

# 12 pioneers leave mark in women's history

Women's History Month is drawing to a close. From the first patent issued to a woman in 1809 to this year's first woman recognized as best director, women have left an impact on history in various forms. In honor of that, a list of 12 historical figures has been compiled below:

## Hillary Rodham Clinton (1947- )

A Yale University Law School grad and former U.S. Senator, Clinton is the first woman candidate to be included in a presidential primary in every state and caucus as well as the first woman to win a primary election. The wife of former President Bill Clinton would later be appointed Secretary of State.

— Andrea Conley



2000



## Kathryn Bigelow (1951- )

Bigelow became the first woman recognized as best director in 2010 after 82 years of the Academy Awards. She competed against her ex-husband and director of *Avatar*, James Cameron. She's directed 15 different projects from 1978 to her 2009 award-winning movie, *The Hurt Locker*. Bigelow is currently working on a drama for television called *The Miraculous Year*.

— Shelly Williams



## Alison Steele (1937-1995)

Steele worked at New York radio station WNEW-FM as a pioneer woman disc jockey in the United States, playing progressive rock.

Her on-air persona went by the name "The Nightbird" and is said to have been the inspiration for Jimi Hendrix's song "Night Bird Flying."

When her show was at its peak in 1971, she had an estimated 78,000 night listeners.

— Ashley Bradley



1980



## Sally Ride (1951- )

Ride joined NASA in 1978. During her career, she was the ground-based capsule communicator for the second and third Space Shuttle flights. In 1983, Ride became the first American woman as well as the youngest American in space on the Challenger.

In 2003, Ride was asked to serve on the Space Shuttle Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

President and CEO of Sally Ride Science, she creates science programs and publications for students with a particular focus on girls.

— Rema Atiya

## Effa L. Manley (1897-1981)

Manley was an American sports executive and the first woman inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. She met husband Abe Manley at the 1932 World Series. They later married and started their own baseball club, the Eagles. The Eagles did not have the success they had hoped for, so they decided to move the Eagles franchise to Newark.

Financial problems caused the end of the Eagles, along with other teams from the Negro National Leagues, so Manley decided to dedicate her life to keeping the history of Negro League baseball alive.

— Megan Carradine



1960



## Gertrude Ederle (1905-2003)

In 1926, Ederle was the first woman to swim the 21-mile English Channel in 14 hours and 39 minutes, breaking the standing record by two hours and setting a women's record that would stand for 35 years.

Ederle received permanent hearing damage during her English Channel swim. She later became a swim instructor for deaf children. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1965.

— Bethany Peterson



## Alice Blaché (1863-1968)

A French filmmaker, Blaché became the first known woman director in motion pictures. In the early 1900s, she met and married Herbert Blaché, with whom she worked at the Solax Company, the largest pre-Hollywood studio in America. She later became head of production and became a pioneer in the use of special effects, narrative film-making and double-exposure masking techniques.

— Andrea Conley



1920

## Amelia Earhart (1897-1937)

After a trip to visit her sister in Ontario, Canada, Earhart chose to leave school and pursue a career with the Red Cross. Soon after, her parents asked her to move to California.

There she learned about aviation, working side jobs to pay for flying lessons. In 1935, Earhart became the first person to soar the skies from Hawaii to America's mainland.

Two years later, Earhart attempted the first flight around the world. But after almost two-thirds of her way through her historic 22,000 miles, she vanished along with her aircraft.

— Shelly Williams



## Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893)

Cary was a pioneer in journalism being the first known black woman to have worked and edited a North American newspaper. In the *Provincial Freeman*, Cary discussed civil rights and urged free blacks to get an education.

Cary later moved to Washington, D.C., where she attended Howard University Law School. In 1870, she also became the first black female lawyer in the United States.

— Ashley Bradley



1880



## Victoria Woodhull (1838-1927)

In 1872, Woodhull became the first woman nominated for U.S. president by the Equal Rights Party with Frederick Douglass as her running mate. Woodhull was ruled ineligible because she wasn't old enough.

The nomination was used to say it was time to put a woman in the White House, but after 138 years, the U.S. has not elected a woman president.

— Shelly Williams



## Mary Kies (1752-1837)

Kies received the first patent issued by the U.S. to a woman for her method of weaving straw with silk thread, which was used in the hat-making industry. The Connecticut native received her patent March 10, 1809.

The Patent Act of 1790 allowed anyone, male or female, to get a patent, but because women could not legally own property independent of their husbands, no women inventors bothered to protect their work.

— Bethany Peterson



1800



## Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910)

When her father died, Blackwell took up a career in teaching in Kentucky to make money to pay for medical school.

She disliked her work at Kentucky but resided in a physician's household where she used his medical books to study from. In 1849, Blackwell became the first woman to earn a medical degree in the United States, graduating first in her class.

— Rema Atiya