

Celebrating Women's Equality Day By Remembering Women Trailblazers

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Dawn Romvari | August 24, 2020



COVID-19 has monopolized much of 2020. Many states and countries are still battling the virus. Along with the virus, especially, in the past few months, our nation has witnessed injustices, igniting the voices of those not heard. Some of these voices have transformed into organizations representing change, advancement, diversity and equality.

Celebrating Women's Equality Day

Women's Equality Day is celebrated in the United States on August 26th this year. It commemorates the 1920 adoption of the 19th Amendment of the Constitution. The amendment prohibits the government and states from denying women the right to vote. However, this [did not guarantee all women](#) the right to vote. Some state laws prohibited women from voting. Laws based on age, citizenship, and residency to name a few. The [women's suffrage movement](#) began in 1848 with the women's right convention in Seneca Falls, New York. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and, many others, helped pave the way for the ratification of the amendment. Women have played pivotal roles throughout history. Advocating for equality while altering the pre-conceived stereotypes set forth by society at the time.

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Let's celebrate some women trailblazers of the past and the present that have made significant advancements in the world.

Women Trailblazers

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) fought for gender and racial equality. [Truth](#) was an African American abolitionist, born into slavery. In 1827, Truth escaped with her daughter to seek freedom from slavery running away to an abolitionist family. Truth became a preacher who spoke about the evils of slavery. She was also an activist for women's rights in the fight for equality.

[Elizabeth Blackwell](#) (1821-1910) became the first woman to graduate from medical school in the United States in 1849. Blackwell and her colleagues founded the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children in 1857.

[Ida B. Wells](#) (1862-1931) was born in Mississippi into slavery during the Civil War. Wells was a journalist and activist who led an anti-lynching crusade in the United States in the 1890's. She was one of the founding members of the NAACP.

Marie Curie (1867-1934) was a Polish scientist. [Curie](#) and her husband, Pierre made groundbreaking discoveries in radioactivity. In 1911, Curie was the first woman in history to win the Nobel Prize for the discovery of radium and polonium. These discoveries led to the development of radiation therapy and the X-ray.

Helen Keller (1880-1968) lost her sight and hearing as a toddler. The nature of the illness was not known but could have been caused by scarlet fever or meningitis. In her lifetime, [Keller](#) tackled both social and political issues including women's suffrage. She was also instrumental in changing perceptions of the blind and deaf. In 1904, Keller became the first person who was blind and deaf to earn a college degree from Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Augusta Savage (1892-1962) attended Cooper Union NYC college. She was one of the leading artists of the [Harlem Renaissance](#), which included poetry, painting, sculpture, jazz, opera and dance.

[Amelia Earhart](#) (1897-1937) on January 11, 1935, became the first person to fly solo from Honolulu to Oakland, California. She also wanted to be the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. In 1937, Earhart got her chance. She and her navigator disappeared over the central Pacific Ocean near Howland Island. The plane and Earhart were never found.

[Frieda Kahlo](#) (1907-1954) was a Mexican artist most known for her self-portrait paintings. She was an artist that served as a role model for bisexual women and people with disabilities.

Rosa Parks (1913-2005) was part of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, [Parks](#) boarded a bus in Montgomery Alabama. Instead of going to the back of the bus, designated at the time for blacks, she sat in the front. When the bus started to fill up with white passengers, the bus driver told Parks to move to the back. She refused. This set-in motion the [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#).

[Valentina Tereshkova](#) (b. 1937) is a member of the Russian State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly of Russia. In 1963, Tereshkova was the first woman to have flown to space. [Sally K. Ride](#) (1951-2012) was the first American woman to fly to space on the Space Shuttle Challenger in 1983.

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[Marsha P. Johnson](#) (1945-1992) was a transgender activist and a central figure in the 1969 Stonewall Riots. Pride is said to have begun at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, NY. The Stonewall Inn was a haven for the LGBT+ community. In June 1969, police raided the inn for a liquor violation "beating the bar's patrons with nightsticks and brandishing their guns." Johnson was at the inn that night. She was said to be one of the first patrons to push back against the police.

Malala Yousafzai (b. 1997) was born in Mingora, Pakistan. Yousafzai began blogging about her experiences and peoples' suppression by the Taliban. In 2012, the Taliban attempted to assassinate her. In 2014, Yousafzai was awarded [The Nobel Peace Prize](#) for her activism to provide education for all children including girls.

What Have We Learned

All of these women trailblazers have done so much, paving the way for the many who took up the cause. Women's Equality Day celebrates and acknowledges all women that have sacrificed and been the voice of those unheard. There are so many women who have fought to break stereotypes and make the world we live in better. The question I leave you with is, "What have we learned?" Taking the first step is often the hardest but, together, we can implement positive changes in the world we live in today.

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