

# Welcome to the New York State Senate Women of Distinction Exhibit

MARCH 2017

Dear Friends:

Women have been prominent in shaping our American history. To celebrate these women, and in recognition of Women's History Month, the New York State Senate developed the Historic Women of Distinction exhibit. Every March, we celebrate famous women in several disciplines whose contributions have earned them recognition as New York's Historic Women of Distinction.

The Women of Distinction exhibit features historic New York women, from suffragists to geneticists, labor organizers to entertainers, whose contributions are still felt today and who stand as an inspiration to the next generation of inventors, explorers and achievers. Some of the women in the display include Susan B. Anthony, Lucille Ball, "Grandma Moses" Robertson, Harriet Tubman and Emma Willard, among others - all with strong links to New York State.

Women's History Month is a time to reflect on the enormous contributions of great women from our past. The Women of Distinction exhibit highlights just a few of these extraordinary women and demonstrates the indelible mark that they have made on our great state.

Established in 1998, the Women of Distinction program was created to recognize the historic contribution of New York women who exemplify personal excellence, courage, selflessness, integrity and perseverance and serve as an example to all New Yorkers. The Senate's Historical Women of Distinction is an annual celebration that coincides with national Women's History Month, observed in March.

We hope you will take the time to enjoy our exhibit and marvel at the accomplishments of our fellow New Yorkers.



**Senator John J. Flanagan**  
Temporary President of the Senate  
Majority Coalition Leader



**Senator Jeffrey D. Klein**  
Independent Democratic Conference Leader  
Majority Coalition Leader



**Andrea Stewart-Cousins**  
Democratic Conference Leader

# LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**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 three new honorees for the year 2017: suffragist and legislator Ida B. Sammis (1865-1943) of Long Island; social reformer Inez Milholland Boissevain (1886-1916) of Poughkeepsie and the North Country; and lawyer and federal judge Constance Baker Motley (1921-2005) of New York City; 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 including: 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 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 non-traditional roles in society; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the induction of three new inductees into the New York State Senate’s Historical Women of Distinction 2017 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.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 2017 Inductees

Inez Milholland Boissevain • Constance Baker Motley • Ida B. Sammis

### Arts and Entertainment

Alice Austen  
Lucille Ball  
Margaret Bourke-White  
Julia de Burgos  
Gertrude Caroline Ederle  
Ella Fitzgerald  
Annette Joanne Funicello  
Althea Gibson  
Charlotte Pruyon Hyde

Emma Lazarus  
Shirley Muldowney  
Eve Rabin Queler  
Anna "Grandma Moses" Robertson  
Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman  
Barbara Stanwyck  
Maureen Stapleton  
Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney

### Education

Margaret Leech  
Anna Caroline Maxwell  
Winifred Edgerton Merrill

Ruth Nichols  
Emma Hart Willard

### Government and Law

Jane Bolin  
Bessie Allison Buchanan  
Shirley Chisholm  
Katharine Bement Davis  
Mary Donlon  
Rhoda Fox Graves  
Belva Lockwood

Sybil Ludington  
Olga A. Méndez  
Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis  
Charlotte Ray  
Eleanor Roosevelt  
Katherine Stoneman

### Heroes (9/11/01)

Kathy Mazza  
Yamel Merino  
Moira Smith

### Labor and Business

Leonora Marie (Kearney) Barry  
Louise Blanchard Bethune  
Kate Gleason  
Martha Matilda Harper  
Rose Knox  
Estee Lauder

Lady Deborah Moody  
Kate Mullany  
Norma Merrick Sklarek  
Mary "Mollie" Sneden  
Madam C. J. Walker



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Medicine and Health

Virginia Apgar  
Elizabeth Blackwell  
Mother Marianne Cope  
Dr. Elizabeth Gillette  
Susan E. Hall

Mary Putnam Jacobi  
Linda Richards  
Susan Smith McKinney Steward  
Lucy Hobbs Taylor  
Adah Belle Samuels Thoms

## Military

Mary Clarke  
Margaret Cochran Corbin  
Betsy Doyle

Juliane Gallina  
Dr. Mary Edwards Walker

## Science and Technology

Katharine Burr Blodgett  
Eileen M. Collins  
Charlotte Friend  
Winifred Goldring  
Grace Brewster Murray Hopper

Barbara McClintock  
Maria Mitchell  
Pan American Exposition — 1901  
Blanche Stuart “Betty” Scott

## Social Reformers

Susan B. Anthony  
Antoinette Brown Blackwell  
Amelia Jenks Bloomer  
Matilda Joslyn Gage  
Mary Wiltsie Fuller  
Clara Hale  
Mary Shotwell Ingraham

Rosalie Jones  
Ann Lee  
Lucretia Mott  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
Mary Burnett Talbert  
Kateri Tekakwitha  
Sojourner Truth  
Harriet Tubman

*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
**HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**



**2017 HISTORICAL INDUCTEES**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**

## 2017 INDUCTEE

### Inez Milholland Boissevain (1886–1916)



Inez Milholland Boissevain was an icon of the New Women 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, DC – 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 Women'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.



## 2017 INDUCTEE

### 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, 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, 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 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.





# 2017 INDUCTEE

## Ida B. Sammis (1865–1943)



Ida B. Sammis was the first woman elected to the New York State Legislature in 1918. By any standard, Mrs. Sammis' legislative record was extraordinary. The Long Island Assemblywoman was an industrious lawmaker who took her duties seriously and served with distinction.

Mrs. Sammis, a well-known suffragist and civic-minded widow, challenged the incumbent Assemblyman who was a member of her own party. In announcing her candidacy against Henry A. Murphy, she did so with reluctance and indicated she would defer to any able male candidate who would commit to the race. Her goal was not the personal acclaim that would come with the election, but instead the satisfaction she would derive from defeating Murphy, whom she characterized as a tool of the German brewers.

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, the opposite sex had broken into the lineup. It was New Year's Day, 1919 – just 12 short months since they became eligible to vote.

Mrs. Sammis introduced 15 bills and 10 were enacted. A broad expanse of subjects was covered and each represented a serious approach to a complex topic. 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 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 ran 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. It was landmark legislation and proved Ida had not forgotten the women of the state. Further, it clearly was an act of conscience, which did much for the forgotten and ill served.

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 Source: <https://books.google.com/books?id=lg4UAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA203&lpg=PA203&dq=ida+b.+sammis&source=bl&ots=VSXgdcXEI&sig=JxsHVVIsVfIyG59N6Wd00mrWsNY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjHISPyrsLSAhUPz2MKHYCsCjcQ6AEIMTAF#v=onepage&q=ida%20b.%20sammis&f=false>  
Assemblyman John J. Flanagan  
Photo Source: <http://www.newsday.com/long-island/li-life/spotlighting-women-in-long-island-s-past-1.4770215>



*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
**HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**



**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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.



## 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.





## Arts & Entertainment

### Margaret Bourke-White (1904—1971)



Margaret Bourke-White is best known for being a pioneer 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 permitted to work in combat zones) and the first female photographer for *Life* magazine, where her photograph appeared on the first cover. Her innovative and breath-taking photographs have earned her national recognition and a place in photography history.

Born in the Bronx, Ms. Bourke-White's interest in photography began as a child. After graduating high school, she attended several colleges and eventually graduated from Cornell University where she left behind a photographic study of the rural campus for the school's newspaper. A year later, she moved to Cleveland, Ohio where she started 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. Candice Bergen played her in the movie, "Gandhi".

In 1953, Ms. Bourke-White developed her first symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. Forced to slow her globetrotting career to fight impending paralysis, she wrote an autobiography, *Portrait of Myself*, from her home in Connecticut. The book later became a bestseller. After several operations, she succumbed to the disease in 1971. 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, which she received along with President Dwight Eisenhower. In 1997, Ms. Bourke-White was designated a Women's History Month Honoree by the National Women's History Project.



## 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.



## 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 US 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude_Ederle)

Photo Source: <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com>

<http://www.economist.com>



## 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.





## 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.





## 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 William 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 A.T.A. 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 US 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.

Photo source: [womenshistory.about.com](http://womenshistory.about.com)

Text source: [altheagibson.com](http://altheagibson.com)





## 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.



## 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 1880’s, 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.





## Arts & Entertainment

### Shirley Muldowney (1940—)



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.



## Arts & Entertainment

### Eve Rabin Queler (1936—)



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.



## 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.



## Arts & Entertainment

### Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman (“Nellie Bly”)

(c.1867—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, called *Nellie Bly’s Book: Around the World in Seventy-Two Days, 1890*.







## 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 Davis* (1937), the screwball comedy *Ball of Fire* (1942), 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.



## 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.



## 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 Witlieb and [www.cr.nps.gov](http://www.cr.nps.gov)

Photo source: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute

Photographer: Jan Stelecki

*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



**EDUCATION**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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 source: *The Book of Women's Firsts, Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women*, by Phyllis Read, Bernard Witlieb; Current Biography from Vassar College; and [thor.prohosting.com](http://thor.prohosting.com).

Photo source: Alumnae and Alumni Vassar College



## 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.htm>

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

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



## 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, 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."



## 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 the 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 sources: 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





## 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**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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.





## 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bessie_A._Buchanan)

Photo Source: Photo courtesy of the NYS Archives.





## 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 source: <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](http://www.npr.org/blogs/visibleman/2007/10/the_courage_of_shirley_chishol.html)





## 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.



## 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.



## 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 NYS 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.





## 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 Genessee 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.





## 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 Source: Encyclopedia Britannica; and [www.obrc.org/women/remarkable\\_women.htm](http://www.obrc.org/women/remarkable_women.htm), "In Search of Remarkable Women"

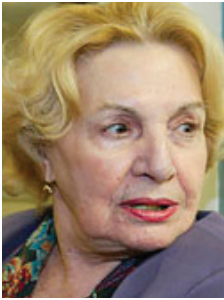
by Susan Howard

Photo Source: Putnam County Historian Richard Muscarella



## 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 Feb. 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.





## Government & Law

### Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis (1929—1994)



Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis was the wife of the 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, and First Lady of the United States during his presidency from 1961 until his assassination in 1963.

Born in Southhampton, New York, many of her early years were spent in New York City and Long Island. She received a formal education, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from The George Washington University. Following her graduation, she began her first job in the fall of 1951 as the “Inquiring Camera Girl” for the *Washington Times-Herald*. Among those she interviewed for her column was Richard M. Nixon. She also covered the first inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

During this time, Ms. Bouvier met John F. Kennedy, who was a Congressman and soon to be elected a Senator from Massachusetts. On September 12, 1953, they married and in January 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy 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 also participated in television and newspaper interviews. Privately, she supplied her husband with numerous 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 her plans to not only redecorate the family quarters of the White House but to historically restore the public rooms. She created a committee of advisors and began scouring government warehouses in search of displaced White House furnishings. To fund the project she helped create a White House Historical Association, an entity which was able to raise funds through the sale to the public of a book she conceived, *The White House: An Historic Guide*. She was also a strong supporter of the arts, inviting artists, writers, scientists, poets, and musicians to the White House to mingle with politicians, diplomats, and statesmen.

After President Kennedy’s death, Mrs. Kennedy began the work of creating the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum as a memorial to her husband.

In 1968, Jacqueline Kennedy married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. When Mr. Onassis died in 1975, she became a widow a second time. She then accepted a job as an editor at Viking Press and later moved to Doubleday as a senior editor. She enjoyed a successful career in publishing until her death on May 19, 1994. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis was laid to rest beside President Kennedy in Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington, D.C.

Throughout her life, Jacqueline Kennedy 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 pass through each day and enjoy its restored beauty, thanks to her efforts.

Jacqueline Kennedy captivated the nation and the rest of the world with her intelligence, beauty and grace. With a deep sense of devotion to her family and country, she dedicated herself to raising her children and to making the world a better place through art, literature, and a respect for history and public service.



## 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* 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 afterwards, 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.



## 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.





## 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**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**





## REMEMBERING 9-11 – HONORING OUR HEROES

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 "police-women" assumed the same duties as their male partners, including working patrols and carrying weapons.

Today, women police officers are slowly closing the gender gap, comprising 3 percent of the nation's law enforcement officers. There are 6,000 women members of the NYPD, the nation's largest police department.

### WOMEN IN FIREFIGHTING

The history of America'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. *(continued on next page)*





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, and she is now the FDNY's second highest-ranking woman.

Today, over 5,000 women hold career firefighting and fire officer's positions in the United States, and up to 40,000 women serve on volunteer squads.

## **WOMEN IN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

Emergency care as we know it today 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. Today, over 17,000 — or 26 percent — of certified EMTs are female.





## 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 — 3 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 leaves behind a husband, NYPD Officer Christopher Delosh.

## 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 recent Women of the Year ceremony.

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



## 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**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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/stlawrencecauw/barry.htm>

Photo Source: <http://digital.upenn.edu/women/eagle/congress>



## 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.





## 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.



## Labor & Business

### Martha Matilda Harper (1857—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.





## 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: Courtesy of Johnstown Public Library



## 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.



## 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."



## 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 laundresses, 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 Sylvius 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.





## 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 is now semi-retired serving as Chair of the AIA National Ethics Council. She conducts classes for the architectural building design and site licensing exams, and is a guest lecturer. In her honor, Howard University offers the Norma Merrick Sklarek Architectural Scholarship Award.





## 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.





## 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'Leia. 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.



*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
**HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**



**MEDICINE & HEALTH**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



# 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 Masters 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 Source: [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/changingthefaceofmedicine/physicians/biography\\_12.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/changingthefaceofmedicine/physicians/biography_12.html)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia\\_Apgar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Apgar)

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





## 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, travelled 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 source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marianne\\_Cope](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](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/de/Mother_Marianne_Cope_in_her_youth.jpg/250px-Mother_Marianne_Cope_in_her_youth.jpg)





## 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.





## 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 work 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."*





## 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.



## 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 source: Viner, Russell. "Politics, Power, and Pediatrics." *The Lancet*.  
January 16, 1999; Merriam-Webster, Inc.; [www.women.eb.women](http://www.women.eb.women)  
Photo source: 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, as well as in England where it was adopted by St. Thomas' Hospital, the institution founded by Florence Nightingale.

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.





## 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.

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](http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah.steward-susan-smith-mckinney-1847-1918)



## 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.



## 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 source: [www.library.vcu.edu/tml/speccoll/vnfame/thoms.html](http://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**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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 Corp (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.



## Military

### Margaret Cochran Corbin (1751—c.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, 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.



## 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 three hundred 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.





## Military

### Juliane Gallina (1970—)



A native of Pelham, New York, in Westchester County, Juliane Gallina was the first woman to be named brigade commander by the U.S. Naval Academy in 1991.

Established in 1845, the U.S. 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, Juliane 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, Juliane Gallina served as chief liaison between the midshipmen and academy officers. In addition to being the student leader of 4,300, Gallina was also the coxswain of the women's crew team and a member of the track and lacrosse teams while at the academy. After graduating from the Naval Academy, Juliane Gallina earned a master's degree in space systems operations and is currently a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy.



## 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](http://www.wtvh.com/promo/walker,WTVH Channel 5, Syracuse, NY).

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



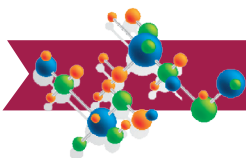
*Women of*  
**DISTINCTION**  
**HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**



**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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.

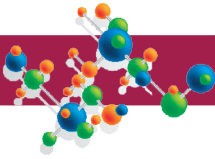
Dr. Blodgett's other experiments during World War II led to breakthroughs in the design of the airplane wing, and she designed a smoke screen that also saved lives during military campaigns.

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

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



## Science & Technology

### Eileen M. Collins (1956—)



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.

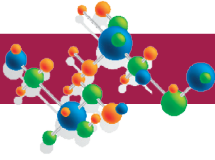
Ms. Collins, who has logged over 6,000 hours in 30 different types of aircraft, and who is a veteran of four space flights, has logged more than 872 hours in space.

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.

Text and photo source: National Aeronautics and Space Administration





## Science & Technology

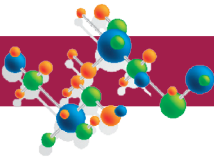
### Charlotte Friend (1921—1987)



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.



## 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.

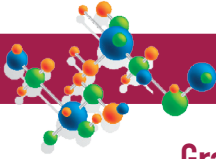
Born and raised in Kenwood, outside of Albany, New York, Ms. Goldring was an exceptional student, graduating Valedictorian of her class from one of the best high schools in Albany, the Milne School. Earning her A.B. with honors in 1909, and her A.M. in 1912, from Wellesley College, she became intensely 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.





## 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.

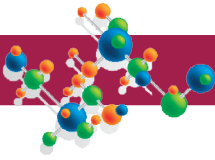
She joined the Naval service during World War II as a member of WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). Her naval assignment took her to Harvard University, where she did computer work and coined the term “bug” to refer to computer glitches. She served 43 years of service in the military,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







## Science & Technology

### Barbara McClintock (1902—1992)



Barbara McClintock, America's most distinguished cytogeneticist, was initially denied acceptance to Cornell University's Dept. 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.

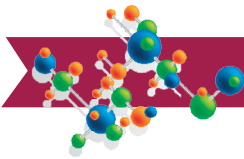
In the 1970s, new DNA research validated Dr. McClintock's theory. Her discovery has helped to explain, for example, how bacteria becomes resistant to certain antibiotics. Cancer researchers subsequently discovered human genes that may transform healthy cells into cancerous ones.

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 Source: 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

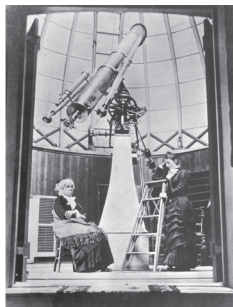
Photo Source: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Library and Archives





## 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."

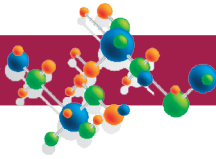
While continuing to work as a librarian, Ms. Mitchell received congratulatory letters from scientists, culminating in 1848 and 1850, when the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Association for the Advancement of Science, respectively, voted her their first female member. Ms. Mitchell was elected 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





## Science & Technology

### The 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo (1901)

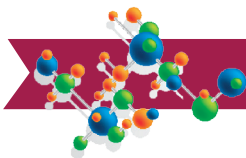


The 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo was part of a series of international expositions at which hundreds of exhibits displayed the greatest technological innovations and product designs of their time.

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.



## 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](http://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**



**SOCIAL REFORMERS**



*Sponsored by the*  
**New York State Senate**



## 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.

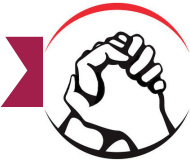
In 1869, Ms. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed one of several women's suffrage organizations. In 1890, the groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association, of which Anthony was president from 1892 to 1900. In 1872, Susan led a group of women to the polls in Rochester to 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 sources: Merriam-Webster, Inc.; [www.encyclopedia.com/articles/00574.html](http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/00574.html)

Photo source: The 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 Suffragist 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 source: [www.greatwomen.org](http://www.greatwomen.org); [www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies](http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/biographies); [www.cc.oberlin.edu](http://www.cc.oberlin.edu); The Encyclopedia Americana - International Edition, Vol.4

Photo source: Oberlin College Archives





## Social Reformers

### Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818—1894)



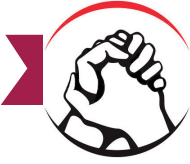
Amelia Jenks Bloomer is probably best known for her dress-reform campaign for women. She frequently appeared in public wearing full-cut pantaloons, or “Turkish trousers,” under a short skirt. She was ridiculed for her costume, which came to be called “bloomers.”

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.







## 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.



## Social Reformers

### Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826—1898)



A noted speaker and writer on woman'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 woman'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 1870's, Ms. Gage spoke out against the treatment of Native Americans. She was adopted in to 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 woman'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 life-long commitment to the struggle of freedom of all people.





## Social Reformers

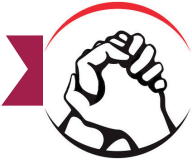
### Clara Hale (1905—1992)



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.



## 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 source: *The Book of Women's Firsts: Breakthrough Achievements of Almost 1,000 American Women*, by Phyllis Read & Bernard L. Witlieb; and *Current Biography*, Vassar College

Photo source: Alumnae and Alumni Vassar College



## 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 woman'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.

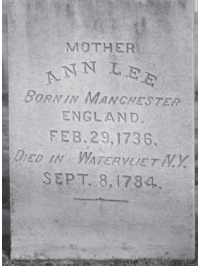
Later, in March of 1913, General Jones organized another pilgrimage from Newark, New Jersey to Washington D.C., arriving on the eve of President Wilson's inauguration, where she and her fellow suffragettes also participated in the famous “March on Washington” suffrage parade. While New York voters had 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.



## Social Reformers

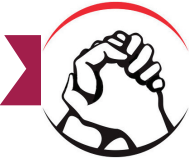
### Ann Lee (1736—1784)



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.



## 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.





## 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.







## Social Reformers

### Mary Burnett Talbert (1866—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.



## 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 10/21/2012.



## 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.





## 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 about 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.harrietubman.org/aboutharriet.htm](http://www.harrietubman.org/aboutharriet.htm)

Photo source: Wikimedia Commons

