



# March: Women's History Month!



**MARCH  
MADNESS**

The month of **March** marks the annually celebrated **Women's History Month** — an observance of the incredible accomplishments of women throughout history. But, why March? Let's take a look at how history got us here and what the month long holiday means to different people.

## CELEBRATING JULIETTE GORDON LOW



**Juliette Gordon Low** (October 31, 1860 – January 17, 1927) was the founder of [Girl Scouts of the USA](#). Inspired by the work of [Lord Baden-Powell](#), founder of Boy Scouts, she joined the Girl Guide movement in England, forming her own group of Girl Guides there in 1911. In 1912 she returned to the States, and the same year established the first U.S. Girl Guide troop in [Savannah, Georgia](#). In 1915, the United States' Girl Guides became known as the Girl Scouts, and Juliette Gordon Low was the first ever leader. She remained active until the time of her death. Her birthday, October 31, is celebrated each year by the Girl Scouts as "[Founder's Day](#)". In 1979, she was inducted into the [National Women's Hall of Fame](#). On May 29, 2012, the centennial anniversary of the Girl Scouts' founding was commemorated when Low was honored with the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#). [Camp Juliette Low](#) in [Cloudland, Georgia](#), bears the name of its founder. Her birthday, October 31, is commemorated by the Girl Scouts each year as "Founder's Day". She was also awarded two patents, a utility patent for a "Liquid Container for Use with Garbage Cans or the Like", Patent 1,124,925, and a design patent, D45234, for the trefoil Girl Scout Badge.



Juliette Gordon Low (center) standing with two Girl Scouts, Robertine McClendon (left) and Helen Ross (right)

In 1948 a postage stamp honoring Low, [Scott catalogue](#) number 974, was issued by the United States. Over 63 million were printed, making this a common issue. At the time the [Post Office](#) had a policy of not honoring civic organizations. It took a joint resolution of Congress, with the approval of President [Harry S Truman](#), to produce the stamp for her. (The [National Postal Museum](#) suggests that it may have helped that [Bess](#)

[Truman](#) was honorary president of the Girl Scouts.) Juliette Gordon Low's home in Savannah is visited by Girl Scouts from all over the world. In 1965, [her birthplace](#) was listed as a [National Historic Landmark](#). In 1999, the city of Savannah named its ferry service the *Savannah Belles Ferry* after five of Savannah's notable women, including Juliette Gordon Low.



In 2016 the first official Girl Scout trail honoring Juliette Gordon Low was created by a Girl Scout for her Gold Award project. The trail is located in Westwinds Metropark in [Holland, Ohio](#).

## CELEBRATING KIMBERLY Ng



**Kimberly J. Ng** is an American executive in [Major League Baseball](#). She is currently the general manager of the [Miami Marlins](#) and the highest-ranking female baseball executive. She is the first woman to serve as general manager of a team in the [Big Four leagues in North America](#) and the [first person of East Asian descent to serve as general manager](#) of an MLB team.

A graduate of the [University of Chicago](#), Ng played [college softball](#). She then worked her way up in the front office of several Major League Baseball teams and became a vice president of the league. She was named the Marlins' general manager in 2020.

### **Marlins general manager**

On November 13, 2020, Ng was hired as general manager of the [Miami Marlins](#). She became the first woman to become a general manager of a men's team in the history of major North American sports, as well as [the first female Asian-American and first East Asian-American general manager](#) in MLB history.



## CELEBRATING JENNIFER WELTER

### This athlete beat homelessness to become the NFL's First Female Coach

By [Jane Ridley](#), October 4, 2017



**Jennifer Welter** watches from the sidelines during the Arizona Cardinals' pre-season NFL game against the Kansas City Chiefs on Aug. 15, 2015. Jennifer Welter remembers the exact moment she felt truly accepted as the first female coach in the NFL. It was back in July 2015, and she was training a rookie player with the Arizona

Cardinals when the team's linebacker Lorenzo Alexander strolled by.

"I was working [with the rookie] on some specialty, but he couldn't resist asking the legend if there was anything he should do differently," Welter tells *The Post*.

"Lorenzo replied: 'You know what you need to do? You need to listen to the coach right there, because what she's telling you is exactly right.'"

It was the validation the now-39-year-old needed, setting the tone for her history-making stint coaching inside linebackers under the supervision of the Cardinals' head coach Bruce Arians.

"Lorenzo was very subtle, but he recognized me as the expert," says Welter.

Two years on, the 5-foot-2, 130-pound trailblazer has written her first book: "[Play Big: Lessons in Being Limitless From the First Woman To Coach in the NFL](#)" (Seal Press, out now). Part memoir, part motivational guide, it reveals how Welter helped break the glass ceiling for sportswomen in the über-male-dominated field.



## CELEBRATING JANET L. YELLEN



**Janet Louise Yellen** is an American [economist](#) serving as the [United States secretary of the treasury](#) since January 26, 2021. A member of the [Democratic Party](#), she previously served as the 15th [chair of the Federal Reserve](#) from 2014 to 2018. She is the first woman to hold either role. She is also a [professor emerita](#) at [Haas School of Business](#) at the [University of California, Berkeley](#), and formerly a distinguished fellow in residence at the [Brookings Institution](#). On November 30, 2020, President [Joe Biden](#) announced he would nominate Yellen to serve as [secretary of the Treasury](#) in his [Cabinet](#). The [Senate Finance Committee](#) unanimously

approved Yellen's confirmation on January 22, 2021. The U.S. Senate confirmed her nomination with a vote of 84–15 (with one [abstention](#)) on January 25, 2021. With her swearing-in by [Vice President Kamala Harris](#) the next day, Secretary Yellen became the first woman to serve as U.S. secretary of the treasury, and the first person in American history to lead the three most powerful economic bodies in the [Federal government of the United States](#): the Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve, and the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Yellen was appointed as the first woman finance minister of the U.S.

President [Joe Biden](#) and Vice-President [Kamala Harris](#) receive an economic briefing from Secretary Yellen in the [Oval Office](#) on January 29, 2021



## CELEBRATING CECILA E. ROUSE



**Cecilia Elena Rouse** is an American [economist](#) serving as the 30th Chair of the [Council of Economic Advisers](#). She is the first Black person to hold this role. Prior to this, she served as the dean of the [Princeton School of Public and International Affairs](#) at [Princeton University](#). [Joe Biden](#) nominated Rouse to be chair of the [Council of Economic Advisers](#) in November 2020.<sup>[4]</sup> On March 2, 2021, Rouse was overwhelmingly confirmed by the Senate, 95–4 on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Rouse served in the [National Economic Council](#) under President [Bill Clinton](#) from 1998 to 1999. Rouse served as a member of President [Barack Obama](#)'s [Council of Economic Advisers](#) from 2009 to 2011.

Rouse is the dean of the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs and the Lawrence and Shirley Katzman and Lewis and Anna Ernst Professor in the Economics of Education. She is the founding director of the Princeton University Education Research Section, is a member of the [National Academy of Education](#) and a research associate of the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#). Her primary research interests are in [labor economics](#) with a focus on the economics of education. Rouse has served as an editor of the [Journal of Labor Economics](#) and as a senior editor of [The Future of Children](#). She is a member of the board of directors of [MDRC](#), and a director of the [T. Rowe Price](#) Equity Mutual Funds and an advisory board member of the T. Rowe Price Fixed Income Mutual Funds.

President [Joe Biden](#) nominated Rouse to become Chair of the [Council of Economic Advisers](#). She appeared before the [Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs](#) on January 28, 2021.



## CELEBRATING BETTY CROCKER

### History of the Betty Crocker Kitchens



Since 1921, the **Betty Crocker** name has symbolized General Mill's continuing tradition of service to consumers. Although Betty was never a real person, her name and identity have become synonymous with helpfulness, trustworthiness and quality. It all began when a promotion for Gold Medal Flour offered

consumers a pin cushion resembling a flour sack if they correctly completed a jigsaw puzzle of a milling scene. The Washburn Crosby Company, a forerunner of General Mills, received thousands of responses and a flood of questions about baking.

"Betty Crocker" was created as a signature to personalize the responses to those inquiries. The surname Crocker was chosen to honor a popular, recently retired director the company, William G. Crocker. Betty was chosen simply as a friendly sounding name. Female employees were invited to submit sample Betty Crocker signatures; the one judged most distinctive is the basis for the one still in use today.

During this same time period, the company expanded its commitment to consumer service and product quality by sponsoring cooking schools across the country. In fact, the company launched a radio show in 1924. Later named "The Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air" the broadcast became one of the longest running shows in radio history. The growth of consumer demand for information necessitated the hiring of 21 home economists. They were employed to carefully test and demonstrate the company's gold medal-winning flour. This was the beginning of the Betty Crocker Kitchens.

First housed in the Washburn Crosby A mill, the kitchens were full of then-modern facilities such as running water and gas stoves. The kitchens formally changed their name to "Betty Crocker Kitchens" in 1946. When General Mills moved its headquarters to Golden Valley, MN

in 1958, seven new kitchens were built, each one representing a different area of the United States: Arizona Desert, California, Cape Cod, Chinatown, Hawaiian, Pennsylvania Dutch, and Williamsburg.

With the re-model of the kitchens in 2003, the entirely new facility features more than 7,000 square feet of kitchen space with 19 fully equipped individual kitchens designed for over 50,000 recipe tests each year.

Our famous test kitchens have grown over the years, but one thing's stayed the same: they're still home to top-notch food ideas and recipe development.

Although the Betty Crocker Kitchens have changed a bit since the 1960s, when this photo was snapped, they're still the place where our food experts taste and test new products and dream up creative new recipes. Today, the updated space totals 13,595 square feet and is comprised of 19 fully equipped kitchens—perfect for crafting up ideas for all occasions, including our popular [Red Hot Holiday series](#)!

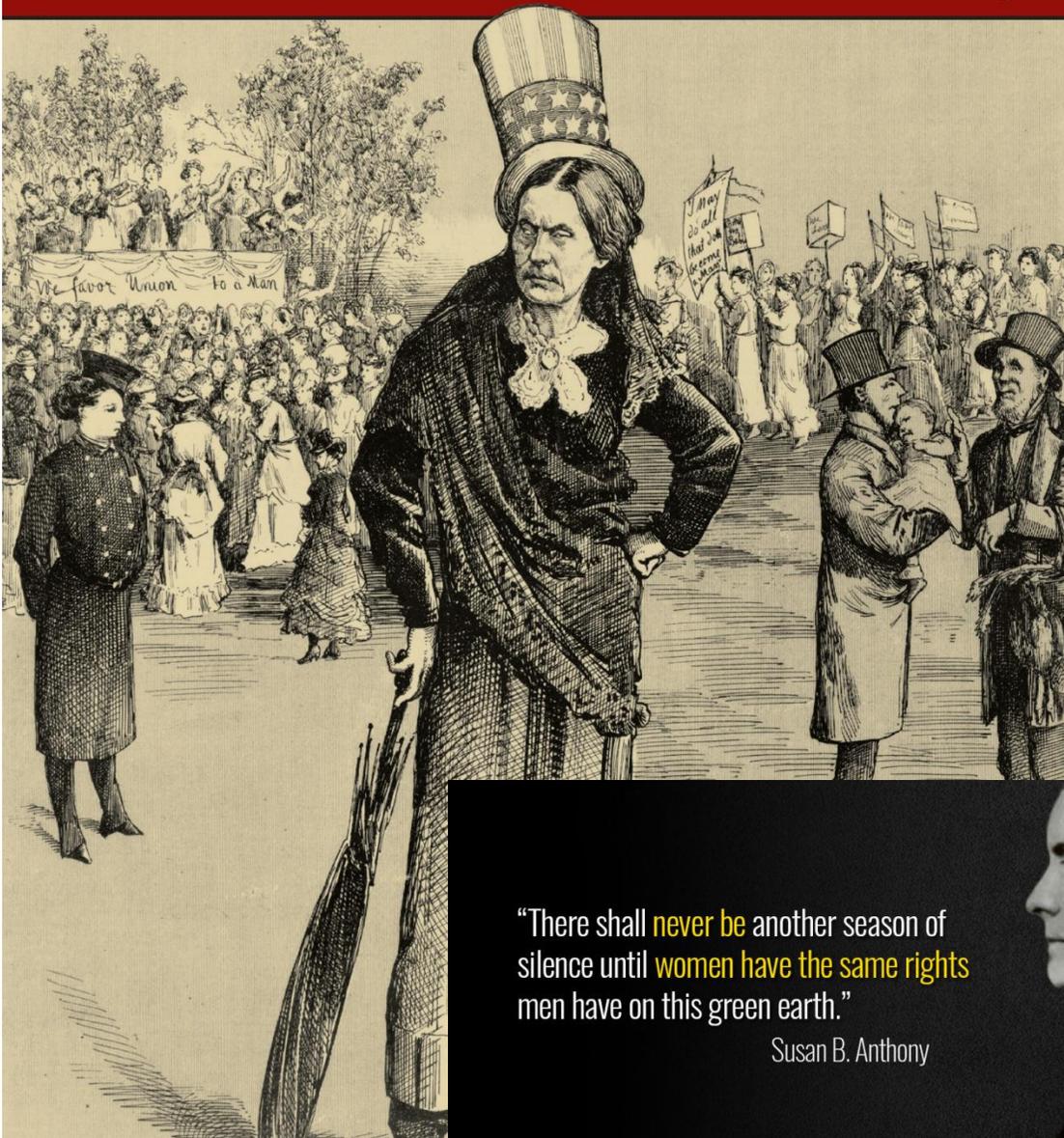


CELEBRATING SUSAN B. ANTHONY

N. E. H. Hull

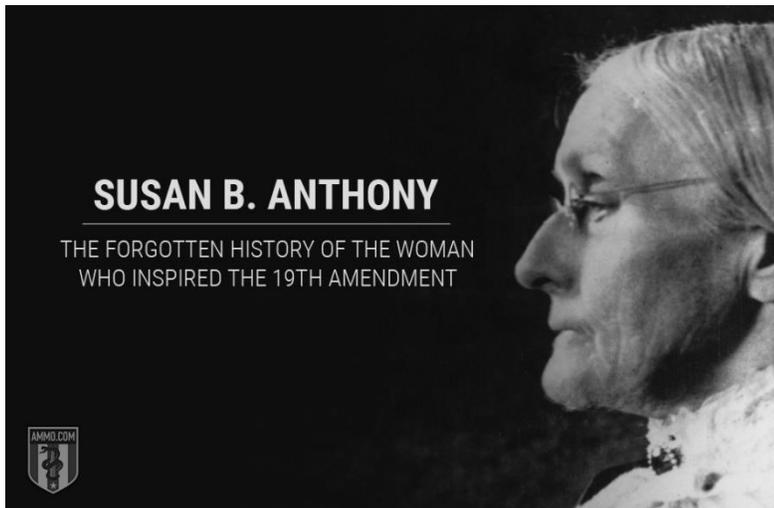
# The Woman Who Dared to Vote

The Trial of Susan B. Anthony



“There shall **never** be another season of  
silence until **women have the same rights**  
men have on this green earth.”

Susan B. Anthony



**Susan B. Anthony** was a women's rights activist known for her work during the suffrage movement in the early 1800s.

Anthony trained women who went on to fight for suffrage (the right to vote) using tactics they learned at her side. One of Anthony's political powers was motivating people to

share a common cause. She worked closely with her lifelong friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton to found the National Woman Suffrage Association, which grew into one of the largest groups advocating for women's voting rights. Led by the Quaker teachings that every human is equal, she began collecting antislavery petitions at age 17 and spent her entire adult life fighting for gender equality and women's right to vote. Although she passed away in 1906—14 years before women gained the right to vote—many leave their “I voted” stickers on her gravesite each election day as a way to say thank you for her contributions.



**Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (around 1870) by Napoleon Sarony, National Portrait Gallery**



The first Susan B. Anthony dollars were struck at the [Philadelphia Mint](#) on December 13, 1978. First strikes at the [Denver](#) and [San Francisco Mints](#) followed on January 9, 1979 and January 29, respectively.

## CELEBRATING SALLY RIDE



In 1983, the world watched as **Sally Ride**—an astronaut and physicist—**became the first American woman in space aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger**. She was the third woman ever in space, paving the way for future female scientists.

Ride worked for two years at [Stanford University's Center for International Security and Arms Control](#), then at the [University of California, San Diego](#) as a professor of physics, primarily researching [nonlinear optics](#) and [Thomson scattering](#). She served on the committees that investigated the [Challenger](#) and [Columbia](#) Space Shuttle disasters, the only person to participate in both.<sup>[3][4]</sup> Having been married to astronaut [Steven Hawley](#) during her spaceflight years and in a private, long-term relationship with former Women's Tennis Association player [Tam O'Shaughnessy](#) in her years after, she is the earliest space traveler to have been recognized as [LGBT](#). Ride died of [pancreatic cancer](#) on July 23, 2012.

## CELEBRATING EDITH WHARTON



As a novelist and writer, Edith Wharton was known for her portrayal of New York's upper class and became the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize in 1921 for her novel *The Age of Innocence*. Despite not publishing her first novel until she was forty, Wharton became an extraordinarily productive writer. In addition to her 15 novels, seven novellas, and eighty-five short stories, she published poetry, books on design, travel, literary and cultural criticism, and a memoir. She was also nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature in 1927, 1928, and 1930, and was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1996, almost 30 years after her death.

## CELEBRATING PATSY TAKEMOTO MINK



After a successful career as an attorney in Hawaii, Patsy Takemoto Mink became the first woman of color elected to Congress in 1965. As a third-generation Japanese American, Mink was the first Asian-American woman to serve in Congress where she fought for social welfare and civil liberties. Mink was the first East Asian-American woman to seek the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party. She ran in the [1972 election](#), entering the [Oregon primary](#) as an anti-war candidate. She was the federal [Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs](#) from

1977 to 1979. From 1980 to 1982, Mink served as the president of [Americans for Democratic Action](#) and then returned to Honolulu, where she was elected to the [Honolulu City Council](#), which she chaired until 1985. In 1990, she was again elected to the U.S. House, serving until her death in 2002. During her second six terms in office, she continued to work on legislation of importance to women, children, immigrants, and minorities. In 1970, Mink became the first Democratic woman to deliver a [State of the Union](#) response and only the second woman to respond to the address. That year, she was the first witness to testify against President Nixon's [Supreme Court](#) nominee [George Harrold Carswell](#). In her testimony, she cited his refusal to hear the case brought to the [5th Circuit Court of Appeals](#) regarding Ida Phillips' employment discrimination case. Phillips had been denied a position because she was a woman with children and Mink's objection highlighted, for the first time in an evaluation of a court nominee, the inequalities faced by working women.

**Mink** is remembered as a woman who dealt with the personal discrimination she had felt as a woman and an Asian American by dedicating her career to creating public policies to open doors for women and minorities. In 2002 Congress renamed the Title IX Amendment of the Higher Education Act, which Mink had co-authored, as the "[Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act](#)".



## CELEBRATING SONIA SOTOMAYOR



After graduating from Yale Law School, **Sonia Sotomayor** served as Assistant District Attorney in New York for four and a half years before entering private practice in 1984 before she was nominated to the U.S. District Court by President George H.W. Bush. In 2009, she became the first Hispanic and Latina Justice to serve on the United States Supreme Court after she was nominated by President Barack Obama. Her nomination was confirmed by the Senate in August 2009 by a vote of 68–31.

President Barack Obama meets with Judge Sonia Sotomayor and Vice President Joe Biden prior to an announcement in the East Room, May 26, 2009



While on the court, Sotomayor has supported the informal liberal bloc of justices when they divide along the commonly perceived ideological lines. During her tenure on the Supreme Court, Sotomayor has been identified with concern for the rights of defendants, calls for reform of the criminal justice system, and making impassioned dissents on issues of race, gender and ethnic identity. She also played an active role on the boards of directors for the [Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund](#), the [State of New York Mortgage Agency](#), and the [New York City Campaign Finance Board](#).

## CELEBRATING KATHARINE GRAHAM



**Katharine Graham** was the first twentieth century female publisher of a major American newspaper. She led her family's newspaper, [\*The Washington Post\*](#), from 1963 to 1991. Graham presided over the paper as it reported on the [Watergate scandal](#), which eventually led to the resignation of President [Richard Nixon](#) and in 1972 she also became the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company as the CEO of the Washington Post

company. She won a Pulitzer Prize for her memoir *Personal History* in 1998.

## CELEBRATING IDA B. WELLS



**Ida B. Wells** eventually moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where she became both a hard-hitting journalist and an anti-lynching advocate. In 1892, a close friend of hers, Tom Moss, was lynched for running a successful grocery business that competed with a local white grocer. He and his business partners were shot down by a mob of angry white men. Enraged by this injustice, Wells set out on a national campaign to investigate lynchings all over the country. In particular, she exposed the lie that black men were being lynched because they raped white women. In many cases, she

found that white women were pursuing illicit relationships with black men, and then accusing them of rape, to avoid being caught. When she dared to suggest such a thing in her paper, local white citizens burned her newspaper offices to the ground and threatened to kill her if she came back to town. She was an early adopter of using sociological methods and statistics to track lynching data, and provided some of the earliest and most comprehensive lists of lynchings that we have at the end of the 19th century. In 1913, when the white women organizers of a national march for woman suffrage in Washington, D.C., tried to segregate black women, Wells refused to march at the back. She waited on the sidelines, and when the delegation from Illinois (the state where she and her husband and family lived) marched past her, she simply joined in line. Wells is a great example of radical black feminist activism at the turn of the 20th century.

## CELEBRATING OCTAVIA BUTLER

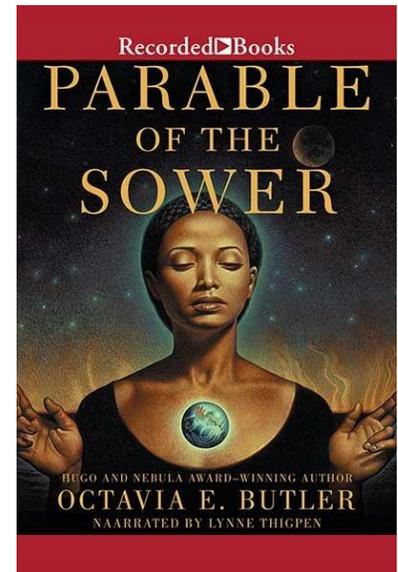
“I WAS ATTRACTED TO SCIENCE FICTION BECAUSE IT WAS SO WIDE OPEN. I WAS ABLE TO DO ANYTHING AND THERE WERE NO WALLS TO HEM YOU IN AND THERE WAS NO HUMAN CONDITION THAT YOU WERE STOPPED FROM EXAMINING.”

— OCTAVIA E. BUTLER



**Octavia Butler** was an American [science fiction](#) author. A multiple recipient of both the [Hugo](#) and [Nebula](#) awards, she became in 1995 the first science-fiction writer to receive a [MacArthur Fellowship](#). Born in [Pasadena, California](#), Butler was raised by her widowed mother. Extremely shy as a child, Butler found an outlet at the library reading fantasy, and in writing. She began writing science fiction as a teenager. She attended community college during the [Black Power movement](#), and while participating in a local writer's workshop was encouraged to attend the [Clarion Workshop](#), which focused on science fiction.

She soon sold her first stories and by the late 1970s had become sufficiently successful as an author that she was able to pursue writing full-time. Her books and short stories drew the favorable attention of the public and awards judges. She also taught writer's workshops, and eventually relocated to [Washington](#) state. Butler died of a stroke at the age of 58. Her papers are held in the research collection of the [Huntington Library](#).



In 2006, the [Carl Brandon Society](#) established the Octavia E. Butler Memorial Scholarship in Butler's memory, to enable writers of color to attend the annual Clarion West Writers Workshop and [Clarion Writers' Workshop](#), descendants of the original Clarion Science Fiction Writers' Workshop in [Clarion, Pennsylvania](#), where Butler got her start. The first scholarships were awarded in 2007. In March 2019, Butler's alma mater, [Pasadena City College](#), announced the Octavia E. Butler Memorial Scholarship for students enrolled in the Pathways program and committed to transfer to four-year institutions.

The memorial scholarships sponsored by the Carl Brandon Society and Pasadena City College help fulfill three of the life's [goals Butler had handwritten](#) in a notebook from 1988:

***"I will send poor black youngsters to Clarion or other writer's workshops***

***"I will help poor black youngsters broaden their horizons***

***"I will help poor black youngsters go to college"***



*I am a Bestselling Writer  
I write Bestselling Books  
And Excellent Short Stories.  
Both Books and Short Stories  
Win prizes and awards  
Everyday in Every way  
I am researching and writing  
My Awardwinning, Best selling  
Books and Short Stories  
Every one of my books  
Reaches and Remains  
For two and more months  
At the top  
Of the Bestseller Lists  
Of Publisher's Weekly,  
The Washington Post,  
The New York Times,  
The Los Angeles Times,  
Etc., Etc., Etc.  
So Be It!  
See To It!*

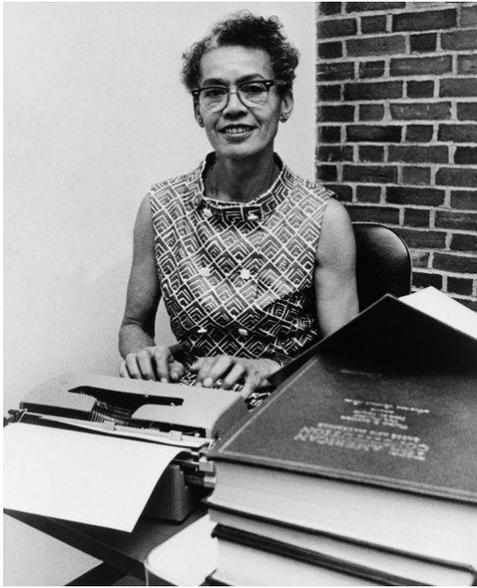
## CELEBRATING MARY CHURCH TERRELL



**Mary Church Terrell** had a 60-year-career as an advocate for women's rights and civil rights, and as a peace activist. She was born in 1863, the year the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, and she died in 1954, just a few weeks after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision desegregated America's public schools. Terrell herself was the first black woman to serve on the D.C. Board of Education. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1884, becoming one of the earliest black women ever to receive a college degree. Terrell was the first president of the National Association of Colored Women, the largest

organization of black women at the turn of the 20th century. She was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a peace activist during WWI, and a famous public speaker and writer throughout the 20th century. In 1953, she became one of the original plaintiffs in the lawsuit *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson & Co.* that eventually reached the Supreme Court and desegregated the nation's capital in 1953. Throughout the 1950s, when she was well into her 80s, she showed up at protests carrying a picket sign demanding freedom and equal rights for African-Americans.

## CELEBRATING PAULI MURRAY



**Pauli Murray** was born in Baltimore in 1910. She eventually graduated at the top of her class from Howard University Law School in 1944. Her senior thesis at Howard Law School became the basis for the strategy in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, when it was tried more than 10 years later. While at Howard, she also participated in an early series of sit-in-style protests to desegregate restaurants near the campus, and these happened more than 15 years before the famous Greensboro sit-ins of the 1960s. Murray was also the first black woman to serve as a deputy district attorney in the state of California. In 1965, she became the first black woman to receive a doctorate from Yale Law School. In 1976, she became the first black woman ordained as a priest in the Episcopal Church. Her list of professional firsts is voluminous. But Murray also matters because she was an openly queer black woman from her early 20s through the rest of her life. For much of her life, she identified as what we would today term a trans man. However, the term "transgender," didn't exist in the 1940s. After many decades of battling with scientists about her gender and sexual identity, Murray settled into her life as a woman and a lesbian. In 2012, the Episcopal Church raised Murray (who died in 1985) to the status of sainthood because of her lifetime of work for freedom.

## CELEBRATING MARLEY DIAS



Twelve-year-old Marley Dias made headlines last year when she put out a call to collect #1000BlackGirlBooks, books that featured black girl characters. The then-fifth grader was tired of reading books that had no girls representative of her experience in them. She collected more than 8,000 books after her call went viral and has since become an editor-at-large at Elle.com, where she has a zine called Marley Mag. She also recently signed a book deal with Scholastic Books to publish a social justice handbook marketed to youth ages 10 and up. She is #BlackGirlMagic personified.

## CELEBRATING NELLIE DAVIS TAYLOE ROSS



**Nellie Davis Tayloe Ross** was an American politician, the [14th governor of Wyoming](#) from 1925 to 1927 and director of the [United States Mint](#) from 1933 to 1953. She was one of the first [women to be sworn in as governor](#) of a [U.S. state](#), and remains the only woman to have served as governor of Wyoming. Ross was born in [St. Joseph, Missouri](#) to James Wynns Tayloe, a native of Tennessee, and Elizabeth Blair Green. Her family moved to [Miltonvale, Kansas](#) in 1884, and she graduated from Miltonvale High School in 1892. She attended a teacher-training college for two years and taught kindergarten for four years.

On September 11, 1902, Ross married [William B. Ross](#), whom she had met when visiting relatives in Tennessee in 1900. William B. Ross was [governor of Wyoming](#) from 1923 to his death on October 2, 1924. Ross succeeded her late husband's successor [Frank Lucas](#) as governor when she won the [special election](#), becoming the first female American governor on January 5, 1925. She was a staunch supporter of [Prohibition](#) during the 1920s. She lost [re-election in 1926](#) but remained an active member of the [Democratic Party](#).

In 1933, Ross became the first female [Director of the United States Mint](#). Despite initial mistrust, she forged a strong bond with [Mary Margaret O'Reilly](#), the Assistant Director of the Mint and one of the United States' highest-ranking female civil servants of her time. Ross served five terms as Director, retiring in 1953. After her retirement, Ross contributed articles to various women's magazines and traveled extensively. She made her last trip to Wyoming in 1972 at the age of ninety-six. Five years later, she died in Washington, D.C., at the age of 101; at the time of her death, she was the oldest ex-governor in the United States. She is interred in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery in Cheyenne.



## CELEBRATING LADDA TAMMY DUCKWORTH



**Ladda Tammy Duckworth** is an American politician and retired [Army National Guard lieutenant colonel](#) serving as the [junior United States Senator](#) from [Illinois](#) since 2017. A member of the [Democratic Party](#), she represented [Illinois's 8th district](#) in the [United States House of Representatives](#) from 2013 to 2017. Duckworth was educated at the [University of Hawaii](#) and [George Washington University](#). A combat veteran of the [Iraq War](#), she served as a [U.S. Army](#) helicopter pilot. In 2004, after her helicopter was hit by a [rocket-propelled grenade](#) fired by [Iraqi insurgents](#), she suffered severe combat wounds, which caused her to lose both of her legs and some mobility in her right arm. She was the first female double amputee from the war. Despite her grievous injuries, she sought and obtained a medical waiver that allowed her to continue serving in the [Illinois Army National Guard](#) until she retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2014.

In 2012, Duckworth was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where she served two terms. Duckworth was elected to the U.S. Senate in [2016](#), defeating Republican incumbent Mark Kirk. She is the first [Thai American](#) woman elected to Congress, the first person born in [Thailand](#) elected to Congress, the first woman with a disability elected to Congress, the first female double amputee in the Senate, and the first senator to give birth while in office. Duckworth is the second of three Asian American women to serve in the U.S. Senate, after [Mazie Hirono](#), and before [Kamala Harris](#).



On February 3, 2009, Duckworth was nominated by President Barack Obama to be the Assistant Secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the [United States Department of Veterans Affairs](#) and the [United States Senate](#) confirmed her for the position on April 22. As Assistant Secretary, she coordinated a joint initiative with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help end Veteran homelessness, worked to address the unique challenges faced by female as well as Native American Veterans and created the Office of Online Communications to improve the VA's accessibility, especially among young Veterans. Duckworth resigned her position in June 2011 in order to launch her campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives in Illinois's 8th congressional district.