

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>.



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"Empowering Iowa's women and girls to achieve their full potential."

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

TEST YOUR IOWA WOMEN'S HISTORY IQ

1. First African American woman admitted to the Iowa Bar?
2. Arguably the most famous lowan woman associated with the Women's Suffrage Movement?
3. Spent her life advocating for the importance of early education opportunities for kids?
4. One of Iowa's most gifted cultural ambassadors and Chinese novelist?
5. First African American female to be elected to the Iowa State Legislature?
6. First female lawyer in the United States?
7. First woman to obtain her Ph.D. at Iowa State University?
8. A female leader in Iowa who publicly espoused women's rights in the years before the Civil War?
9. First fine arts teacher to receive Teacher of the Year award, an advocate for students, and legislator?
10. Iowa's first female Lieutenant Governor?
11. Pioneer scholar and editor in the field of African and Women's Studies?
12. Iowa's first female secretary of State?
13. Long-time advocate for Latino/Hispanic immigrants and professor at the University of Northern Iowa?
14. First female to serve in the Iowa State Legislature?

ANSWERS TO WOMEN'S HISTORY IQ TEST

1. Gertrude Rush
2. Carrie Chapman Catt
3. Evelyn K. Davis
4. Hualing Nieh Engle
5. Willie Glanton
6. Arabella Mansfield
7. Dr. Ada Hayden
8. Amelia Bloomer
9. Ruth Ann Gaines
10. Joann Zimmerman
11. Charlotte Bruner
12. Ola Babcock Miller
13. Rosa Maria Escude de Findlay
14. Carolyn Pendray