

March 21, 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 to learn more about the Indiana Commission for Women and their current initiatives.

Sources:

- **Amelia Earhart Museum**
(<http://www.ameliaearhartmuseum.org>)
- **Amelia Earhart Official Website**
(<http://www.ameliaearhart.com>)
- **Amelia Earhart Papers, Purdue University**
(<http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/cdm/collections>)
- **Staff (June 1998), *The Indiana Historian: Aviation in Indiana***
(<http://www.in.gov/history/files/aviationindiana.pdf>)
- **Todd A. Fruehling, "The Spirit of Amelia Earhart Lives On..."**, *The Purdue Alumnus*, 63:3 [December 1975], 12-13).

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Women's History Month 2015

Telling 31 stories in 31 days this March.

Amelia Earhart (1897-1937?)

Amelia Earhart is known as one of the world's most celebrated aviators and has become a symbol of perseverance for American women. She learned to fly while in California, taking up aviation as a hobby. She took odd jobs to pay for her flying lessons. In 1922, she purchased her first airplane. After moving back east to Boston, Massachusetts, she was selected to be the first passenger on a transatlantic flight in 1928 by her future husband, George Palmer Putnam.

From that very first "First", Earhart achieved a series of record-making flights, including:

- First woman to fly across the Atlantic (June 1928)
- Placing third in the first Women's Air Derby, also known as the Powder Puff Derby (1929)
- First woman to make a solo transatlantic flight (May 1932)
- First person to fly from Hawaii to the American mainland (January 1935)
- First person to fly solo anywhere in the Pacific (January 1935)
- First person to fly solo in both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans (January 1935)
- First person to fly solo from LA to Mexico City (April 1935)
- First person to fly nonstop from Mexico City to Newark, NJ (May 1935)

In 1932, Earhart developed a line of flying clothes for the Ninety-Nines, an organization of licensed women pilots to which she had been elected the organization's first President in 1931. Her first creation was a flying suit with loose trousers, a zipper top and big pockets. She then began designing her own line of clothes "for the woman who lives actively."

Earhart will forever be connected with Indiana history because she joined the faculty of Purdue University and spent the last two years of her known life working for Purdue. In 1935, Purdue hired her to be a "Counselor on Careers for Women," the first appointee to a newly formed department to help guide young women in their academic careers and toward the workforce. Earhart was paid \$2,000 a year to spend two weeks out of each semester on campus, giving lectures, classes, and conferences and advising university officials on courses and programs. She also became a "chief consultant for the University work in aeronautical engineering."

In 1936, when Earhart decided to attempt a flight around the world, the Purdue Research Foundation supplied the money through private benefactors. With those funds, she purchased a Lockheed Electra, naming it the Flying Laboratory. Purdue then gave her a leave of absence from her duties and unrestricted use of its flight and engineering facilities to prepare her airplane for the flight. On July 2, 1937, Earhart and her navigator, Captain Fred Noonan, disappeared over the Pacific Ocean.

Purdue University now is home to the largest collection of Earhart memorabilia in the world.