

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Highlighting women-owned businesses

by Smera Jain

Succeeding as a female entrepreneur can prove to be extremely challenging as females struggle to be taken seriously in male-dominated industries. Male entrepreneurs vastly outnumber female entrepreneurs in almost all industries. Even though female-led companies have increased by more than 55% since 2008, women-run businesses still only attract 2% of all venture funding in the U.S. and the U.K. Here are two impeccable female entrepreneurs who not only run the leading companies of their industries but are also billionaires.

In 2013, Melanie Perkins founded Canva, a free online graphic design platform, alongside Cameron Adams and her now-husband, Cliff Obrecht. Canva allows users to create a variety of graphics and visual content in a much less tedious way than tools like Adobe. It has made a significant impact around the world, boasting more than 60 million monthly active users across 190 countries, however, the road to the company's success was a long one.

In 2006, Perkins and Obrecht first came up with the idea for Fusion Books, an online platform where students can collaborate to create their school newspaper or yearbook. Perkins used Fusion Books, which is still active today, as a stepping stone for her dream startup, Canva. In 2010, the founders were able to build connections in Silicon Valley with the help of Silicon Valley investor, Bill Tai. After avid networking in Mai-Tai, Bill Tai's retreat for business investors and entrepreneurs, Perkins and Obrecht gathered investors and started building Canva's design platform.

In 2012, with the help of their tech advisor and the co-founder of Google Maps, Lars Rasmussen, the couple discovered tech co-

founder, Cameron Adams and tech developer Dave Hearnden. After their first round of funding Canva received over \$1.5 million and Perkins was able to achieve her dream of launching a one-stop graphic design platform that is Canva, in 2013.

Melanie Perkins has a current net worth of \$6.5 billion, with Canva being valued at \$40



billion: it has not even been a decade since it went live.

Founded in 2006 by Emily Wojcicki, 23andMe, Inc. is the leading company in the biotechnology genetic genealogy industry. It is based right here, in Sunnyvale, California, and specializes in at-home saliva test kits that can

test for genetic predispositions, ancestry and inherited traits. After 15 years of selling saliva tests, the genetics testing company went public on June 17, 2021, by merging with a special purpose acquisition company created by Virgin Group's Richard Branson. Emily Wojcicki acquired the billionaire status when 23andMe, Inc. went public and became valued at \$3.5 billion, with its shares rising by 21%. While she has become one of the most successful people in the industry, this was not always the case.

Wojcicki was raised in Palo Alto by illustrious parents and went on to pursue a career on Wall Street after graduating from Yale. In 2007, one year after she launched 23andMe, Inc., she married Sergey Brin, the co-founder of Google and one of the richest people in the world, but they got divorced in 2015. Wojcicki recalls, in an interview for Fortune's December 2020 and January 2021 cover story, that while she was married to the tech mogul, she was often ignored despite having a successful career herself.

"There are people who wouldn't talk to me for years and years," she said. "I remember those days really well."

Women have been undeniably looked down on regardless of their achievements and had a hard time succeeding in male-dominated workplaces. Nevertheless, female entrepreneurship is on the rise, and Wojcicki has made great efforts to promote this growth by investing in numerous female entrepreneurs and their businesses.

"Having been surrounded by money for a while, I have seen that it's heavily male-dominated," Wojcicki said. "I think that you have a lot of women out there who have been underdogs for a while, and are going to drive change."

The vitality of intersectionalism to feminist theory

by Shraddha Sriram

Every individual comes with their own unique experiences of discrimination and entitlement. A person is shaped by a multitude of factors, with social and political affiliations both contributing to one's identity.

In 1989, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, who is a professor of law at Columbia Law School and UCLA and a civil rights activist for gender and race issues, coined the term intersectionality. Previously, an obscure concept, intersectionality is the understanding that every individual has their own experiences of discrimination and privilege. This includes their background of their race, education, sexuality and class, among other equally important factors.

"Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects," Crenshaw said in June 2017, during an interview with Columbia Law School. "It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here and a class or LBGTQ problem there."

For years, the feminist movement was restricted to white, cisgender and heteronormative females. Efforts were made to improve the standing of white, cisgender straight women whilst at the same time denying the struggles of all other women. This also led to only the struggles of white women being validated.

Without acknowledging the discrimination that women of color and LBGTQ+ women face, no forward progress can be made. The racial and gender pay and wealth gap cannot be fixed if this reality is not addressed. While jarring,

the sentiment that the term intersectionality is still a radical and leftist idea is widely believed on the right. People on the right view intersectionality as an ideology that strives



to completely restructure society by placing nonheteronormative people of color on top, claiming that intersectionality will place white, cisgender and straight women at the bottom of the societal totem pole. In reality, intersec-

tionality works to validate women of different backgrounds and recognize the unique forms of discrimination they face.

Although there are those who completely deny the concept of feminism, there are also self-proclaimed feminists that claim that certain women do not deserve the rights they are fighting for. Commonly known as TERFS, Trans-exclusionary radical feminists dismiss the fight for for trans women's rights, with a prime example being author of the world-renowned book series Harry Potter, J.K. Rowling. In a 2020 tweet, Rowling commented on an op-ed regarding creating a more equal world for people who menstruate, tweeting, "'People who menstruate.' I'm sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?" This statement attempts to falsify the idea that those who are not women also menstruate, targeting those who do not fit social norms, especially transgender men and women. Leaving behind certain women for being less than society's ideals does absolutely nothing to advance women's rights and actually brings the fight for gender equality nowhere. The neglect of a person's humanity and rights simply because they do not fit a certain set of requirements stains and brings the entire movement down.

Until all women, regardless of gender identity, race, sexuality, education, disability, gender, age, culture, language and class are given equal importance, there will be no equality.

Latina women in history

by Jael Ramirez



Dr. Antonia Novello, born on Aug. 23, 1944, in Puerto Rico, graduated from the University of Puerto Rico earning her MD degree. Once Dr. Novello earned her degree, she did not stop there: she moved to Michigan and studied nephrology at the University of Michigan. For several years, Dr. Novello ran a private practice while gaining pediatric experience at Georgetown hospital before becoming deputy director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Despite Dr. Novello's many accomplish-

ments, she decided to further her education, earning a degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University before being promoted to US surgeon general, earning her title as the first woman and Latina US surgeon general. Dr. Novello used her position and expertise to spread awareness about AIDs in women and children, and devoted herself to improving healthcare for women, children and minorities.



Another Latina woman who made a mark on history is Dr. Ellen Ochoa. Born and raised in California, Ochoa earned her bachelor's in physics at San Diego State University and later earned her master's and doctorate in electrical engineering at Stanford University. In 1988, Ochoa joined the Ames Research Group at NASA as a research engineer where she became an author of several research papers. In 1990, Ochoa was promoted to the Johnson Space Center as an astronaut. Ochoa became the first hispanic woman in space as an astronaut

aboard Space Shuttle Discovery in 1993. Dr. Ochoa has worked hard for her title and awards, especially NASA's Distinguished Service Medal. Today, Ochoa continues to serve on multiple committees including the American Association for the Advancement of Science and strives to make a difference in science and technology.



Dolores Huerta is one of the most well known labor activists in the Chicano civil movement. Huerta became a devoted activist at the age of 25 when she co-founded the Community Service Organization (CSO) and Agricultural Workers Association. These organizations focused on economic improvements for Hispanics. Huerta and Cesar Chavez eventually founded the United Farm Workers' Union (UFW) in 1962 and Huerta served as the vice president until 1999. Huerta advocated for safer working conditions for agricultural workers. With Huerta's contributions, agricultural workers received benefits through the Union Contract of 1970 and the ability to form unions and negotiate better benefits and wages through the 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. Huerta selflessly devoted her life to improving the lives of many, and has been honored with many awards, including the 1998 Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award.

Recognizing Latina women's contributions to society allows current young Latina to learn from past leaders and advocates and use them as positive role models.

Middle Eastern women's rights

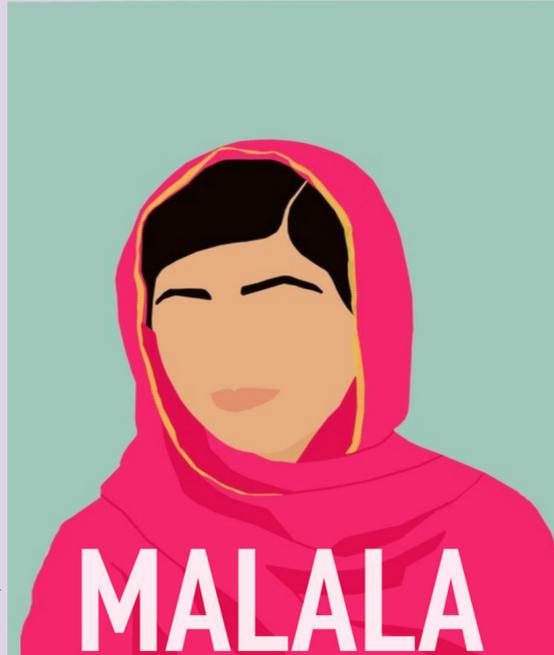
by Martha Marki

In recent years, women's rights advocates in the Middle East have seen victories as women have gained the right to drive and travel more freely as of recent years in the push for equal rights. However, the fight for gender equality is far from over.

For generations, women in the Middle East have lacked numerous rights that men have. These range from travel restrictions to child marriages, so-called honor killings of women, complicated divorce processes and severe dress codes. Middle Eastern women struggle with the devastating power differences in the patriarchal system that has existed for so long. In 2015, Saudi Arabian women were finally permitted to vote in local elections, and in 2016, the employment rate of Saudi Arabian women had only been at a mere 66 percent. According to The National News, up until 2018, women in Saudi Arabia were banned from driving; it was the only country in the region with this rule, separating Saudi Arabia even compared to its neighboring countries.

Fortunately, as time passes women are being recognized more for the rights they deserve. This includes laws against domestic violence being passed in countries like Iran and enforcing laws that hold rapists and abusers accountable, according to Chatham House. While many of these reforms are likely due to politicians feel-

ing pressure from other Western societies' own progressive advancements to reform and value equality for all, progress is still progress.



(which approximately 37 percent of women in the Middle East experience) are among these trapped people. Furthermore, women are more likely to lose their jobs and suffer casualties in conflicts. Wilson Center employee Dalia Hatuqa wrote in an article from 2021 that, in Palestine, the COVID-19 pandemic worsened many challenges women face, creating higher levels of domestic violence, alarming rates of emotional and psychological distress, increased domestic responsibilities, and lower female participation in the national labor market.

Social media also depicts a gap between the way men and women are treated, specifically in politics. Female Middle Eastern politicians receive a significant amount of abusive comments online. They are heavily criticized about their clothes and that they typically are too "emotional," whereas these topics are not discussed when it comes to discourse regarding male politicians. Yet at the same time, individual Middle Eastern women on social media are one of the more accurate depictions of life for them, compared to the international media which still has the ability to pick and choose what is broadcasted.

The fight for women's rights in the Middle East has not been as easy battle. While the victories must be rightfully celebrated, more progress must be made in order to truly give all women the equality they deserve. No on woman is free, until all women are free.

But it ought to be noted that the pandemic creates a low point for Middle Eastern women in particular, as quarantine traps people at home. Victims of domestic violence

Iconic queer women

by Zoe Davis-Marsh and Koko Grundler

Society constantly looks back on history, trying to recognize key individuals whose efforts have influenced the course of history. Though we often celebrate those who live on immortalized by their deeds, there is a subset of people constantly overlooked: queer women. From spearheading civil rights movements to breaking boundaries in art and entertainment, queer women have been at the forefront of many historical events. Yet, they rarely get the recognition they deserve.

Marsha P. Johnson, a queer woman who left home right out of high school with \$15 and big dreams, working as a waiter to make ends meet, she became an activist and self-described drag queen. She later played a key role in the Stonewall riots of 1969. Before deciding on Marsha P. Johnson, Marsha went under the moniker "BLACK Marsha." Marsha's reaction to concerns regarding her gender was "Pay It No Mind," hence the "P" in her name stood as a representation of her feelings towards gender. She dressed on the cusp between traditional men and women's clothing, expressing both her pride and identity, after officially coming out. Johnson was one of the first drag queens to visit the Stonewall Inn once it opened its doors to women and drag queens; previously, it was a gay men-only club. The Stonewall riots took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969. While the first two nights of riots were the most violent, conflicts with police led to a week of spontaneous rallies and marches through Greenwich Village's LBGTQ+ neighborhoods. Marsha P. Johnson Institute was founded in memory of who "BLACK Marsha" was. In her later life, she was an AIDS rights

activist and protested in streets and activist groups. Helping raise awareness for AIDS and normalizing the LBGTQ+ community, she made a big impact on those she met. She is



remembered as an icon in the LBGTQ+ community, building the backbone for what pride is today.

Glady Bentley, a black singer, pianist and entertainer during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s was revolutionary in regards to her presentation of gender and sexuality. After

running away from an unsupportive family at sixteen, Bentley quickly gained popularity, not just for her talent in singing rather ribald songs and playing piano, but also for her brazen display of dressing as a man when performing and eventually making her own musical revenue that started a chorus of eight men dressed in drag. She proudly displayed her love of women in her peak by flirting with women in her audiences and even announcing a supposed marriage between her and a white woman, gossip that was especially scandalous during her time. In her younger years, Bentley felt shunned by her mother due to her not being born a boy, something she believed to have greatly contributed to the person she eventually became. Her "behaviors" regarding her attraction to women and preference for masculine clothing led to her family sending her to a psychiatrist, who diagnosed her with extreme social maladjustment. Her refusal to conform to what society and her family wanted from her led to her running away, giving her the opportunity to begin a new life in New York City.

Queer women continue to change history to this day, bringing much needed changes to society. They shaped the world into what it is today, the impact they have flourishes. Although people of all marginalized groups continue to struggle with making their voices heard, these women constantly prove society wrong, fighting the oppression they faced to make themselves known all across the globe. Johnson and Bentley are just two of the many queer women that deserve to be celebrated and immortalized alongside other greatest historical figures.