

March 1, 2015

Women quietly do extraordinary things every day. To help shed light on the resilience and strength of Hoosier women and celebrate their accomplishments and contributions to history we are releasing an article every day in the month of March. These articles showcase how women have moved Indiana and our country forward and who inspire others to do great things in their own lives.

Women in Indiana have an important role to play. You can make a difference by:

- Learning more about the issues affecting women in Indiana.
- Voicing your opinion on issues important to you
- Serving as an advocate for women
- Mentoring another woman
- Join ICW's mailing list or social media outlets to be notified of upcoming events, programs and resources available to women

Go to [www.in.gov/icw](http://www.in.gov/icw) to learn more about the Indiana Commission for Women and their current initiatives.

#### Sources:

- **The American Presidency Project** ([www.presidency.ucsb.edu](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu))
- **Law Library of Congress' guide to the legislative history of Women's History Month** (<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>)
- **National Women's History Museum** ([www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org))
- **National Women's History Project** ([www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org))
- **U.S. Government Publishing Office** ([www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov))

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## Women's History Month 2015

*Telling 31 stories in 31 days this March.*

### The History of Women's History Month

Women have always been part of history. A few of their stories are remembered; however, most have gone largely unnoticed. Thirty-five years ago, President Jimmy Carter became the first President to urge American citizens to recognize the importance of women's history. On February 28, 1980, President Carter issued a [presidential statement](#), designating March 2-8, 1980, as *National Women's History Week*:

*...Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well... I ask my fellow Americans to recognize this heritage with appropriate activities during National Women's History Week, March 2-8, 1980.*

For the next five years, Congress continued to pass joint resolutions designating a week in March as *Women's History Week*. By 1986, fourteen states had already declared March as *Women's History Month*. The National Women's History Project, along with other women's groups, used this momentum and state-by-state action as rationale to lobby Congress to declare March as *National Women's History Month*. That year, Congress passed [Pub. L. 100-9](#) which designated the month as a national *Women's History Month*:

*Whereas American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made historical contributions to the growth and strength of the Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways;... Whereas, despite these contributions, the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued in the body of American history: Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the month of March, 1987, is designated as "Women's History Month", and the President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such month with ceremonies and activities.*

That same year, President Ronald Reagan issued [Proclamation 5619](#) on March 16, 1987, stating:

*From earliest times, women have helped shape our Nation. Historians today stress all that women have meant to our national life, but the rest of us too should remember, with pride and gratitude, the achievements of women throughout American history. Those achievements span the wide range of human endeavor. They have not been attained without the quiet courage and sacrifice of millions of women, some famed, most not... All Americans can be truly grateful for the role of women as the heart of the family and for their every accomplishment today and throughout our history.*

Between 1988 and 1994, Congress continued to pass resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March as *Women's History Month*. Since 1995, Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama have issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as *Women's History Month* celebrating women's contributions to the United States and recognizing the specific achievements women have made throughout American history.