

# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

This month, The Catalyst celebrates the strength of women from all cultural, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds throughout history and today...

## Community celebrates Women's History Month with series of events

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"As an all-women's high school, this is a particularly exciting time to celebrate the women who have come before us and upon whose shoulders we stand," said Director of Communications George Retelas in an email to the NDB community.

"Women continue to make tremendous strides in our country and around

the world, not the least of which is the United States electing the first woman vice president to hold office."

In addition, the administration prepared a program filled with several activities, discussions, and prayer services lasting throughout the whole month. On International Women's Day, March 8, a school-wide prayer service was held to acknowledge

the many strides and accomplishments achieved by the female sex. Also, films including "On the Basis of Sex", "Becoming", "Whale Rider", and "Life and Death of Marsha P. Johnson" were shown weekly over Zoom, followed by group discussions analyzing the films.

The school also hosted Rose Jacobs Gibson, the former Mayor of East Palo Alto, who gave a

talk about her involvement in local politics and her encouragement of others to make change. According to Interim Head of School Linda Kern, Gibson's talk was hosted "in honor of Women's History Month and in celebration of local women leaders of color."

Overall, the NDB community has done a lot to commemorate the national observance of Women's History Month.

## Featured alumna: Jennifer Salma, '88



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JENNIFER SALMA

Then and now: Jennifer Salma is a graduate of the Class of 1988.

by Mia Muzzi  
Staff Writer

Jennifer Salma graduated from NDB in 1988 and still maintains her Tiger pride to this day. She leads a very successful life, living with her family and helping out in her community. Salma covered many fields of work and is no stranger to the inequality and discriminations that women must face daily in the workplace.

Salma attended college at UC Santa Barbara and got a degree in political science with an emphasis on public service. She then continued onto law school and got a degree in San Francisco. She has always enjoyed challenging herself academically and while still in school, she took many honors classes and met her best friends

while doing so. After graduating from UC Santa Barbara, she worked at an internship in D.C for Democratic Congressman George Miller. She loved D.C. so much that she continued to live and work there for a few more years.

However, she was also interested in seeing the world, so she backpacked around Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia for a year before coming back to San Francisco for law school. Public service was her passion and she worked in that area up until the time she had kids.

Salma feels that her family and kids are her greatest achievement and she is very proud of who they have become.

"It's challenging to raise children and have a family that is function-

al and together, but we all love each other and we work through all of our difficulties," said Salma. "Just accepting my kids for who they are and really helping them thrive to become the best person they can be is what I consider my greatest achievement to be, so far."

Due to her work involvement and womanhood, she has experienced gender bias in the workplace.

"Oftentimes I was at a meeting with 20 men, and I was the only woman sitting at the table," stated Salma. "And that was intimidating."

Now, in 2021, Salma still believes there is a lot of change to be made for women's equality but there has been progress made.

Salma agrees that women's equality is still a pressing matter. "There's a lot more awareness about females and also the value that they can add to an organization or the skills that they bring that might be different to the skills that males bring. And I think that people understand now that women in the workplace, can be just as valuable if not more valuable in certain areas," emphasized Salma. "I think that there's still a lot of undervaluing going on for women, with regard to pay and things like that but I think there's been a lot of changes."

Salma brings a lot of pride to the NDB community. With this month being National Women's History month, it is especially appreciated for all that she has done and will continue to do throughout her future.

NDB celebrated WHM with a featured woman of the day, including

- Maya Angelou
- Octavia Butler
- Rosa Parks
- Shirley Chisholm
- Michelle Obama
- Sonia Sotomayor
- Ellen Ochoa
- Greta Thunberg
- Malala Yousafzai
- Oprah Winfrey
- Gloria Steinem
- Ruth Bader Ginsburg
- Barbara Gittings
- Zanele Muholi
- Tammy Duckworth
- María Grever
- Sandra Day O'Connor
- Helen Zia
- Kelly Izdihar Crosby



# The history of the American women's suffrage movement

by Amelia Kyle  
Editor in Chief

The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment of the US Constitution, granting American women the right to vote, did not pass until a century ago. The passage of this amendment was the direct result of an eight-year long fight led by advocates of women's suffrage, who persisted despite extreme public opposition to voting equality.

The battle began in 1840, when women's rights pioneers Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were prohibited from attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention due to their sex. As a result, they decided to build a Women's Rights Convention, which eventually came to life in the state of New York 8 years later.

Over time, similar conventions were held in the United States also pe-

tioning for legal equality between men and women. They became breeding grounds for intersectional alliances between feminists fighting for women's rights and abolitionists fighting for an end to slavery. Some abolitionists consistently in attendance at these conventions were Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and Lucy Stone.

The women's suffrage movement is a clear historical example of the importance of social justice groups banding together instead of attempting to outshine each other. Feminists and abolitionists lifted, empowered, and aided each other in achieving the individual goals of both groups, which they both successfully did.

In 1866, this intersectionality was furthered by the formation of the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), an organization created by Stanton

and fellow suffragette Susan B. Anthony. The goal of the AERA was to achieve suffrage for all American citizens, regardless of sex or race.

An amendment granting women's suffrage was originally proposed in Congress in 1878, but failed to pass through the Senate. Although women could not vote on a national level, state governments had the power to legalize it. The first state to do so was Wyoming in 1890, which had previously granted women this right while it was still a territory of the US.

The Progressive Era, which lasted from 1890-1925, brought women's suffrage into major political discussions and achieved national attention. Colorado became the second state to grant women's suffrage in 1893, three years after Wyoming. More and more state constitutions



PHOTO COURTESY OF SENECA FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A scene from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, the first ever for U.S. women's rights.

beginning to join in 1911.

Shortly before the national ratification of women's suffrage, Jeannette Rankin, a politician from Montana, became the first woman in the House of

Representatives in 1917. At the same time, then-President Woodrow Wilson publicly supported the right for women to vote, and urged the Senate to pass it after the end of World War I. The Nineteenth Amendment

was officially ratified on August 26, 1920.

All information used in this article was collected from the National Women's History Museum/crusadeforth-evote.org.

## The story of the first woman in the U.S. Navy

by Audrey Mogannam  
Staff Writer

On March 21, 1917, Loretta Perfectus Walsh was the first American woman to enlist in the Navy that served beyond a nursing capacity. A mandate was passed on March 19, 1917, to allow women to enlist in the Navy. When Walsh heard this news she wasted no time and hastily made her way to enlist.

Walsh was a patriotic woman looking for ways she could further serve her country that she dearly revered. There was a clear solution for Walsh: the answer to this invigorating question was to serve in the Navy.

Initially, Walsh was reportedly not loved or respected by many. In a majority of scenarios, whether it be the workforce, corporate world, or beyond, men were given respect by default. This was especially true in the Navy due to the

fact that until 1917 the navy was an entirely male-driven environment. On the contrary, women like Walsh had to work three times as hard to earn the respect that men were given naturally. However, defying social norms, Walsh did prove herself. She became a Chief Officer within a year of her training.

Walsh unfortunately died in war doing what she loved. Walsh served in the army till her death, from age 21 to 29.

Although Walsh is one of many women to accomplish what was deemed impossible feats for women, Walsh's story adds to the collective impact of Women's History Month pushing women to progress.

Walsh's accomplishments inspire other women to achieve their goal and break new boundaries every day.

Women's History Month is about celebrating

the women who have made outstanding strides far from the ordinary, breaking cultural and social barriers.

These amazing women are acknowledged in Women's History Month to empower other women to achieve greatness in their own terms and capacity. This month is not completely about learning women's strides in history. This month represents more.

Women's History Month is about teaching women by example of other accomplished women in history to be confident in their own skin to take on greater obstacles than yesterday. This month reminds women who they are and where their roots lie.

In her time, Walsh achieved what seemed impossible and frowned upon by many. Now Walsh is celebrated as the first ever woman in the Navy. With Walsh's strides, she made women in the Navy yesterday's impossibilities and today's ordinary. Without her strides to enlist as a woman in the Navy, it is a possibility that it might not have ever been done.

For society to proceed with its time, taboo has to be demolished and new social norms must be created. Walsh demolished the taboo of women being



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL

Loretta Perfectus Walsh before her time in the Navy.

ing incapable of strength whether it be physically or mentally. Women in the 1900's were expected to remain home, bear children, cook meals, look pretty, and clean. Walsh envisioned more, society's taboo remained in hindsight for her.

Walsh pushed the women of her time

out of their comfort zones by showing others what women were capable of. She inspired women to do what they thought was impossible. Loretta Perfectus Walsh taught women that anything is possible with passion, power, and determination.

Walsh pushed the women of her time

tively influence and celebrate women. Although we have come a long way, such as having the first ever female Vice President, Kamala Harris, in United States history just this year, there is still work to be done to eliminate gender bias and discrimination of women in society.

As young ladies who attend an all-girls Catholic school, it is our job as NDB students to take part in the action and advocate for women's equality.

## What is International Women's Day?

by Nicole Miller  
Staff Writer

International Women's Day 2021 took place on Monday, March 8. This day celebrates any cultural, political, and socioeconomic accomplishments, such as the women's rights movement. It additionally highlights issues women still face today, including gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence against women.

International Women's Day has been observed by many since the

early 1900's, with the very first gathering being held in 1911.

It all started in 1908, when women's oppression and inequality were especially transpiring. This encouraged countless women to become more vocal and active in campaigning for change. More than 15,000 women decided to march through New York City, to demand shorter hours, better pay, and of course, voting rights.

The colors that symbolize International Women's Day are purple,

green, and white. Purple represents both justice and dignity. Green signifies hope. White represents purity, although being a quite controversial concept. These colors originated from the Women's Social and Political Union, which took place in the United Kingdom in 1908.

Each year, there is a different theme for International Women's Day. For example, last year, the theme was "An equal world is an enabled world."

This year, the theme is "Choose To Chal-

enge," with a huge emphasis on inclusivity. Together we are all called to recognize and take part in the fight against gender bias and inequality.

Additionally, we are called to celebrate the amazing women who have paved the way for us and allow us to recognize our potential.

Some examples are Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Amelia Bloomer, Susan B. Anthony, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Mary McLeod Bethune,