

Women Making Impact: Celebrating Women's History Month

Early French feminist Simone de Beauvoir argued that women have a tough time seeing their own subjugation and therefore lack a “concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit.” She said that unlike other oppressed groups there is no historical record of women’s shared cultures, traditions, or oppression because they have been written out of history. We are here to change that.

Women have been making great strides and making impacts around the world to gain a respectable place in society. These women, past and present, deserve to be recognized, to have their histories recorded.

Thanks to trailblazers of the past, American women today can vote, hold office, and build careers that can be equally respected as the men. However, there are still steps that need to be taken for women to be considered equal in all aspects. These women today are fighting for equal pay, equal representation, and the collapse of degrading social standards.

Important Historical Milestones:

Patriarchy: First Used in 1561, it meant a Christian Church. In 1626 it was used to refer to social systems and governments in which the father or a male are in charge. Now, it is a pejorative term that means the dominance of men in powerful situations that tend to exclude women.

Feminism: First used in 1841 and meant feminine quality or character. Now, it refers to the advocacy of equality of the sexes and the feminist civil rights movement.

Suffragette: This word has had many meanings and was first recorded in religious definitions, but in 1906 it was coined to mean a woman who advocates or campaigns for women’s rights to vote. By 1910 it also came to mean a woman who is strong-willed and assertive and was used derogatively.

Matriarchy: Opposite of patriarchy, the word refers to social organization in which the mother or oldest female is the head of the family, and descent is followed through the female line. This has also come to mean governments, cultures, or communities are ruled by the woman.

Early Trailblazers



1744-1818

Abigail Adams saw the road that America was headed down and pleaded to her husband, John Adams, and to the Continental Congress, "Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."



1820-1906

An abolitionist and supporter of the women's suffrage movement, **Susan B. Anthony** was a pioneer for standing up for people's rights. She was one of the first people to advocate for equality amongst men and women by co-founding an association that advocated for women's rights such as voting.



1821-1910

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman to earn her medical degree in America after being admitted to an all-male institution. She later opened the New York Infirmary for Women and Children and ran it with her sister, Emily.

Pushing Past Voting

Women did not stop once they earned the right to vote. Instead, they followed Dr. Blackwell's steps and kept pushing forward, making names for themselves in areas that were only considered for men. The following women proved that they could handle a man's job and made a name for themselves deserving respect.



Sandra Day O'Connor was the first woman nominated to serve on the Supreme Court. She was sworn in by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 and served for 24 years, retiring in 2006.



A Cuban-American woman, **Geisha Williams** who made history in 2017 by becoming the first Latina CEO of a Fortune 500 company when she was promoted at Pacific Gas and Electric Company. She also served as a director for Edison Electric Institute and the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations.



Kentaji Brown Jackson was an American attorney, and jurist serving as a federal judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. She was nominated to the Supreme Court of the United States by President Joe Biden on February 25, 2022 and is the first African American woman to serve on the Supreme Court.



Jennifer King was hired as an assistant coach in the NFL in 2020 and became the first Black woman to hold the position. In 2021, she was promoted to full-time coach of the Washington Football Team, and is once again, the first Black woman to hold the post.



Shamsia Hassani is Afghanistan's first woman graffiti and street artist. Her murals in Kabul depict women as powerful, confident, and ambitious. She teaches at Kabul University and has created murals in over fifteen countries.

Breaking Down the Stigma

In the early 19th century and into the 20th century, women were institutionalized for hysteria often. As a result, women could not talk about their ambitions, depressions, anxieties or any other emotions without having fear of being labeled hysteric. Although hospitalizations do not happen like they used to, women are still labeled as over-emotional. These women are continuing to break down the stigma surrounding mental and physical health.



Princess Diana was a beloved royal icon, the “people’s princess.” Diana was a barrier breaker for the royal family because she was outspoken, dared to stray away from the typical Royals fashion, and was a breath of fresh air when it came to the charity work she did. She spoke of her struggle with bulimia in an interview with BBC, something that regular people, let alone a royal, wouldn’t think to do. She also geared up to trek across a landmine in Angola to bring attention to the issue.



Amber Scholl is influencing young women (and boys) around the world to be happy in their bodies and live out their dreams. Many refer to her as their “big-sister” due to the experiences and stories she shares on her YouTube channel. She often preaches about loving yourself to the fullest extent possible and not being afraid to show it.



Not just known for her athleticism and gold medals, **Simone Biles** is now known as an advocate for mental health after she pulled out of the Olympics in Tokyo due to her own mental health after dealing with the stresses of speaking out about sexual abuse happening in the organization. Her bravery to admit to the world the reason why she stepping down made her a role model for other women who are too scared to stand up and speak out.

Gaining Respect in the Political World

Politics was a world reserved only for men. However, women also have a voice worth hearing, strategies worth enacting, and visions worth fulfilling. The following women have proven exactly that and deserve to be recorded in history as the peacemakers they are.



Marcelina Bautista is a union leader, as well as the director and founder of Mexico’s Center for Support and Training of Domestic Workers (CACEH). Her initiative helps to educate and secure the futures of workers, employers and community members. She was awarded an international human-rights prize from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Germany in 2010.



A Liberian peace activist, **Leymah Gbowee** lead a nonviolent women’s movement, Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace that helped bring an end to the second Liberian Civil War in 2003. She also received the Nobel Peace Prize for her brave work.



Shirley Raines is hairdresser who founded the non-profit organization “Beauty 2 The Streetz” which provides the homeless of Skid Row, Los Angeles with free makeovers. With the arrival of the Covid 19 Pandemic, Raines and her team shifted towards protecting the homeless from the virus by handing out supplies such as masks and hand sanitizer.



Malala Yousafzai is the youngest person to win a Nobel Peace Prize. She is an activist for women’s rights to an education not only in Pakistan but all over the world. She stands for women empowerment, human rights, and gender equality. Yousafzai’s bravery and passion are helping create substantial changes in the world for girls. She has shown the world that you’re never too young to make your voice heard.