Learn More About Women’s History In Iowa

The Office on the Status of Women promotes the inclusion of women in decision making, ensuring that information about women is available to all stakeholders and enables the government to be responsive to needs of women and girls in all facets of life.

For more information and materials related to women’s resources, history, and leadership in Iowa visit us at: https://humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/icsw.

March is Women’s History Month

Our Rich History

The goal of Women’s History Month is to highlight the accomplishments of women throughout history in all sectors of life and to celebrate women from all different backgrounds and identities.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed a proclamation declaring March 2nd through the 8th to be Women’s History Week. This proclamation was inspired by a week-long celebration of women’s contributions in the school district of Sonoma, California. The National Women’s History Project followed suit and began organizing celebrations in several communities and school districts.

The first National Women’s History Week was a success. In the first couple years, thousands of schools and communities were celebrating women’s contributions. By 1986, many were lobbying for Congress to declare the entire month of March as Women’s History Month.

In 1987, Congress declared March as National Women’s History Month. Since then, a presidential proclamation is issued each year. Iowa has issued a proclamation declaring March as Women’s History Month since 1987.
Important Women in Iowa’s History

Not enough people are aware of the extent of women’s contributions to society, whether past or present. Women have played an integral role in shaping Iowa’s history. The Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame was established in 1975 by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of women in Iowa. Each year the ICSW and the Governor welcome four women into the Hall of Fame, paying tribute to them and setting them forth as role models for others. For more information, visit: https://humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/icsw/events-recognition/iowa-womens-hall-fame

Top Row Left to Right

Carrie Chapman Catt
Gertrude Rush
Ola Babcock Miller
Evelyn K. Davis
Rosa Maria Escude de Findlay
Mabel Lee
Hualing Nieh Engle
Dr. Ada Hayden

Bottom Left to Right

Willie Glanton
Mary Campos
Ruth Ann Gaines
Jo Ann McIntosh Zimmerman
Christie Vilsack
Carolyn Pendray
Arabella Mansfield
Bonnie Campbell

ANSWERS TO WOMEN’S HISTORY IQ TEST

1. First African American woman admitted to the Iowa Bar?
   14. Carolyn Pendray

2. Arguably the most famous Iowan woman associated with the Women’s Suffrage Movement?
   13. Rosa Maria Escude de Findlay

3. Spent her life advocating for the importance of early education opportunities for kids?
   12. Ola Babcock Miller

4. One of Iowa’s most gifted cultural ambassadors and Chinese novelist?
   11. Christine Bruemmer

5. First African American female to be elected to the Iowa State Legislature?
   10. Jo Ann McIntosh Zimmerman

6. First female lawyer in the United States?
   9. Ruth Ann Gaines

7. First woman to obtain her Ph.D. at Iowa State University?
   8. Amelia Bloomer

8. A female leader in Iowa who publicly espoused women’s rights in the years before the Civil War?
   7. Dr. Ada Hayden

9. First fine arts teacher to receive Teacher of the Year award, an advocate for students, and legislator?
   6. Arabella Mansfield

10. Iowa’s first female Lieutenant Governor?
    5. Willie Glanton

11. Pioneer scholar and editor in the field of African and Women’s Studies?
    4. Hualing Nieh Engle

12. Iowa’s first female secretary of State?
    3. Evelyn K. Davis

13. Long-time advocate for Latino/Hispanic immigrants and professor at the University of Northern Iowa?
    2. Carrie Chapman Catt

14. First female to serve in the Iowa State Legislature?