International Women's Day

INDIANA COMMISSION *for* women
2019 *Writing Her Story*

Photo Courtesy: Kheel Center / Flicker

Source:
- International Women's Day (http://www.internationalwomensday.com)
- History of International Women's Day (http://www.internationalwomensday.com/about.asp#.VPxtD_nF_eR)
- United Nations Women Watch (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/history.html
- White House (http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/08/statement-president-barack-obama-commemorating-international-womens-day)

March is National Women's History Month. Its roots can be traced back to March 8, 1857, when women from New York City factories staged a protest over working conditions. Garment workers marched and picketed, demanding improved working conditions, a 10-hour day and equal rights for women. Fifty-one years later on March 8, 1908, women in the needle trades marched again in New York in honor of the 1857 event. They too demanded the right to vote and an end to sweatshops and child labor.

However, in the United States, National Women's Day was first observed on February 28, 1909. Women continued to celebrate the day on the last Sunday of February until 1913. As World War I was about to begin, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February 1913. Then, International Women's Day was transferred to March 8th, which has remained its global date.

In 1914, more women across Europe held rallies to campaign against the war and express women's solidarity. Since then, it has become a day when women are recognized for their achievements and serves as an opportunity to remember women's past struggles, to celebrate their progress and to look ahead to what still needs to be done. It is a time when women's organizations and governments around the world hold large-scale events honoring women's advancements and reminding communities of the continued action needed to ensure women's equality is gained and maintained in all aspects of life.

International Women's Day is an official holiday in many countries and has become a holiday for men to honor their mothers, wives, girlfriends, colleagues, etc. with flowers and small gifts. In some countries International Women's Day holds the equivalent status of Mother's Day where children give small presents to their mothers and grandmothers.