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Area Bulletin

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### League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area, February 2024 special

League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

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*Voting is my super power!*



## March is Women's History Month

By Wendy D. Thomas

Women's History Month is observed to commemorate, study, and honor the vital role of women in American history. It is a time for recognizing the accomplishments of talented, resourceful, persistent women who did not give up on reaching their goals. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the trailblazing women who have led the way and inspire a new generation to do the same. These women are trailblazers who cut a path for others to follow. They are role models for others to know that dreams can be accomplished. They have provided the shoulders on which many have stood and continue to stand today.

The League of Women Voters Huntington Area recognizes the importance of their accomplishments. While too numerous to name, we offer this sampling of local, state and national women. We proudly recognize and celebrate their achievements. Their dedication and experiences continue to be an inspiration to women of all ages and a catalyst for continued advocacy on behalf of women everywhere.

"If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader." – **Dolly Parton**

# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

“Standing on  
the Shoulders  
of Those  
Who Came  
Before Us”

Theme inspired by the song  
“Standing on the Shoulders”<sup>©</sup>

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Join the  
Celebration  
March 2nd  
at 1 pm

## Cabell County Public Library

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# Women's History Month Community Celebration!

By Laura Deveny

Anyone else feel like unifying community events would be a welcome right about now? One that focuses on awareness of our past and on the gratitude and optimism that we can draw from it? Good, because the League of Women Voters in cooperation with the Cabell County Public Library is planning a community celebration for Women's History Month.

The reference department at the library has identified thirty women – ten national, ten state, ten local – to celebrate during the month of March. The gallery of thirty will be on display at the downtown library. In addition, local eateries and taverns have been invited to adopt an honoree in order to name a menu item after them for Women's History Month.

David Owens and his staff at the library took on the project of identifying the women to be celebrated, finding suitable images, and writing a brief description of each. Next, contacts were made around the city as we appealed for participation from local businesses.

Here are some insights formed while cold calling over thirty businesses in the Huntington area: We have a large number and variety of local eateries and taverns. Each one is attractive, well kept, and staffed with engaging and personable fellow residents. I came away feeling that I should get out more to take advantage of what Huntington has to offer.

Participating eateries and taverns will be announced at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> kickoff celebration at the downtown library. Here's a teaser from Allison White at Sip Downtown Brasserie on Ninth Street:

*"We're going to do the Joan C. Edwards Beast Burger. This burger is a mix of venison, bison, wild boar and Wagyu beef topped with aged white cheddar, caramelized onions, mushrooms, adobo aioli and pickles. Served with fries."*

Yum!

The theme of our kickoff is "Standing on the Shoulders of Those Who Came Before Us" inspired by Joyce J. Rouse's song "Standing on the Shoulders." This stirring song will be performed by local talent Wendy Wilson. Wendy will be accompanied on keyboard by Mike Campbell. The celebration will also feature a proclamation by the mayor, recognition of celebrated women in attendance, viewing of the gallery of images, a slide presentation of fun facts unearthed about the women during the research process, and light refreshments.

Thanks to all who participate in the community celebration of diverse women who inspire us.





**Abigail Adams** famously reminded her Founding Father husband, John Adams, to “remember the ladies,” in the newfound spirit of independence.



**Ida Wells Barnett** used her skills as an educator, journalist, and activist to expose the sexist and racist violence that was her lived experience. Her work in urban reform was influential in shaping the Progressive Movement.



**Colonel Ruby Bradley**, from Spencer, WV, was dubbed an Angel in Fatigues for her work administering to the sick, and supplying what rudimentary maternal care was available, in the Santo Tomas Internment Camp, in Manilla, during WWII.



**Pearl Buck** was born in Hillsboro, Pocahontas County. Though she was only a resident of the state for a brief moment, she would return to the area whenever her parents returned from their overseas missionary work. She was the first female recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938.



**Carrie Chapman Catt** was a key figure in the women’s suffrage movement in the USA which provided the impetus in winning the right to vote for women.



**Coralie Franklin Cook** was an educator and civic activist. Born in Virginia she lived in Harper’s Ferry. A graduate of Storer College, she was invited to speak at Susan B. Anthony’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, where she extolled the importance of twinning the issues of civil rights for the Black community with demands for more rights for women.



**Dagmar** (Virginia Ruth Egnor) was a graduate of Huntington High School. By the 1950s she had established herself as a feature in the early years of network broadcasts of variety shows. A comedienne, singer, dancer, and actress, Dagmar was a pioneer of female involvement in television.



**Jean Dean** was Huntington's first female mayor. She was instrumental in helping bring Amazon to Huntington, and establishing the Jean Dean Public Safety Building which houses the Huntington Police Department.



**Joan C. Edwards** has left a legacy of philanthropy within our community. A supporter of Marshall University, Cabell Huntington Hospital, the Huntington Museum of Art, and more; the Huntington area has been enriched by her generosity



**Memphis Tennessee Garrison** moved to Huntington after a 40-year teaching career in McDowell County. Education was only part of her legacy, however, as she contributed to the founding and growth of chapters of the NAACP throughout southern West Virginia.



Award winning author, **Denise Giardina** has given voice to the disempowered in Appalachia. Her two novels set in the region, *Storming Heaven* and *The Unquiet Earth*, are regarded as major works in the Appalachian cannon. She was a recipient of the American Book Award in 1993 for *The Unquiet Earth*.



**Minnie Buckingham Harper**, Winfield, was the first African-American woman to serve as a member of a state legislative body in the United States. She represented McDowell County following the death of her husband. Overcoming prejudice against African-Americans and women, Ms.Harper's story is an unheralded triumph.





**Anna Jarvis**, of Taylor, Webster County, is widely credited with establishing Mother's Day. Her inspiration for this was fostered by her own work as a caregiver to her mother.



**Katherine Johnson**, of White Sulphur Springs, was a pioneering woman in the field of aeronautical computations. Her work for NASA was recognized recently in the movie *Hidden Figures*.



**Kathy Mattea**, South Charleston, has been recognized throughout the music industry for her contribution to country music, as well as her work promoting civil and social causes. She currently hosts the widely popular NPR show Mountain Stage.



Half Sister to Blues legend Bessie Smith, **Mary Smith McClain (Diamond Tooth Mary)** performed at such illustrious venues as The Cotton Club, The Appollo Theatre, and even at The White House. Diamond Tooth Mary continued performing up until her death at age 97.



**Mildred Mitchell Bateman** was born in Brunswick, GA, but has a long connection with West Virginia. She was the first female, and first African-American, to serve as director of the Department of Mental Health in West Virginia. She chaired the psychology department at Marshall University before becoming Director at Huntington State Hospital. Her work in support of the mental health community has won local, state, and national recognition.



**Dolly Parton** has entertained countless millions with her music and acting. She has also been a tireless promoter of children's reading through her Imagination Station program.



**Jan Rader** has won national recognition for her tireless struggle to improve the lives of those ravaged by the opioid epidemic. “Hometown hero” is just not big enough title for all her work!



**Marie Redd** served as the first African-American Senator in the West Virginia Statehouse. Her work as a community activist, championing the underserved won her a statewide accolade; in 2020 she was named a West Virginia Wonder Woman by West Virginia Living Magazine.



**Sheila Redling** was a “drive-time” fixture on local radio before turning her considerable talents to a career as a successful author. As well as a growing reputation for her literary endeavors, Shiela has given back to our community by hosting numerous workshops where participants can hone their own literary craft.



**Mary Lou Retton**, Fairmont, captured the nation’s hearts at the 1984 Olympic Games, winning the All-Round Gold Medal for female gymnasts. She also served on the President’s Council for Physical Fitness and Sports. An inspiration to countless West Virginians pursuing their dreams.



**Rosie the Riveter** was the embodiment of the can-do spirit of civilian women in WWII. Used as a figure to encourage women to join the industrial workforce, Rosie has become an iconic female figure.



First Lady **Eleanor Roosevelt** left a legacy of political activity. An important figure and key supporter of the New Deal which provided assistance to families throughout the Great Depression.

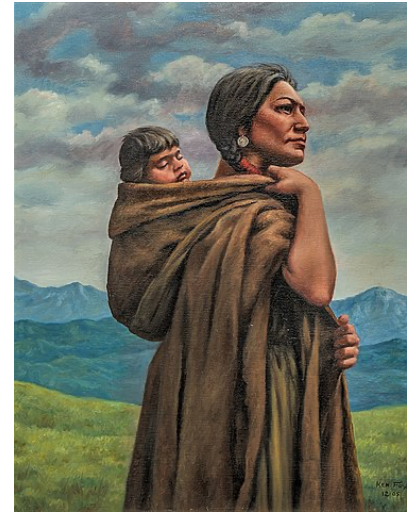




**Betsy Ross** was the alleged designer of the second American Flag, known as the Betsy Ross Flag. Despite no documentary evidence to substantiate this claim, Ms. Ross has become a powerful symbol of the role played by women in the Revolutionary War and early days of the Republic.



For over 50 years **Judy Rule** led the Cabell County Library with a spirited devotion. During her time at the library each branch was given a new building and in 2021 the Cabell County Library was recognized on the national level having won the prestigious National Medal for Museum and Library Service.



A guide and interpreter for the Lewis and Clark Expedition, **Sacagawea** was recognized by the National Woman's Suffrage Association as "a symbol of women's worth and independence."



**Blaze Starr (Fanny Belle Fleming)** was a burlesque performer of national renown. At a time when many viewed burlesque as lowbrow entertainment, she remained loyal to it's more anarchic nature, poking fun at highbrow dramatic conceits.



**Harriet Tubman** embraced the causes of abolition and women's suffrage. When asked if she believed women should vote she famously replied, "I suffered enough to believe it."



Suffragist and temperance advocate, **Frances Willard** was a tireless worker for causes which impacted women. She was the first female depicted in the Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol.