



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: SENATOR RITCHIE'S WEEKLY COLUMN

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\*\*\* WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH \*\*\*

During the month of March, we shine a spotlight on all that women have contributed to society throughout the years, and look toward the future as we continue to pave the way for new accomplishments. Women's' History Month originated as a national celebrating in 1981, when Congress passed a measure that declared one week during the month of March as 'Women's History Week.' It wasn't until 1987 that the entire month became designated as

‘Women’s History Month.’ This year, our nation will be celebrating the contributions of those who dedicate their lives to serving the public with the theme “Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government.”

As a member of New York State’s Legislative Women’s Caucus, I’m working alongside my colleagues to improve the participation of women in government and spearhead initiatives that improve the lives of women across our state. In addition, this year, we’re laying the groundwork for the celebration of the Women’s Suffrage Centennial in 2017. Next year will mark 100 years since women in our state won the right to vote, and in the months to come members of the Legislative Women’s Caucus will be working to plan programming to mark the milestone. Our state set the stage for the women’s rights movement with instrumental events, like the first Women’s Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, influential change makers, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and women who paved the way for others, like Oswego’s own Mary Edwards Walker, the only woman to ever receive the Medal of Honor.

And here in Central and Northern New York, I’m also working to support women and recognize them for their achievements through things like my Women of Distinction program, which honors local people for their contributions to our communities and the [Upstate Women’s Leadership Council](#), which is bringing women from throughout our region together for networking, mentoring and more. In the coming weeks, I’ll be announcing details of this year’s Women of Distinction program and calling for women from throughout Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Oswego Counties to be nominated for this special honor. In addition, planning is underway for another event hosted by the Upstate Women’s Leadership Council. For more information on both of these programs, I invite you to visit my website, [www.ritchie.nysenate.gov](http://www.ritchie.nysenate.gov).

Year after year, we're seeing more and more women becoming leaders and taking on new challenges. As we kick off Women's History Month, I hope you'll take a moment to join me in reflecting on—and recognizing—the contributions made by women who are making a difference here in our communities, and beyond.