Brigade Commander, she served as chief liaison between the midshipmen and Academy officers. In addition to being the student leader of 4,300, she was also the coxswain of the women's crew team and a member of the track and lacrosse teams while at the Academy.

She served for 21 years in the United States Navy, retiring as a Commander in 2013. During her time in the Navy, she spent 10 years at the NRO as a Deputy Program Director and Senior System Engineer and Program Manager.

Ms. Gallina earned a Bachelor of Science from the Naval Academy and a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering from George Washington University.

In 2019, Ms. Gallina became the Chief Information Officer for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and in 2021, she was promoted to Associate Deputy Director for Digital Innovation. Prior to taking on these roles at the CIA, she spent a decade in various leadership positions at IBM.

Text source: <https://blog.executivebiz.com/2021/02/cia-cio-juliane-gallina-recognized-with-2021-wash100-award-for-driving-innovation-partnerships-resources-across-the-federal-sector/>.

Text and photo source: Department of the Navy, United States Naval Academy





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Crescencia Joyce Garcia
1920 – 2023

Crescencia Joyce Garcia served as a Private First Class in the United States Army during World War II. She was a member of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion and received the Congressional Gold Medal for her bravery and service.

Born in Puerto Rico, Ms. Garcia attended high school for two years, but was forced to drop out because her mother could no longer afford it while caring for her and her siblings. She eventually moved to New York City and took a job in a sewing factory. Ms. Garcia used the money that she made to relocate her family from Puerto Rico to an apartment in the Bronx.

Ms. Garcia applied to nursing school at Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, but she didn't have enough education to be accepted. She did, however, get a job as an orderly at the hospital, which helped her earn additional income.

After the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Ms. Garcia was compelled to join the Army. She was sent to Des Moines, Iowa for basic training and was assigned to an all-Black unit of 855 women, the largest group of Black servicewomen to serve overseas during World War II.

After her training as a medic in Texas, she was transferred to England, where she was assigned to the 6810th Hospital Center northwest of Birmingham. She worked in a burn unit alongside doctors and nurses, treating soldiers of all races. After the war, Ms. Garcia received an honorable discharge and married Army veteran Esteban Garcia II, and together, they raised three children in the Bronx. To help support her family, Ms. Garcia worked as seamstress and pattern maker.

In 2020, at the age of 100, she contracted COVID-19 while at a care facility. At the time, a picture of her in uniform, posted on Instagram, caught media interest, and she was identified as one of only six survivors of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only female military unit to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. These remarkable women shattered barriers and played a pivotal role in ensuring that mail reached our American troops. Ms. Garcia's name is engraved on a monument at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for future generations to see.

Ms. Garcia died on August 3, 2023 at the age of 103.

Text sources : <https://www.nabmw.org/crescencia-joyce-garcia>
<https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/a40222420/crescencia-garcia-world-war-ii-hero-6888/>
<https://ourtimepress.com/crescencia-j-garcia-world-war-ii-veteran/>
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/crescencia-garcia-world-war-ii-veteran/>

Photo source: <https://ourtimepress.com/crescencia-j-garcia-world-war-ii-veteran/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Military

Olivia J. Hooker, Ph.D.

1915 - 2018

Olivia J. Hooker, Ph.D., was the first African American woman to serve on active duty in the United States Coast Guard. An alumna of the University of Rochester, Dr. Hooker was a psychologist, a professor, and a survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921.

Dr. Hooker was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and moved with her family to Tulsa. She was six years old when her community was destroyed on May 31, 1921, in the worst race riot in the history of the United States. The Tulsa Riot resulted in the deaths of more than 300 people, and the burning and destruction of more than 100 homes and businesses in a once prosperous area known as "Black Wall Street."

Despite her early experiences with hatred and injustice, Dr. Hooker sought to serve her country during World War II. However, the United States Navy refused to enlist a woman of color. Undeterred, she enlisted in the United States Coast Guard, becoming the first African American woman to serve on active duty.

Following the War, Dr. Hooker attended graduate school on the GI Bill, achieving a Master's Degree from Columbia University and, in 1961, a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of Rochester, where she was one of two Black female students.

Dr. Hooker worked at the Albion Correctional Facility, and offered therapy and support services as a Director at the Kennedy Child Study Center in New York City. She was a Senior Clinical Lecturer, and an APA Honors Professor at Fordham University. After her retirement, she continued to help children with developmental disabilities at the Fred Keller School for Behavioral Analysis until the age of 87. She joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary at age 95.

The images and devastation of Tulsa always remained with Dr. Hooker. In 1997, along with other survivors, she helped found the Tulsa Race Riot Commission, which drafted recommendations for restitution. In 2003, she was one of the plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit filed against the State of Oklahoma and the City of Tulsa by more than 100 survivors, and about 300 descendants of people who lost their lives or property in the attacks, seeking compensation due to the local governments' involvement in the massacre. The U.S. Supreme Court dismissed the case without comment.

Dr. Hooker died of natural causes in her home in White Plains at the age of 103. She was awarded the American Psychological Association's Presidential Citation, and in 2012, she was inducted into the NYS Senate's Veterans Hall of Fame by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. In 2015, the Olivia Hooker Dining Facility in the Staten Island Coast Guard facility was named in her honor. A training facility at the Coast Guard's headquarters in Washington, D.C. was named after her that same year. In 2019, the U.S. Coast Guard announced the commission of their 61st Sentinal Class, fast-response cutter, the USCGC *Olivia Hooker*.

Text sources:

<https://www.rochester.edu/2020-celebration/olivia-hooker/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olivia_Hooker

Photo source: <https://blackrocblog-blog.tumblr.com/post/111290965862/olivia-j-hooker>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Military

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker

1832 - 1919

The only woman to win the Congressional Medal of Honor, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was so far ahead of her time that she was acclaimed not as much for her patriotism as for being “that shocking female surgeon in trousers.” Awarded the Medal of Honor in 1865 for her heroic efforts in the Civil War, Dr. Walker was a surgeon as well as a Union spy who was held as a prisoner of war.

A native of Oswego, Mary Walker was born November 26, 1832. She graduated at age 23 from Syracuse Medical College, the Nation's first medical school, which was also ahead of its time because it accepted women and men on an equal basis. She married fellow student Albert Miller and refused to take his name — unheard of in the mid-19th century!

During the Civil War, she was at first refused a commission as an Army surgeon and instead volunteered at a Washington, D.C. hospital. She then worked at the Union front lines, including the battles of Bull Run and Chickamauga. She fearlessly crossed Confederate lines to treat civilians and was taken prisoner for four months in Virginia. Later, she worked at a female prison and an orphan asylum.

When her Medal of Honor was revoked after 52 years — allegedly because of her fight for women's rights — Dr. Walker refused to return it and wore it until her death in 1919. President Carter reinstated her Medal of Honor in 1977, and she remains the only woman so honored. A surgeon, suffragette, writer and inventor from the 19th century, Dr. Walker continues to be an inspiration for women of the 21st century.

Text source: www.wtvh.com/promo/walker,WTVH Channel 5, Syracuse, NY.

Photo source: Women's Internet Information Network, Inc. - military women's history.



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Science & Technology

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Science & Technology

Katharine Burr Blodgett

1898 - 1979

The first female research scientist at General Electric Company in Schenectady, Katharine Burr Blodgett made significant contributions to the field of industrial chemistry, including six U.S. patents. Dr. Blodgett had a long-time collaboration with fellow scientist, Dr. Irving Langmuir, and the area of their research is now known as Langmuir-Blodgett technology.

After graduating from high school in 1913 at the age of 15, she won a scholarship to Bryn Mawr College. The knowledge she obtained while a graduate student at University of Chicago helped her invent gas masks that saved countless lives during World War I.

Dr. Blodgett's other experiments during World War II led to breakthroughs in the design of the airplane wing, and she designed a smoke screen that also saved lives during military campaigns.

Dr. Blodgett has been credited with inventing nonreflecting glass, which is commonly found today in camera lenses and optical equipment, automobile windows, eyeglasses, picture frames and submarine periscopes.

The first woman to receive a doctorate in physics from Cambridge University in England, Dr. Blodgett received numerous honorary doctorate degrees and awards. In 1951, she was the first industrial scientist to be awarded the Garvan Medal. Dr. Blodgett spent nearly all of her adult life in Schenectady, where she helped pave the way for women physicists and scientists around the world.

Text sources:

Prominent Women of the 20th Century, Peggy Saari;
<http://chem.ch.huji.ac.il/~eugenik/history/blodgett.html>.

Photo source: *The Hall of Electrical History, Schenectady Museum Association*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Science & Technology

Eileen M. Collins

1956 - Present

Eileen M. Collins used her good grades, flying experience, and a letter of recommendation from her ROTC supervisor to go straight from college into Air Force pilot training and then on to achieve one of the most recognizable accomplishments of our day: Ms. Collins was the first American woman to pilot a spacecraft, the space shuttle Discovery.

A native of Elmira, Ms. Collins graduated from Corning Community College in 1976 and Syracuse University in 1978. She learned to fly when she was 20, earning her pilot's license in 1977.

Ms. Collins was hand-picked by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1990 to become an American astronaut. In February 1995, she became the first American woman to pilot a space shuttle, the Discovery, which represented the first flight of the new joint Russian-American space program. Ms. Collins also served as a pilot on the shuttle Atlantis in May 1997, the sixth shuttle mission to rendezvous and dock with the Russian space station Mir, and her rise to fame accelerated when she became the first female shuttle commander, on the Columbia, in July 1999.

Ms. Collins went on to command the shuttle Discovery in July 2005, the historic "Return to Flight" mission during which the shuttle docked with the International Space Station and the crew tested and evaluated new procedures for flight safety, shuttle inspection and repair techniques.

Ms. Collins, who has logged over 6,000 hours in 30 different types of aircraft, and who is a veteran of four space flights, has logged more than 872 hours in space.

She is the recipient of a multitude of awards and honors, including the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in Grenada, the French Legion of Honor, the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal and NASA Space Flight Medals.

Eileen M. Collins retired from the Air Force in January 2005 and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in May 2006. She is a member of the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Science & Technology

Charlotte Friend

1921 - 1987

As the first scientist to discover a direct link between viruses and cancer, Charlotte Friend made important breakthroughs in cancer research, particularly with leukemia, a leading cancer killer of children. Because of Dr. Friend's work, medical researchers developed a greater understanding of cancer and how it can be fought.

Dr. Friend, the daughter of Russian immigrants, was born in New York City. She began her career at the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York City and taught as an associate professor in microbiology at Cornell University in Ithaca. In 1966, Friend became a professor and director at the Center for Experimental Cell Biology at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital Medical School.

Dr. Friend has been honored for her work by the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society and is a recipient of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Cancer Research. She was a member of many national and international scientific organizations and was elected president of the American Association for Cancer Research in 1976. She was elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences that same year, and in 1978, became the first woman president of the New York Academy of Sciences.

Text sources:

Prominent Women of the 20th Century, by Peggy Saari;
The New York Academy of Sciences.

Photo source: *The New York Academy of Sciences Archives*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Science & Technology

Winifred Goldring

1888 - 1971

Best known for being appointed the first female State Paleontologist of New York, Ms. Goldring was a pioneer in her field and the first woman to be elected President of the Paleontological Society - the largest association of paleontologists in the world. At the time of this bestowment, the field of paleontology was an overwhelmingly male-dominated area. The tremendous support she was given by men for her presidency of the Society underscores her prominence as a nationally-known and respected geologist.

Born and raised in Kenwood, outside Albany, New York, Ms. Goldring was an exceptional student, graduating as valedictorian of her class from one of the best high schools in Albany, the Milne School. Earning her A.B. with honors in 1909, and her A.M. in 1912, from Wellesley College, she became intensely interested in geology during the course of her studies. After graduating, she remained at Wellesley as a geology instructor and served as a teaching assistant in Boston's Teacher's School of Science. During the summer of 1913, she also studied at Columbia University with renowned geologist Amadeus Grabau.

Ms. Goldring's return to New York was in 1914, when she accepted a position as Scientific Expert at the New York State Museum. Her most noted work however, was with the Gilboa fossil flora. As plant fossils were being revealed during the excavations for the Gilboa dam and reservoir in Schoharie, New York, Ms. Goldring was assigned to scientifically describe and illustrate them. Her inherent knowledge of botany, coupled with graduate courses taken at Johns Hopkins University in 1921, made her uniquely qualified for this work. It was the publication of her report on the Gilboa fossil forest in 1924 that established Ms. Goldring as an important Devonian researcher.

Ms. Goldring was also known for her work with stromatolites. The stromatolite site that she studied, the Petrified Sea Gardens, are a National Natural Landmark and a National Historic Landmark of the United States.

Although there were other notable female geologists/paleontologists in her lifetime, Ms. Goldring's appointment as State Paleontologist in 1939, was a first for women in the Nation and in the world.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Science & Technology

Anne LaBastille

1933 - 2011

Anne LaBastille was an award-winning author, ecologist, and photographer, steadfastly fighting for the preservation of the natural world. An impassioned conservationist and courageous advocate for the environment, she spent much of her life writing and exploring deep in the Adirondack Wilderness. She was born in 1933 and raised by her brilliant and eccentric parents, her father, Ferdinand Meyer LaBastille, on the faculty at Columbia University, and her mother, Irma Goebel, a stage actress and musician.

Taken with the idea of preserving the forest, from both ecological and societal standpoints, she enrolled in the natural resource program at Cornell University. There, she was the first female student to study wildlife ecology, later becoming Cornell's first female professor of natural resources. She lived alone in a small rustic cabin that she built, without electricity or plumbing, on Twitchell Lake near Old Forge. She wrote movingly about solitude and how it felt to be one with nature.

She worked and fought for solutions to acid rain, climate change and the need for conservation, long before the topic of climate change made headlines. She traveled around the world with many not-for-profits to study and alleviate the effects of acid rain and pollution on lakes and wildlife. She was a charter member of the New York State Outdoor Guides in the 1970s, among a few pioneering women who broke into the male dominated field.

She was the author of over a dozen books including *Woodswoman: Living alone in the Adirondack Wilderness*, *Beyond Black Bear Lake*, and *Women of the Wilderness*, of which over a 100,000 copies were sold. She also wrote over 150 articles and over 25 scientific papers for magazines like *National Geographic* and *Backpacker*, including some of the first to point out the dangers of acid rain to the Adirondack watershed. She was the Commissioner of the Adirondack Park Agency, a post she held for 17 years, and routinely took positions that clashed with the agendas of snowmobilers and sportsmen.

She was honored by the World Wildlife Fund and the Explorers Club for her pioneering field research in wildlife ecology at Lake Atitlan in Guatemala, where she struggled to save endangered giant grebes, a flightless, pie-billed bird.

Upon her death, Ms. LaBastille's wishes were documented in her will - to support female conservation students, make a meaningful contribution to writers, and preserve her Adirondack cabin.

Text sources: <https://foundationhoc.org/portfolio-item/written-in-the-wilderness-the-life-legacy-of-anne-labastille/>
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/labastille-anne-1938>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_LaBastille
Adirondack Explorer August 2011

Photo source: www.adirondackalmanack.com/2014/07/anne-labastille-cabin-headed-to-adirondack-museum.html





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Science & Technology

Grace Brewster Murray Hopper

1906 - 1992

A native of New York City and a graduate of Vassar College and Yale University, Grace Hopper was known for her role in developing COBOL (Common Business-Oriented Language), a widely used computer language that allows computer commands to be written using an English-based vocabulary instead of machine code.

She joined the Naval Service during World War II as a member of WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). Her naval assignment took her to Harvard University, where she did computer work and coined the term "bug" to refer to computer glitches. She served 43 years of service in the military, and attained the rank of Rear Admiral before retiring in 1986.

Grace Brewster Murray Hopper standardized the Navy's computer languages, published more than 50 articles, and was honored many times. President George H. Bush awarded her the National Medal of Technology in 1991, the first time the award was given to a woman. She also was named "Man of the Year" in 1969 by the Data Processing Management Association.

Known for her unorthodox and blunt style, she once called the women's movement "tommyrot and nonsense."

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Science & Technology

Barbara McClintock

1902 - 1992

Barbara McClintock, America's most distinguished cytogeneticist, was initially denied acceptance to Cornell University's Department of Plant Breeding because she was a woman. Eventually allowed to study plant genetics, McClintock received her Ph.D. from Cornell in 1927, and later formulated one of the most important genetic theories of the 20th century.

Dr. McClintock's work in cytogenetics — the study of heredity through cell genetics — has been key to today's understanding of human disease. But the great medical and biological significance of her research would not be recognized for decades.

In 1942, Dr. McClintock was invited to the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island to further her research, and in 1944, she became the third woman elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

In 1951, Dr. McClintock theorized that genes are not fixed in place, but can "jump" from place to place on chromosomes. Her discovery of mobile genetic elements, known as the "jumping genes theory," was disputed for over 20 years.

In the 1970s, new DNA research validated Dr. McClintock's theory. Her discovery has helped to explain, for example, how bacteria becomes resistant to certain antibiotics. Cancer researchers subsequently discovered human genes that may transform healthy cells into cancerous ones.

Dr. McClintock was finally recognized for her significant contributions in 1983 when, at the age of 81, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology.

Text sources: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Library and Archives;
"At Long Last — A Nobel for a Loner", by Gina Maranto (Discover, December 1983);
National Women's Hall of Fame

Photo source: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Library and Archives





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Science & Technology

Maria Mitchell

1818 - 1889

A native New Englander from Nantucket, Massachusetts, Maria Mitchell was born into a strongly religious Quaker family. One of the tenets of the Quaker religion — that girls should receive education equal to that of boys — prepared her well, as she is recognized today as the first female astronomer in the United States.

A teaching assistant by the age of 16, Ms. Mitchell opened her own school at age 17, and went on to work as a librarian on the island of Nantucket where she lived with her father, William, an astronomer who recorded star observations for the United States Coast Guard. Ms. Mitchell's love of reading and learning, along with her father's encouragement, motivated her to follow in her father's footsteps.

In the fall of 1847, Maria, who had been tracking a faint light near the North Star through her father's telescope, recorded what she believed to be a comet. While the discovery of comets was not an unusual occurrence by that time, the fact that a woman had spotted it certainly was. Ms. Mitchell's father promptly contacted Harvard University's observatory about his daughter's discovery, as the King of Denmark had offered a gold medal to the person who discovered a comet seen only through a telescope. When a citizen of Rome discovered the same comet two days later than Maria Mitchell, he was awarded the prize before the news of Maria's earlier discovery was received. A year later and after some negotiation, however, Ms. Mitchell was recognized with the medal for the discovery of what was named "Miss Mitchell's Comet."

While continuing to work as a librarian, Ms. Mitchell received congratulatory letters from scientists, culminating in 1848 and 1850, when the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Association for the Advancement of Science, respectively, voted her their first female member. Ms. Mitchell was elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Women in 1875, and served as professor of astronomy at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, from 1865 to 1888, the year before she died.

Posthumously, Ms. Mitchell was elected to the Hall of Fame of Great Americans at New York University (now Bronx Community College), and in 1994 was elected to the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York.

Text source: <http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies/mitchell>

Photo source: Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Science & Technology

*The Women Organizers of the
1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo*

1901

The 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo was part of a series of international expositions at which hundreds of exhibits displayed the greatest technological innovations and product designs of their time.

The 350-acre site, containing hundreds of buildings that took years of planning and work, was made possible through the efforts of the Board of Women Managers, established in 1899 under President Kate Hamlin. Some board members were society matrons; others were professionals or active in social reform programs.

The women were involved in recruiting exhibitors, soliciting attendance by women's civic and professional organizations, and promoting the Exposition at meetings throughout the country. Women were also incorporated in professional capacities — architect Josephine Wright Chapman won a sealed competition to design the New England Building and S. Cecilia Cotter displayed her sculptures.

Text and photo source:

Images of America: Buffalo's Pan-American Exposition, Thomas Leary and Elizabeth Sholes with the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME Science & Technology

Blanche Stuart "Betty" Scott

1889 - 1970

Blanche Stuart Scott, the first woman to drive an automobile from coast to coast, was also the first American woman to fly an airplane solo.

Born on April 8, 1889 in Rochester, New York, the impetuous Ms. Scott first came to the attention of the authorities at the age of 13 for driving her family's automobile around the City. Since there was no established age at that time for operating a motor vehicle, she continued to do so, much to the consternation of the Rochester City Council.

By the age of 21, and after completing finishing school, she made headlines in 1910 for becoming the first woman to drive an automobile cross-country, from New York to San Francisco. At that time, there were only 218 miles of paved road outside of the major United States cities, and the trip took Ms. Scott from May 16 until July 23 of that year. During this cross country drive, she drew the attention of Jerome Fanciulli, an early aviator who was part of the famous Curtiss Exhibition Team. As the first and only woman to receive flying lessons from Glenn Curtiss, Ms. Scott debuted her flying skills by flying at an altitude of 40 feet, after a gust of wind lifted her airborne.

Following her formal instruction with Mr. Curtiss, she joined his Exhibition Team, making her first public appearance in Fort Wayne, Indiana on October 24, 1910. This began the career of the woman who holds the title of America's first female professional flyer. During her career, Ms. Scott completed the first woman's long distance flight, became the first female test pilot, was a member of the Ward Exhibition Team, was the first American woman to ride in a jet, ultimately working for the United States Air Force Museum.

After retiring from active flying in 1916, Ms. Scott worked in the media field. For nine years, she did writing for Warner Brothers and Universal Studios in California, and also wrote and produced a succession of radio shows in the Rochester area.

A member of the Early Birds, the OX-5 Club, and the Long Island Early Fliers Club, Blanche Stuart Scott passed away on January 12, 1970.

Text source: www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/scott

Photo source: Courtesy of the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, Hammondsport, NY





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Science & Technology

Giuliana Tesoro

(1921 – 2002)

Giuliana Tesoro was an Italian-born American chemist who earned more than 125 patents.

Ms. Tesoro grew up in Venice, Italy, where as a person of Jewish faith, she faced extreme hardships under the Mussolini era. She completed high school early, but was denied access to Italy's university system due to its fascist rules. An ambitious and gifted student, she fled to Switzerland first, then to the U.S., where she received her Ph.D. in organic chemistry at the age of 21. A year later, she married Victor Tesoro, who was working at Yale during her studies, in the heart of New York City.

Ms. Tesoro quickly moved up the ranks at various corporations and educational institutions. She started working as a research chemist at Calco Chemical Company, then moved to Onyx Oil and Chemical Company under the same title. During her time at Onyx, she rose from the head of the Organic Synthesis Department in 1946 to the Associate Director in 1955. Next, Ms. Tesoro served as Assistant Director of Organic Research over a roughly 10-year tenure, before moving to the Textile Research Institute for two years. In 1969, she accepted a position as Senior Chemist at Burlington Industries, then was appointed Director of Chemical Research in 1971, where she was a prolific inventor, having been granted more than two dozen patents in 1970 alone. She then taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1972 to 1976 as a visiting professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

From 1982 until her retirement in 1996, Ms. Tesoro was a highly respected and world-renowned research professor of polymer chemistry at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, New York (now the NYU Tandon School of Engineering). She brought her 40 years of experience in the industry to her teaching position and published numerous papers related to her research. Often, Ms. Tesoro lectured captivated audiences at conferences worldwide.

Her advances in textile processing and organic compounds drastically improved clothing for consumers. Ms. Tesoro developed flame-resistant fibers and discovered a way to prevent static in synthetic fibers. The majority of her patents were for surface active agents, chemical modification of fibers, and fire retardants.

Text sources:

<https://www.investors.com/news/management/leaders-and-success/giuliana-tesoro-helped-shape-high-tech-fabric-industry/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuliana_Tesoro

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Photo source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuliana_Tesoro#/media/File:Giuliana_Tesoro.jpg



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Social Reformers

NEW YORK STATE SENATE



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Susan B. Anthony

1820 - 1906

Susan Brownell Anthony was a zealous and tireless advocate for the rights of women and blacks. From the age of 17, when she was a teacher in rural New York State, she lobbied for equal pay for women teachers, for co-education, and for college training for girls.

When the Sons of Temperance refused to admit women into their movement, she organized the first women's temperance association, the Daughters of Temperance. Anthony lectured on women's rights and abolition, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. They secured the first laws in the New York State Legislature guaranteeing women rights over their children and control of property and wages.

Early in the Civil War, Anthony worked with abolitionists and organized the Women's Loyal National League, which argued for emancipation. After the War, she unsuccessfully challenged the 14th Amendment to allow women and African-Americans the right to vote.

In 1869, Ms. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed one of several women's suffrage organizations. In 1890, the groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association, of which Anthony was president from 1892 to 1900. In 1872, Ms. Anthony led a group of women to the polls in Rochester to test their right to the franchise under the 14th Amendment. She was arrested and fined, but she refused to pay.

An early target of abuse and scorn, Susan B. Anthony eventually became a national heroine. With the issue of a dollar coin in 1979, she became the first woman to be depicted on United States currency. She spent most of her life in the Rochester area and died there in 1906.

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc.; www.encyclopedia.com/articles/00574.html

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Antoinette Brown Blackwell

1825 - 1921

The first woman ordained in the United States by a mainstream denomination, Antoinette Brown Blackwell overcame a lifetime of gender-based obstacles to have a distinguished career as a minister, a writer and a suffragist.

Born in Henrietta, Antoinette Brown began her public speaking career at age nine during services of the local Congregational Church. Following graduation from Oberlin College, her plans to continue her studies in theology were met with much social resistance. The faculty barred her from participating in classroom discussions and attending her graduation, and refused to grant her a degree. Years later, Oberlin finally awarded her honorary master's and doctoral degrees.

Armed with faith and fortitude, Brown preached whenever she had an opportunity, speaking for the abolitionist and temperance movements. At a time when public speaking by women was considered taboo, she was often shouted down by male preachers.

In 1853, Antoinette Brown was ordained a minister of the First Congregational Church in Wayne County and later became a Unitarian. After marrying Samuel C. Blackwell, she continued to write prolifically, while raising five daughters. She published eight books and was a pioneer in the women's suffrage movement. Rev. Blackwell preached her last sermon at age 90, and at 95, was finally able to vote when the Nineteenth Amendment was enacted.

Text sources:

www.greatwomen.org;

www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies; www.cc.oberlin.edu;

The Encyclopedia Americana - International Edition, Vol.4

Photo source: Oberlin College Archives





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Amelia Jenks Bloomer

1818 - 1894

Amelia Jenks Bloomer is probably best known for her dress-reform campaign for women. She frequently appeared in public wearing full-cut pantaloons, or "Turkish trousers," under a short skirt. She was ridiculed for her costume, which came to be called "bloomers."

But Amelia Jenks Bloomer did much more than campaign for dress reform. In 1849, she started publishing a newspaper for women called *The Lily: A Ladies Home Journal Devoted to Temperance and Literature*. In 1850, she introduced fellow temperance worker Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, initiating a collaboration that would last half a century. The paper soon became the voice for Stanton and other supporters of women's interests advocating for change in women's rights, and was used as a platform to campaign for ideas.

Ms. Bloomer published the newspaper from her home in Seneca Falls, where she also served as the deputy postmistress. *The Lily* is considered to be the first newspaper edited by a woman. Ms. Bloomer began a career as a speaker in 1852, which she continued after she moved to Iowa in 1855. In this work, she was recorded as a worker for women's rights and other social reforms.

Text source: Merriam Webster, Inc.; National Parks Service

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Inez Milholland Boissevain

1886 - 1916

Inez Milholland Boissevain was an icon of the New Woman in the early 1900s. Publicly recognized for her brilliance, she was raised by socially conscious parents and educated at Vassar, where she became active in the women's suffrage movement and as an advocate for the poor.

After her graduation in 1909, Ms. Boissevain stopped a campaign parade for President Taft when she began speaking through a megaphone from a window in a building the parade was passing. Hundreds of men broke ranks to see and hear her, thus beginning her reputation as one of the most powerful, persuasive and beautiful orators in the suffrage movement.

In the same year, Ms. Boissevain applied to Yale, Harvard and Columbia, only to be rejected on the basis of her sex. She eventually earned her law degree in 1912 at New York University and promptly became involved with the labor strikes of the Women's Garment Workers and the Triangle Shirtwaist factory struggle. She vigorously participated in a grand jury investigation into the conditions of Sing Sing Prison, speaking out for reform and opposing capital punishment.

On March 3, 1913, Ms. Boissevain led the women's suffrage demonstration in Washington, D.C. – on a white horse. Labeled the "American Joan of Arc," she rode at the front of the procession of 8,000 participants, wearing a flowing white cape. Ms. Boissevain carried a banner that proclaimed "Forward Out of Darkness, Leave Behind the Night, Forward Out of Error, Forward into Light," the eventual slogan of the National Woman's Party. The photograph of Ms. Boissevain during the parade became one of the most memorable images of the struggle for women's rights in America.

Inez Milholland Boissevain spent her life seeking justice, equality and civil rights for American women. On October 23, 1916, she spoke to 1,500 people at Blanchard Hall in Los Angeles, California. Standing at the podium, she wobbled and fell to the floor, gasping her famous last words, "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?"

Because of her work, and the persistence of tens of thousands of American suffragists, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ensures women's voting rights now and for future generations.



Text source: [Vassar College Encyclopedia](#)

Photo source: www.rememberinginez.com



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini

1850 - 1917

Frances Xavier Cabrini, also called Mother Cabrini, was the first American citizen to be canonized a saint in 1946. Known as the Patron Saint of Immigrants, her influence in New York and beyond is memorialized with schools, institutions, shrines and monuments dedicated in her honor.

Raised in Italy, she was captivated by the adventures of missionaries who traveled the world spreading the Word of God. Inspired by their stories, she took religious vows and added Xavier to her name to honor the Jesuit saint, Francis Xavier, the patron saint of missionary service.

Mother Cabrini and six of her sisters founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, spending years developing the Order, expanding their service throughout Italy.

At the suggestion of Pope Leo XIII, she and her sisters left for New York City to serve the thousands of Italians who immigrated to the United States, mostly in great poverty. Not immediately supported, the Archbishop found the sisters housing at the convent of the Sisters of Charity. She later obtained the Archbishop's permission to start an orphanage, which was located in West Park, New York and known today as Saint Cabrini Home.

Mother Cabrini and the Sisters organized catechism and education classes for the Italian immigrants and provided for the needs of orphans. To support their efforts of building schools and orphanages, she begged in New York's slums, found people to donate money, time and labor, and went on to establish dozens of institutions and health care facilities.

New York City became the site of the first of Mother Cabrini's Columbus Hospitals, intended for Italian immigrants but opened to all nationalities. For the next 28 years, she traveled tirelessly, setting up schools, hospitals, orphanages and novitiates in several U.S. cities, as well as in countries throughout Latin America and Europe.

In 1909, Mother Cabrini was naturalized as a United States citizen, with numerous tributes and honors ascribed to her work, including The Cabrini Mission Foundation and Mother Cabrini Park in Brooklyn. In 1996, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Text sources:

<https://cabrinishrinenyc.org/about-st-cabrini/>

<https://time.com/4380994/frances-cabrini-first-american-saint/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Xavier_Cabrini

Photo source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Frances-Xavier-Cabrini>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Mary Wiltsie Fuller

1862 - 1943

Mary Wiltsie Fuller, a progressive activist for women's rights, established Wiawaka, an Adirondack retreat for women. The daughter of a Troy industrialist, Ms. Fuller became aware of the need for respite for the working women in shirt-collar factories, mills and laundries of Troy and Cohoes. Vacations and recreation were beyond the means of these hard-working women. When it officially opened in 1903, Wiawaka (Indian name for the "Great Spirit of Women"), could accommodate up to 38 women for a weekly rate for room and board of \$3.50.

Through her association with the Girls Friendly Society of the Episcopal Church, Ms. Fuller was able to elicit fellow sponsors as well as other influential friends from Saratoga and surrounding areas for help. She approached Katrina Trask (Yaddo - Saratoga) about helping to find a location for her retreat for the women. Ms. Trask was civic-minded and leased to Ms. Fuller land located on the southeastern shore of Lake George. The following year, Ms. Trask sold the property to Ms. Fuller for one dollar and a bouquet of flowers.

A group of about 50 friends helped Ms. Fuller raise money for renovations, and contributed canned goods and vegetables for the kitchen and wood for the fireplaces. Wiawaka is one of the oldest and longest continuously operated non-profit retreats for women in the United States of America today.

Mary Wiltsie Fuller lived and worked at Wiawaka until her death in Glens Falls in 1943.

Text source: Wiawaka archives

Photo source: The Lake George Mirror





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Matilda Joselyn Gage

1826 - 1898

A noted speaker and writer on women's suffrage, Ms. Gage worked her entire life for the liberation of women and became one of the most influential women in the suffrage movement. Ms. Gage, along with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was a founding member of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and served in various offices of that organization (1869-1889). She helped organize the Virginia and New York State suffrage associations, and was an officer in the New York association for 20 years. From 1878 to 1881, she published the *National Citizen and Ballot Box*, the official newspaper of the NWSA.

An only child, Ms. Gage was raised in an antislavery household. Her home, like that of her parents, was used as a station on the Underground Railroad. A committed abolitionist, Ms. Gage continued to support the Underground Railroad and became interested in the women's suffrage movement. Her life's work would become the struggle for the complete liberation of women.

Ms. Gage believed that the rights of all people were intertwined. Just as she had fought slavery and spoke out for women's rights, she also championed Indian rights. During the 1870s, Ms. Gage spoke out against the treatment of Native Americans. She was adopted into the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk Nation and given the name Ka-ron-ien-ha-wi (Sky Carrier). Inspired by the Six Nation Iroquois Confederacy's form of government, where "the power between the sexes was nearly equal," this indigenous practice of women's rights became her vision.

Ms. Gage was well-educated and a prolific writer. She corresponded with numerous newspapers, reporting on developments in the women's suffrage movement. She co-edited with Stanton and Anthony the first three volumes of the six-volume *The History of Woman Suffrage* (1881-1887). She also authored the influential pamphlets "Woman as Inventor" (1870), "Woman's Rights Catechism" (1871), and "Who Planned the Tennessee Campaign of 1862?" (1880).

"Until liberty is attained—the broadest, the deepest, the highest liberty for all—not one set alone, one clique alone, but for men and women, black and white, Irish, Germans, Americans, and Negroes, there can be no permanent peace." Gage spoke these words during the Civil War, and they characterize her lifelong commitment to the struggle of freedom of all people.

Text source: *The Matilda Joselyn Gage Foundation*

Photo source: www.nyhistory.com





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Clara Hale

1905 - 1992

Clara Hale, best known as "Mother Hale," was a prominent philanthropist, social activist and child care worker who founded Hale House in New York City and created a sanctuary for drug-addicted and AIDS-infected infants and their mothers.

As a young widow raising three children in New York City, Hale began caring for the babies and small children of full-time maids, unwed mothers and other women who could not or would not care for them. By 1940, she had become an official foster parent, and over the next 28 years her apartment became home to more than 40 children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. In 1970, at the age of 65, Hale took in the child of a drug-addicted woman so the woman could seek treatment. Word quickly spread, and within six months, Hale, with financial support from her children, had taken in 22 drug-addicted babies - and Hale House had been created.

Mother Hale established the foundation for the Hale House Center for the Promotion of Human Potential. She expanded it to care for mothers and children infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS.

Text source: *Prominent Women of the 20th Century, Peggy Saari*

Photo source: *The Hale House*





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Mary Shotwell Ingraham

1887 - 1981

Brooklyn-born Mary Shotwell Ingraham founded the United Service Organizations (USO), which serves the social, recreational, spiritual, educational and entertainment needs of the men and women in the armed forces.

For her USO work, Ms. Ingraham was the first woman to receive the prestigious Medal for Merit. Bestowed upon her in 1946 by President Harry S. Truman, this award not only recognized her service to the country, but also her service on a committee of the U.S. War Department that select the first women for officers' training in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps.

A 1908 Vassar College graduate, Ingraham was president of the Brooklyn YWCA from 1922 to 1939. She was then promoted to president of the national board of the YWCA, on which she served for the next five years. Ingraham also served for 30 years, from 1938 to 1968, as an unsalaried member of the New York City Board of Higher Education. While a board member, she headed a committee that helped establish the City University of New York in 1961. Ingraham was also the proud mother of Mary Ingraham Bunting, the first woman to serve on the Atomic Energy Commission.

Text sources:

The Book of Women's Firsts: Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women, by Phyllis Read & Bernard L. Witlieb;

Current Biography, Vassar College

Photo source: Alumnae and Alumni Vassar College





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Rosalie Jones

1883 - 1978

Rosalie Gardiner Jones, a wealthy Oyster Bay socialite, made a statement during her life, not because of her resources, but because of her advocacy and resiliency. Born in 1883, Ms. Jones attended Adelphi College, then a women's school in Brooklyn, and was graduated from Brooklyn Law School. She also received degrees from Washington College of Law, George Washington University, and American University.

Ms. Jones was later known as "General Jones" due to her work within the suffrage movement. Despite her privileged upbringing, Ms. Jones first participated in a New York City outdoor suffrage demonstration in 1911 at the age of 28. This was considered radical at the time, as the mainstream suffrage movement consisted of parlor meetings and conventions. President of the Nassau County branch of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association from 1912-1913, Ms. Jones gained notoriety by organizing a pilgrimage from New York City in 1912 to present petitions to the new governor and gain publicity for the cause. Hiking in fog, rain, mud and snow for the 140-mile trek, General Jones was joined by suffragists from across New York State.

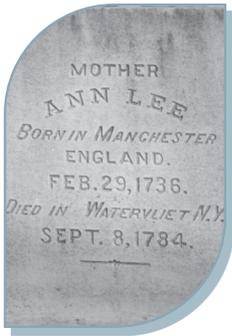
Later, in March 1913, General Jones organized another pilgrimage from Newark, New Jersey to Washington D.C., arriving on the eve of President Wilson's inauguration, where she and her fellow suffragettes also participated in the famous "March on Washington" suffrage parade. While New York voters had already responded to General Jones' efforts by amending the State Constitution on November 6, 1917, Congress passed the 19th Amendment banning voting discrimination based on sex on June 4, 1919. The amendment was ratified by the states on August 18, 1920.

Ms. Jones was Nassau County president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1912 and 1913, and published *The American Standard of Living and World Cooperation* in 1923. She spent her final years in Brooklyn, where she died in 1978.

Text source: www.newsday.com, Huntington Historical Society

Photo source: Suffolk County Historical Society and Harris & Ewing, Washington D.C.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Ann Lee

1736 - 1784

Ann Lee is considered the first spiritual leader of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, or "Shakers" as they are commonly known. She and her followers established the first Shaker settlement in America, sailing from England in a ship called the *Mariah*. They managed to arrive safely in New York, and settled between the Hudson and Mohawk rivers in what is now known as the Town of Colonie.

The Shakers were a celibate, Christian community that believed in separation from the outside world, equality of the sexes, common ownership of property and devotion to industry. Ann's status as a prophet and leader was vehemently denounced by most. She aroused intense opposition and was even accused of spying for the British.

The Shakers advocated pacifism, and Mother Ann Lee was jailed as a traitor during the Revolutionary War for publicly proclaiming her views as a conscientious objector. Ann Lee and her immediate entourage were unbowed in their zealous commitment. However, in the end, she was forced to move from one friend's home to another in constant fear for her life. She died in 1784, worn out by her adversaries.

Text sources:

Davies, Philip John. "Mother of the Shakers." *Contemporary Review*, Feb. 2001;
Gill, Gillian. "American Revolutionary." *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 July 2001.

Photo source: New York State Senate Media Services





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Audre Lorde

1934 - 1992

Audre Lorde was a leading African-American poet and essayist who gave voice to issues of race, gender and sexuality. As a poet, she is best known for technical mastery and emotional expression, as well as expressing anger and outrage at civil and social injustices she observed throughout her life.

A self-described black, lesbian, mother, warrior and poet, her poems and prose largely deal with issues related to civil rights, feminism, lesbianism, illness and disability, and the exploration of black female identity.

She was born in New York City to West Indian immigrant parents. While still in high school, she published a poem in *Seventeen* magazine. She earned her BA from Hunter College and MLS from Columbia University. She was a librarian in the New York public schools throughout much of the 1960s and married a white attorney, Edward Ashley Rollins, in 1962; she bore two children before divorcing in 1970.

Her first volume of poetry, *First Cities*, was published in 1968. That year she left her job as head librarian and began teaching as poet-in-residence at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, witnessing first-hand the deep racial tension in the South. She met her long-time partner, Frances Clayton; the two would remain together for 17 years.

Lorde went on to teach in the City University of New York system and at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She published a succession of works, which began to reach a larger audience. *The Black Unicorn* (1978) explored her African heritage and is considered by critics to be one of her greatest works.

Perhaps she is best remembered for *The Cancer Journals* (1980), in which she documents her own struggle with breast cancer and the possibility of death. She felt isolated by the cancer diagnosis because all of the support models focused on white, heterosexual women. She refused to be victimized by the disease. She received numerous literary rewards including an American Book Award for *A Burst of Light* in 1989.

Audre Lorde battled cancer for more than a decade and spent her last few years living in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Around this time, she took an African name, Gamba Adisa, meaning "she who makes her meaning clear."

Text sources: <https://www.biography.com/scholar/audre-lorde>
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/audre-lorde>

Photo source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/writer-radical-feminist-womanist-lesbian-and-civil-rights-news-photo/542053662?adppopup=true>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Lucretia Mott

1793 - 1880

Educated at a Quaker boarding school near Poughkeepsie, Lucretia Coffin Mott became a teacher and was distressed to find that experienced women teachers were paid less than half as much as their male counterparts.

She was soon traveling around the country lecturing on religion, temperance, the abolition of slavery, women's rights and peace. With Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she called a convention of women in Seneca Falls in 1848, from which was issued a "Declaration of Sentiments" that demanded legal equality for women. In 1852, she presided over a women's rights convention in Syracuse.

She worked to secure educational opportunities and suffrage for women and African-Americans. She and her husband, James Mott, opened their home to runaway slaves via the Underground Railroad after the Fugitive Slave Law was adopted in 1850.

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Antonia Pantoja, Ph.D.

1922 - 2002

Antonia Pantoja, Ph.D., was an educator, social worker, feminist and civil rights activist. She was the founder of *ASPIRA*, the Puerto Rican Forum, and *Producir*. Dr. Pantoja is the first Puerto Rican woman to receive the American Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Born in Puerto Rico, she moved to New York City in 1944. Like many Puerto Ricans emigrating to the United States during World War II, she found a job as a welder in a factory. With a profound interest in education, she applied to and won a scholarship to Hunter College, and eventually earned her Ph.D. in Social Work.

In 1957, Dr. Pantoja founded the Puerto Rican Forum, which served as an incubator for other organizations and programs that promoted economic self-sufficiency. In 1961, she founded *ASPIRA* (Spanish for aspire), a non-profit that promotes positive self-image, commitment to community, and education. *ASPIRA* now has offices in six states and Puerto Rico, and its headquarters, the *ASPIRA* Association, is in Washington, D.C. It has provided approximately 50,000 Latino students with career and college counseling, financial aid and other assistance, and is today one of the largest nonprofit agencies in the Latino community.

In 1964, Dr. Pantoja shifted her emphasis from self-help programs to the reformation of the educational system. In 1970, she established the Universidad Boricua, which is now known as Boricua College and the Puerto Rican Research and Resource Center in Washington, D.C. She joined the faculty of the San Diego State University's School of Social Work in 1978, where she became the Director of the Undergraduate Program in Social Work. She went on to co-found the Graduate School for Community Development, a private freestanding educational institution.

In 1972, *ASPIRA* of New York, under the direction of Dr. Mario Anglada, and with the support of Dr. Pantoja, filed a civil rights lawsuit demanding that New York City provide classroom instruction in transitional Spanish for Latino students.

Dr. Pantoja received numerous awards and recognitions including The Hispanic Heritage Award and The Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York State Board of Regents, and was Inducted into the Hunter College Hall of Fame, to name a few. She published her autobiography in 2002, *Memoir of a Visionary: Antonia Pantoja*, where she alluded to being a lesbian and discussed her decision not to go public before then with her sexual orientation. Dr. Pantoja also authored numerous papers and other written work.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Mabel Ping-Hua Lee

1896 - 1966

Mabel Ping-Hua Lee was the first Asian American woman of Chinese descent in the United States to earn a Doctorate in Economics.

Ms. Lee was born in China and raised in New York City. She was one of the few Chinese women who lived in the United States in the early 20th century due to strict laws passed by Congress.

A feminist pioneer, Ms. Lee fought for the rights of women and the Chinese community. In 1912, at the age of 16 and riding on horseback, she participated in the New York City women's suffrage parade.

Ms. Lee attended Barnard College while also participating in conversations about women's rights in both the U.S. and China.

In 1915, Ms. Lee was invited by the Women's Political Union to give a presentation. Her speech, "The Submerged Half," urged the Chinese community to promote girls' education and women's civic participation.

Unable to vote, Ms. Lee vowed to become a feminist pioneer by entering a Ph.D. program in Columbia University's Department of Political Science, Science, and Philosophy, earning her doctoral degree in Economics in 1921.

Following the eventual passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, she was still unable to vote due to her status as a Chinese immigrant and the harsh discriminatory immigration laws of the time.

After the passing of her father, Ms. Lee took over the administration of his mission, which later became the First Chinese Baptist Church in New York. She continued to work with the Chinatown community until her death in 1965.

In 2018, the United States Congress approved legislation to designate the Chinatown Post Office as the "Mabel Lee Memorial Post Office."

The role of Chinese suffragists in the United States played a vital role in the struggle as they fought for equality of sex and race; they taught white suffrage leaders about the global scope of the fight for women's rights as they advocated both here and in the new Chinese Republic.

Text sources:

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mabel-ping-hua-lee>

<https://www.thelodownny.com/leslog/2018/12/dedication-for-chinatowns-mabel-lee-post-office-takes-place-this-morning.html>

Photo source: <https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2020/05/05/19th-amendment-at-100-mabel-ping-hua-lee/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformer

Susan Wu Rathbone
(1921 – 2019)

Susan Wu Rathbone, also known as Wu Shih-san and Auntie Wu, was a passionate and beloved community leader in New York City. She has been referred to as "Flushing's most influential Chinese activist."

Ms. Rathbone was born in 1921 in Hefei, China. She was a schoolteacher in Chongqing before moving to the U.S. with her husband, Frank Rathbone, an American soldier she met during WWII in 1945, becoming the first Chinese war bride in 1946. The couple lived in Jamaica before settling in Flushing, where her positive impact on the community was felt for decades.

As Founder of Chinese Immigrants Service, Ms. Rathbone used her home phone number as Auntie Wu's Hotline. The hotline was desperately needed; it immediately helped Chinese immigrants cope with their new lives in the U.S. by providing employment assistance, marriage counseling, English lessons, and general information on how to navigate American laws and culture.

"After working in this community for such a long time, people feel they can trust me," she said in a 1993 interview. "They treat me like their mother or sister." Often, she was forced to disconnect her phone after midnight so that she could rest.

As Founder of the Chinese American Women's Association, she was a vocal supporter of battered women. She had immense influence among Chinese senior citizens, many of whom she had helped on Auntie Wu's Hotline. Something of a local celebrity, people stood up when she entered a room to show their respect.

Ms. Rathbone also started *Women's Voice*, a quarterly bilingual magazine that provided a space for women to reveal their thoughts and share their experiences.

When asked what her favorite saying was, Ms. Rathbone responded, "If you want to be happy, you have to make other people happy first."

Text sources:

<https://www.newspapers.com/article/daily-news-susan-wu-rathbone-chairwoman/42888412/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Wu_Rathbone

<https://citylimits.org/2000/06/01/lius-ends/>

Photo source: <https://www.newspapers.com/article/daily-news-dropout-has-degree-at-62ja/42888720/>





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Sylvia Ray Rivera

1951 - 2002

Sylvia Ray Rivera was a tireless advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, ethnic minorities, and the homeless. One of the first transgender activists, Sylvia was a trailblazer whose exceptional willingness to stand up for marginalized communities is felt and remembered throughout New York State.

Of Puerto Rican and Venezuelan descent, Sylvia was born and raised in New York City. Abandoned by her father, she became an orphan after her mother committed suicide. Her grandmother adopted her, but disapproved of her effeminate behavior. Bullied at home and in school, Sylvia ran away at age 11. Living on the streets and working as a prostitute, she found belonging in an eclectic mix of sex workers, drag queens, and members of the gay community. Through these experiences, she co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), a group dedicated to helping homeless drag queens and trans women of color.

During the Civil Rights Movement, Sylvia was present at the Stonewall Inn Riots when gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, drag queens, and trans people rose up against what began as a routine raid. Her work that followed, as a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, promoted city-wide gay rights and anti-discrimination legislation.

Sylvia was also an active member of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of New York. She ministered through the Church's food pantry. She remained a passionate advocate for LGBTQ youth, and MCC New York's shelter is now called "Sylvia's Place" in her honor.

Established in 2002, The Sylvia Rivera Law Project is dedicated to "guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination or violence."

In 2005, the corner of Christopher and Hudson streets was renamed "Sylvia Rivera Way." This intersection in Greenwich Village is the neighborhood where she began organizing and is only two blocks away from Stonewall Inn.

Sylvia never wanted to be labeled, other than as a human being who deserved equal human rights. She fought for inclusion until the very end. Sylvia passed away after fighting cancer in February 2002.

Text sources:

<https://www.bese.com/the-crusade-of-transgender-activist-sylvia-rivera/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sylvia_Rivera

Photo source: Val Shaff (<http://valerieshaff.com/about/>)





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1815 - 1902

Born in Johnstown, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was educated at the Johnstown Academy and at Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton became interested in the abolitionist cause, and spoke frequently on the subject of women's rights. In 1848, she circulated petitions that convinced the New York State Legislature to pass a bill granting property rights to married women.

In 1848, she and Lucretia Mott convened a women's rights convention in Seneca Falls and drafted the "Declaration of Sentiments," which called for equal rights for women. An effective writer and orator, she worked closely with Susan B. Anthony to campaign across the country for women's suffrage.

In 1854, Ms. Stanton received an unprecedented invitation to address the New York State Legislature, and her speech resulted in new legislation that granted women the rights to their wages and to equal guardianship of their children. She helped organize the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869, and in 1878 she drafted a federal suffrage amendment that was introduced repeatedly in Congress. The amendment, in substantially the same language, was finally adopted in 1919.

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Mary Burnett Talbert

1886 - 1923

At a time when many women, especially African-American women, were struggling against inequality, Mary Talbert was an eloquent voice for justice.

Born in Ohio after the Civil War, Ms. Talbert was witness to the development of Jim Crow laws and the horrors of lynch mobs. She experienced the prejudices of a society that viewed black people and women in particular as inferiors.

Ms. Talbert overcame those social obstacles and earned a Bachelor's degree from Oberlin College. In 1891, she moved to Buffalo, New York and became a writer, lecturer and organizer on behalf of women and African-Americans.

Ms. Talbert's long leadership of women's clubs helped to develop black female organizations and leaders in communities around New York and the United States. Women's clubs provided a forum for African-American women's voices at a time when they had restricted opportunities in public and civic life. In both black and white communities, women's clubs fostered female leadership.

One of the most sought-after lecturers in the world, Ms. Talbert went on both national and international speaking tours. Along with W.E.B. Dubois, she was a founder of the Niagara Movement and later helped form Buffalo's first NAACP chapter.

Buffalo's 150-year-old Michigan Avenue Baptist Church, to which the Talbert family belonged, has been named to the United States National Register of Historic Places. Many prominent African-Americans worshipped or spoke there. The Church also had a landmark role in abolitionist activities. In 1998, a marker honoring Mary Talbert, who served as the Church's treasurer, was installed in front of the Church by the New York State Governor's Commission Honoring the Achievements of Women.

Ms. Talbert was a leading voice for women's suffrage and urged women of all races to unify against injustice.

Text source:

The African-American Experience in New York, Black History Month Exhibit

Photo source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Burnett_Talbert





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Social Reformers

Kateri Tekakwitha

1656 - 1680

Born near the town of Auriesville, Kateri Tekakwitha was the daughter of a Mohawk warrior. Her first name is Mohawk for Catherine, and Tekakwitha means "she who cuts the way before her." Orphaned at four years old and troubled by poor health in childhood, she was left pockmarked and nearly blind from smallpox. As a teenager she converted to Catholicism and was baptized at age 20, incurring wrath and hostility from others in her tribe. She moved to a Catholic settlement in Canada and lived a life devoted to prayer and care of the sick and aged.

Kateri was known for her ministrations on behalf of her people and for her physical sacrifice, a practice credited with bringing her in perfect union with God in prayer. She taught others the lesson of the cross and had an innate kindness that made her a memorable presence.

Kateri, known as the "Lily of the Mohawks," is credited with inspiring the establishment of Native American ministries throughout the United States and Canada. Upon her death on April 7, 1680, at the young age of 24, the pockmarks from childhood smallpox miraculously disappeared. Her grave and nearby monument at Caughnawaga are considered shrines by believers and many pilgrims visit each year. She was declared venerable and beatified by the Catholic Church, and she was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 21, 2012.

Text sources: www.catholic.org/saints/saints/kateritekakwitha.html;
Marquardt, Deborah. "Hour Four Artists Put Finishing Touches on God's Creation." *U.S. Catholic*, Aug 93, vol58, Issue 8, p14.;
Torrens, James S. "American and Catholic." *America*, May 11, 1996;
Hutchinson's Biography Database "Kateri Tekakwitha and the Miracle of Prayer." *Indian Country Today (Lakota Times)*, 5/17/00.





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Sojourner Truth

1797 - 1883

Sojourner Truth was born a slave in Ulster County and was given the name Isabella. One of 13 children born to slave parents, she spoke only Dutch. When she was sold at age 11, she learned to speak English but suffered through much cruel treatment. She was sold many times and suffered hardships under slavery. Forced to submit to the will of her third master, John Dumont, Isabella married an older slave named Thomas. They had five children together and stayed on the Dumont farm until a few months before the State of New York ended slavery.

After gaining her freedom with the New York Emancipation Act of 1827, she worked as a servant in New York City and became active as an evangelist. She claimed that she conversed with God, and in 1843 she changed her name to Sojourner Truth and traveled as a speaker on the topics of the abolitionist cause and women's rights.

With her deep voice and simple message of God's mystical love, Truth was an effective preacher despite her illiteracy. She rivaled in eloquence the famed Frederick Douglass, with whom she frequently shared the platform. She achieved national fame, and President Abraham Lincoln received her in the White House in 1864.

Text source: Merriam-Webster, Inc., lkwpl.org/wihohio.trut-soj.htm

Photo source: The National Women's Hall of Fame





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Harriet Tubman

c.1820 - 1913

Born a slave on a plantation in Maryland, Harriet Tubman fled in 1849 after hearing rumors that she was about to be sold. She married John Tubman at age 24, and told him that she wanted to escape to the North. He told her that he would not let her leave, but Harriet did escape, leaving behind her husband, her parents and her sisters. After her own escape, she assisted about 300 fugitive slaves over the next decade along the "Underground Railroad" to Canada.

She became the railroad's most famous conductor, and was known as the "Moses of her people." She settled on a farm in Auburn in approximately 1858, and served in the Union forces as a spy, nurse and laundress during the Civil War. After the war, she began caring for orphans and old people at her Auburn farm, forming the Harriet Tubman Home for Indigent Aged Negroes. Harriet died in her home in 1913, at the age of 93.

Today, the Harriet Tubman Center (HTC) continues the kind of work she had begun many years ago. The Center provides a safe passage from violence for women and children, and helps them achieve their own freedom, just as Harriet helped so many people achieve freedom.

Text sources:

Merriam-Webster, Inc.;

www.harriettubman.org/aboutharriet.htm

Photo source: Wikimedia Commons





Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

Social Reformers

Victoria Woodhull

1838 - 1927

Victoria Woodhull was the first woman to own a brokerage firm on Wall Street, the first woman to start a weekly newspaper, and was a passionate and vocal activist for women's rights and labor reform. She became the first woman to run for President of the United States, choosing Frederick Douglass as her running mate.

Born into poverty in rural Ohio, she was married at 15 years old to a 28-year-old man. She was required to work outside the home and obtained several jobs, including cigar store clerk, seamstress, spiritual medium and stage actress. Following her divorce, she began her association with the Free Love Movement, which sought to erase the stigma of divorce and make it easier for women to escape abusive marriages.

Ms. Woodhull resettled in New York and married a Civil War veteran. She became acquainted with Cornelius Vanderbilt who gave her tips on how to acquire funds, which led to her and her sister opening the brokerage firm of Woodhull, Claflin, and Company, making them the first women to operate a brokerage firm on Wall Street.

Using funds from the brokerage, they began publishing *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, a newspaper that promoted the Free Love Movement, women's suffrage, and political reform. Her true passion was to help women achieve financial and sexual freedom.

Ms. Woodhull was the first woman to directly address a congressional committee in support of the Nineteenth Amendment to fully guarantee women's voting rights.

Ms. Woodhull mounted a presidential campaign against Ulysses S. Grant after being nominated by the Equal Rights Party. Frederick Douglass was nominated as her running mate, although he never formally accepted the nomination. Her platform included universal gender and racial equality, civil service and tax reform, and opposition to land grants given to railroads and other corporations.

Even though she had not yet reached the Constitutionally-mandated age of 35 to serve as President, Ms. Woodhull is still regarded as the first female presidential candidate.

Text sources:

<https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/victoria-woodhull/>

The Women Who Made New York, Julie Scelfo, 2016

Photo source: <https://ehistory.osu.edu/biographies/victoria-woodhull>

