



## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY

### Honoring Women Who Ran For the Presidency

We hear it over and over - these are incredible times. Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign has spotlighted women's political roles, which have not seen this kind of attention since the early 1900's when women were pursuing the vote. Repeatedly, political pundits and journalists have pointed out that gender remains the most restricting force in all aspects of American life.

We Americans like to think of ourselves as THE world leader, yet many other democracies are ahead of the United States in utilizing the abilities of the majority of their citizens - the women. Astonishingly, twenty-six countries granted women the vote before the U.S. did and similarly, the U.S. falls behind many others in electing women as national leaders. Such countries as Australia, Britain, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, and even Pakistan have preceded the United States.

It is not as though American women haven't tried: NWHM research shows that at least 35 women have run for president. Most are unknown, and some represented parties that no one has heard of (including the Surprise Party and the Looking Back Party). Although these may generate amusement, it nonetheless is true that the women who mounted campaigns to speak to their issues were courageous: more than men, they knew that their audacity invited ridicule. As more and more accepted the risk, however, their candidacies elevated public esteem for women's abilities.

### NWHM Launches First But Not the Last: Women Who Ran for President

NWHM's newest CyberExhibit ([www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org)) highlights the campaigns of twelve women who announced their intention to contend for America's top office. Each attempt created a stepping stone for those who followed.

Representative Patricia Schroeder and one-time presidential candidate said many years ago that more women would run for office if they only knew their history. It is the hope of NWHM leadership that this exhibit will inspire a truly democratic future, one in which every girl can grow up aspiring to be president.

Intern Kirsten Blake researched this exhibit and it was curated by Doris Weatherford. (See Page 2)



### History Lights the Path For the Future

History is a powerful tool! Our wisest leaders study it. By learning from our past, we are not doomed to repeating the same mistakes. Each generation can build on the one before . . . except . . .

Except when there is no history! Very few women know about their own history. Today, it is still mostly relegated to those who enter women's studies programs or those who've somehow stumbled upon this empowering information.

Few of us know that the documentation of women's history has been repeatedly unearthed, reclaimed, and lost. Christine de Pisan first wrote on women's history in 1405. Aphra Behn recovered the history of women in 1660; Mary Astell in 1694; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in 1734; Matilda Joslyn Gage in 1873; Virginia Woolf in 1932; and Mary Ritter Beard in 1946.

Most women today learned little of women's history in school. Information about the women who came before astonishes women and men. Many times they have said rhetorically, "Why didn't I know that!" The women in history were courageous, persistent and caring.

Empowered by their history, women in the future will step forward with the leadership skills that have empowered men for centuries. Together, we can leave this gift to generations of women who will follow in our footsteps.



*"There is no escaping the fact that the principle by which the male citizens of these United States assume to rule the female citizens is not that of self-government, but that of despotism...King George III and his Parliament denied our forefathers the right to make their own laws; they rebelled, and being successful, inaugurated this government. But men do not seem to comprehend that they are now pursuing toward women the same despotic course that King George pursued toward the American colonies."*

Victoria Claflin Woodhull, 1871

### DISTINGUISHED PANEL DISCUSSES WOMEN RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT



From Left to Right: Karen O'Connor, Kathy Bonk, Edith Mayo, Joan Wages, and Jessie Washington

On March 6, 2008, NWHM joined with Sewall-Belmont House and Museum to celebrate Women's History Month by convening a panel to discuss *First But Not the Last: Women Who Ran for President*.

The panelists for the event were Edith Mayo, Curator Emeritus, Political History, Smithsonian Institution; Kathy Bonk, Senior Strategist

for Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder's campaign; Jessie Washington, Strategist for Senator Carol Moseley-Braun's campaign; and Karen O'Connor, Founder and Executive Director, Women & Politics Institute at American



University. C-Span covered the lively discussion on women's roles in politics. Each of the panelists brought a unique perspective and added immensely to the dialogue. The audience had many thoughts and questions.

There was one conclusion from the evening -- women need to know their history and there needs to be a National Women's History Museum!

Repeatedly, the panelists pointed out that women would be more active in politics if they knew what women had done before them. The brave women who stepped forward were role models.

"It's time to take the 'Men Only' sign off the White House door!"

Carol Moseley-Braun, 2003

# Running For the Nation's Top Job



From Left to Right: Victoria Woodhull, Patsy Takemoto Mink, Shirley Chisholm, Elizabeth Dole, and Carol Moseley-Braun.

As the presidential primaries roll on, March marked the first Women's History Month in which a woman was a top contender for the nation's top job. Because of that, the National Women's History Museum is posting a CyberExhibit at [www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org), "*First But Not the Last: Women Who Ran for President.*"

The very first was the flamboyant Victoria Woodhull. Her 1872 campaign made no pretense of expecting to win, but she used this opportunity to draw attention to women's rights, including the right to vote. A complex personage, Woodhull had no formal education, but made legitimate money as a New York City stockbroker -- and illegitimate money with her appreciable abilities as a con artist. At least a century ahead of her time in societal morality, she practiced "free love" and advocated birth control. Woodhull actually spent election day in jail, charged with obscenity for publishing the (true) story of a popular preacher's adulterous affair.

Belva Lockwood had better credentials, but also knew that her 1884 race would fail. Ironically, she had been an early elected official: the male voters of Lockport, New York chose her as school superintendent in 1857. She later moved to Washington, DC and operated a successful co-educational school until women began the fight for entry into law schools. After overcoming several complex barriers to practice law, she formed the Equal Rights Party and won some 4,000 votes in six states. Her most significant achievement, however, may have been when she won \$5 million for eastern Cherokees, arguing the case before the U.S. Supreme Court at age 75.

Most leaders of women's organizations considered Woodhull and Lockwood to be self-aggrandizing, prioritizing their personal careers over women's genuine needs. A few argued that such audacity was a necessary phase of moving issues forward -- but right or wrong, eighty years passed before another ran for president. Despite winning complete voting rights in 1920, the only precedent of the first half of the 20th century was the Prohibition Party's 1924 nomination of Marie C. Brehm for vice president.

The first serious female presidential contender finally arrived in 1964. Margaret Chase Smith, a liberal Republican from Maine, won the votes of 27 delegates at the 1964 Republican convention that nominated conservative Barry Goldwater. Smith's career also marked other milestones: she was the first woman elected to both the House (1940) and the Senate (1948); she sponsored the first non-nursing women's branch of the Navy, World War II's WAVES; and her 1960 re-election campaign for the Senate was the first between two female nominees.

After Smith broke the presidential barrier, every decade since has seen at least one female candidate. Also like Smith, Patsy Takemoto Mink set a congressional precedent: the first Asian-American woman in the US House, she was born in Hawaii of Japanese parents. Her 1972 presidential campaign was motivated by feminism, environmentalism, and the Vietnam War, but was rather brief: Mink ran only in the Oregon primary and ended her campaign after coming in eighth

of nine candidates. Her positions on the issues, however, soon were adopted by most Americans.

Mink dropped out partly because another woman with a very similar background was in the race, as Democrat Shirley Chisholm also ran in 1972. A New Yorker born to immigrants from Barbados, she was the first African-American congresswoman. Chisholm ran an energetic campaign and won 151 votes at the tumultuous convention that nominated George McGovern.

The Vietnam War was over, but military issues -- including sexual harassment of its women -- motivated Colorado Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder, who had long experience on the House Armed Services Committee.

Also a founder of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, she competed in the Democratic campaign that nominated Michael Dukakis in 1988. Schroeder returned to Congress, where she led a feminist revolution in 1993: during this first year of Bill Clinton's administration, thirty bills on women's issues were enacted into law; the previous record had been five.

In 2000, Elizabeth Dole became the first Republican since Margaret Chase Smith in 1964. She had been Elizabeth Hanford when President Richard Nixon appointed her to the Federal Trade Commission; after her 1975 marriage to divorced Kansas Senator Robert Dole, she headed the Department of Transportation in the Reagan administration and Department of Labor in the first Bush administration.

She campaigned for her husband, the 1996 Republican presidential nominee, and then for herself in the 2000 election. After dropping out late in 1999, she was elected to the Senate in 2002 from her native North Carolina.

The 2004 presidential election was briefly the focus of Democrat Carol Moseley-Braun, the first African-American woman in the Senate. Illinois voters elected her to that position in 1992, but after a number of controversies, she lost her 1998 re-election bid.

President Bill Clinton appointed her as an ambassador, and when that ended with the 2000 presidency of George W. Bush, she declared her candidacy in 2003 and participated in some debates.

In addition to these politically experienced women, three minor-party women -- Ellen McCormack, Sonia Johnson, and Lenora Fulani -- have emulated Woodhull and Lockwood in using the presidential platform for their issues. And, of course, in 2008, New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is making history as the woman most likely, to date, to go to the White House.

Article by Doris Weatherford, NWHM Vice President of Program, Author -- <http://members.authorsguild.net/weatherford>

## SPOTLIGHT ON NWHM BOARD MEMBER

### GFWC HONORS WILMA VAUGHT Brid. General USAF (Ret.)

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) awarded General Vaught their highest honor in celebration of Women's History Month. General Vaught, President of the Women in Military Service For America Memorial Foundation (WIMSA), is one of the most decorated military women in U.S. history, breaking down numerous barriers for women.

She says, "The National Women's History Museum is important because we don't have a place where we pay tribute as a nation to the accomplishments and progress of women as contributors to the security and economic progress of the country. This needs to be recorded as a source of inspiration for future generations."

General Vaught has been a guiding light to NWHM as it has grown and pursues a building site. NWHM honors her unyielding dedication to the recognition of women's many contributions.



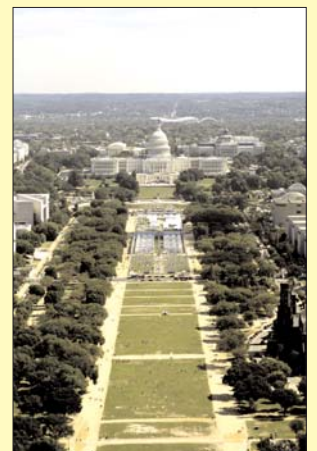
## Building Site Update

We continue to wait on word from NWHM's bid for the building ON the National Mall. We've been told that it could be several more months before we have any notice.

While our competition is stiff (we've learned of two others who have also bid), no other group could be representing 52% of our nation's population! **Women deserve a home among our nation's other national museums.**

As we wait, NWHM is utilizing every minute to prepare for the Design Phase that will include an in-depth program design, financial projections and other planning. It is normal for a new museum to spend 1-2 years with architects, exhibit designers, economists, curators and historians planning how "the story" of the Museum will be told.

It's a creative, yet challenging process. Many visions must be melded into one. This planning phase is critical because it produces documents that become the litmus test for all that is to follow in the building design, renovation and exhibit installation.



Aerial View of the National Mall

# President's Letter



You might have noted that our "look" has changed. *A Different Point of View* is bigger and better -- in color. We made this change for a couple of reasons. We need more space to write about women's history - there's tons to tell -- and we have a lot going on that we want you to know.

Educators tell us that they use our newsletter information in teaching their classes. It's no wonder - women's history is still virtually missing from the textbooks. A 2004 study of 18 history textbooks showed that only 10% of the items were on women's history.

Also, the birthday listings are back. A number of supporters have told us that

they missed them. So they are back by popular demand!

In addition, you will find our first Annual Report. Last May, NWHM convened a focus group, a dedicated group of early Charter Members, to tell us what we were doing right and what we could be doing better. We listened to their comments and are working to implement all that we can. Soon the Board of Directors will hold a special meeting to consider the Museum's pre-design plan. It will be the first of many meetings over a 1-2 year period that will determine the content of the Museum.

We are hard at work to make our shared vision a reality. With your on-going support, this Museum will open its doors!

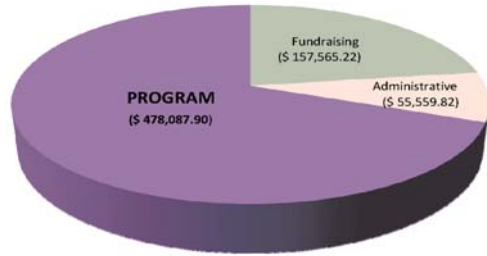
Sincerely,

Joan Bradley Wages

## NWHM 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Last year, 2007, presented many challenges and opportunities for NWHM. Our website grew rapidly in popularity as a resource on women's history and a building site ON the Mall opened as a possible permanent home. Support from NWHM Charter Members is critical to our success. Thank you for sharing our vision to honor the women who came before us and preserve that information for future generations.

Partial Donation Listing as of Dec. 31, 2007



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## The Missing Part of History

NWHM developer, Judy Renfrew, overheard two of her daughters talking about Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign. Ellie, her 6-year-old, declared, "**Women aren't allowed to be President.**" Judy was horrified to hear this, and told Ellie that women can be whatever they want to be -- including President of the United States. Ellie then asked, "**Then why haven't there been any women Presidents?**"

Judy later said, "Even though my daughter is growing-up in a well-educated cosmopolitan area, attending a good public school and has two progressively-minded parents, she still came to this conclusion based on her own observations."

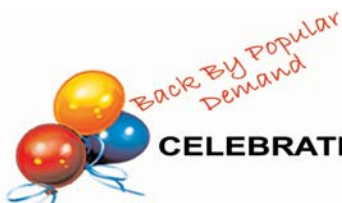
Edith Mayo, Curator Emeritus of Smithsonian American History and a noted expert on women's history, told an audience on March 6, 2008 of her granddaughter who attends a prestigious, private school in the Washington area. Some time ago her granddaughter brought home a list of historical figures. She was to choose names for further research. The list of more than 30 names contained only two women -- Eleanor Roosevelt and Britney Spears! Shocked, Edie's daughter took time off from work to discuss the matter with the school which put out an addendum adding 20 more women to the list.

Not every girl is fortunate enough to have Edie Mayo as her grandmother.

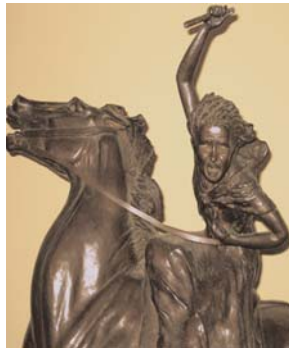
NOTE -- Edith Mayo curated the NWHM CyberExhibit "Woman Suffrage" that won the top award from *Surfing the Net with Kids*.

**"Imagine a picture of the House Floor of 406 women and 28 men or the Senate floor with 98 women and two men."**

Patricia Scott Schroeder, 1991



## CELEBRATE THESE WOMEN BORN IN THE SPRING



A young American patriot, **Sybil Ludington (4/5/1761)** is the female counterpart to the more famous Paul Revere. When British troops and British loyalists attacked a nearby town, Danbury, Connecticut, in 1777, a rider came to the Ludington household to warn them and ask for the local regiment's help. At the time, the Colonel's regiment was disbanded for planting season, and all of the men were miles apart at their respective farms.

The rider was too tired to continue and Colonel Ludington had to prepare for battle, so he asked his barely sixteen-year-old daughter Sybil to ride through the night, alerting his men of the danger and urging them to come back together to fight. Ludington rode all night through the dark woods, covering forty miles (a significantly longer distance than Revere rode), and because of her bravery, almost the whole regiment was gathered by daybreak to fight the British. After the battle at Danbury, George Washington went to the Ludington home to personally thank Sybil for her help.



**Belle Boyd (5/9/1844)** was a Civil War spy for the Confederacy. The change of her name from Isabelle illustrates the nature of her character, as she used a carefully crafted image of a Southern belle to charm Union soldiers into giving her information helpful to the South. In 1861, Boyd fatally shot a Union soldier, and when no consequences followed, she felt encouraged to begin a career in espionage. Courting the attentions of Union men, she sought out important military information and sent it South. Even though one of her messages was soon intercepted, Federal officers took no action beyond reprimanding what they assumed was an innocent teenager. Arrested and detained for a week in Baltimore early in 1862, she moved on to Fort Royal, Virginia, where, with her mother, she brazenly shared the same hotel as Union officers,

and after scouting out a knothole in a room over their headquarters, listened until the plans of troop movements were clear. An expert rider, Boyd made her most famous ride on the night of May 23, 1862, when she delivered intelligence of "immense service" as General Stonewall Jackson termed it in his thank-you note. After being arrested a total of six times, she ultimately was banished to Canada, under a sentence of death should she return.



Civil Rights activist **Coretta Scott King (4/27/1927)** said that she was determined, even in girlhood, to do something positive for the cause of human rights. After her husband's assassination in 1968, she continued working towards equality for African-Americans in various, more central ways. Days after her husband's death, King flew to Memphis with three of her children to lead the march of thousands of people in honor of Dr. King and to continue to promote the cause they had both fought for, equality for all people.

Later that year she led the Poor People's March in Washington, D.C. In 1969, she founded the multi-million dollar Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta. The complex includes King's boyhood home, his tomb, exhibitions and speeches on display. "The center enables us to go out and struggle against the evils in our society," she often said. King's beliefs, actions, and dedication have helped change the United States and the world, making it a place that treats all people more equitably.



circa 1890

Newspaper reporter **Elizabeth Jane Cochran, aka Nellie Bly's (5/5/1864)** career began when she wrote an indignant letter to the newspaper Pittsburgh Dispatch over a columnist's assertion that women only belonged in the home doing domestic tasks; the column condemned working women.

The newspaper editor was impressed by the letter and offered her a job. She later moved to New York and got a job at *New York World*, where her first assignment was to write about the mentally ill. Posing as a mentally ill patient, she lived at the Blackwell Island Insane Asylum for 10 days, observing physical cruelty, cold baths, and forced meals of old food.

Her report of the cruelty prompted public and political action and led to the reform of the institution. In 1889, Bly reached international celebrity status when she traveled around the world by ship, train and burro in 72 days, 6 hours and 11 minutes, making real the fantasy of Jules Verne's 1873 novel, *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

To read full biographies of these and other amazing women, log on to [www.nwhm.org](http://www.nwhm.org) and click on Biographies, under the Educational Resources tab. (<http://www.nwhm.org/Education/biographies.html>)

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