

**2003 *Write Women
Back Into History*
Essay Contest Winners**



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Iowa Commission the Status of Women
Iowa Department of Education
State Historical Society of Iowa

2003 *Write Women Back Into History* Essay Contest Winners



6-7 Grade Category

1st Place: Brittni Strouth, Sibley-Ocheyedan Middle School

2nd Place: Kathryn M. Skilton, Nashua-Plainfield Middle School

3rd Place: Rachel Nilles, LeMars Community Middle School

8-9 Grade Category

1st Place: Caitlin Oponski, Indianola Middle School

2nd Place: Amy Williams, Indianola Middle School

3rd Place: Amy Xu, Fort Dodge Senior High School

Best Essays on Women in Science and Engineering for 6-7 Grades

1st Place: David Maffett, Parkview Middle School, Ankeny

2nd Place: Dianna Krejsa, Indianola Middle School

Best Essays on Women in Science and Engineering for 8-9 Grades

1st Place: Desmond Strooh, Central Academy, Des Moines

2nd Place: Tabby Pauly, Wilson Junior High School, Council Bluffs

Edith Rose Murphy Sackett Award on the Best Essays on a Woman Volunteer

Caitlin Hillyard, Central Academy, Des Moines

April Sauls, Central Academy, Des Moines

Editor's Note: Essays were typed as submitted.

First Place

Grace Murray Hopper: “Mother of the Computer”

by Brittni Strouth, Grade 7

Sibley-Ocheyedan Middle School

Sponsoring Teacher: E. Rochelle Hook

Most of the world is run on computers. Industries, communications, education, and even the government rely on the computer. None of this would be possible without the innovations of Grace Murray Hopper.

Grace Murray Hopper was born on December 9, 1906. Her father encouraged her to not limit herself to traditional female roles. She graduated Phi Theta Kappa from Vassar in 1928, with a Bachelors degree in Math and Physics. In 1930, at age 23, she received a Masters degree in Math at Yale University. Vassar hired her as a mathematics instructor. In 1934, Hopper earned a Ph.D. and was promoted to associate professor.

When World War II began, Hopper joined the Navy. Hopper’s first assignment was as a programmer of the Mark I, the world’s first large-scale automatically sequenced digital computer. Hopper worked on Mark I and its successors, Mark II and Mark III.

During her work with Mark II, Hopper was credited with coining the term “bug” in reference to a glitch in the computer. She found a moth, which flew through an open window and into one of Mark II’s relays, temporarily shutting it down. The word “bug” referred to problems with the hardware. In the mid 1950’s, Hopper coined the term “debug” to include removing programming errors.

In 1949, she joined Eckert-Mauchley Computer Corporation as a senior mathematician. The company introduced BINAC, the Binary Automatic Computer, which was programmed using C10 code instead of the punched cards utilized by the Mark series. This paved the way for production of the first commercial computers, UNIVAC I and II.

The BINAC was programmed using a series of binary codes (using only 1’s and 0’s.) This made it very easy to make mistakes and incredibly difficult to find them. Hopper was convinced that if computers could be programmed in plain English, they would become easier to use. Her team laughed at her, but that didn’t stop Grace Hopper.

In 1952, she developed the first computer compiler called the FLOW-MATIC. The compiler worked like a form of shorthand that called up the code already written in the computer files. By the end of 1956, she had reached her goal of “teaching” UNIVAC I and II to recognize English statements. In 1959, she went one step further and invented the computer language COBOL. She worked hard to get this language standardized and soon the Navy and others were using the language.

Hopper received numerous honors before her death in 1992. But, she claimed her work as a teacher as her most important and rewarding accomplishment.

Hopper kept a clock in her office that ran counter-clockwise as a reminder of her belief that most problems have more than one solution. She was quoted as saying, “Humans are allergic to change. They love to say, ‘We’ve always done it this way.’ I try to fight that. That’s why I have a clock on my wall that runs counter-clockwise.”

Grace Hopper is a role model to me because I often hear people say, “You can’t do it that way.” When I hear that, I think of Grace’s clock and say, “Yes, I think I can.” She believed that “we’ve always done it that way” was not necessarily a good reason to continue to do so, and that is

an important attitude to have if I want to effect change in the world.

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Second Place

Martha Peterson: My “Grandmother” the J. P.
by Kathryn Skilton, Grade 7
Nashau-Plainfield Middle School
Sponsoring Teacher: Brian Rupp

With her snowy white hair, cheerful smile, and spunky attitude, I had always known Martha Peterson as a jewel of the town. Involved in church and community activities and author of a column for the weekly town newspaper, she is known favorably by almost everyone. Having filled in when my grandmother couldn't make it to my school's grandparents' day, Martha has encouraged me in school, 4-H events, and other activities. I was amazed when I found out that as Justice of the Peace for Chickasaw County, Iowa, from 1963 to 1970, Martha Peterson was a pioneer for women in judicial roles.

Trained as a teacher, Martha taught for several years before marrying and raising two children on a farm in Chickasaw County with her husband. Although the justice of the peace position was an elected one, Martha was appointed to the job in 1963 when the then-current Justice of the Peace stepped down. Martha came into the justice of the peace position with no formal legal training, and only an annual state-wide meeting of the justices of the peace and a worn-out handbook published in 1925 to guide her. It was a challenging role, but she learned the ropes quickly and was elected to a second term. She says in her seven-year career she saw everything from school bus fights to murders.

Martha was warned by her husband that she would lose all of her friends if she took the justice of the peace position. Believing that she could be fair and make a difference, though, she accepted the challenge. In fact, one of her first cases involved a close family member. Martha remembers that she was ironing at the time the deputy brought the offender to her house. She sat him down at the kitchen table and tried him as if he was anyone else, including making him pay the full fine. She claims that by the end of her career as Justice of the Peace she had seen more than half of the people from her township.

Before cases went to the District Court, defendants appeared before Martha or the other justice of the peace in the county. While some cases were heard at the courthouse, the offenders were normally brought to the Peterson home by the sheriff's deputies or the patrolmen. She recalls

that one prisoner tried to escape, but was tackled and handcuffed by the officer in the bushes outside her house. She was paid \$4.00 per offender or \$1.00 per page of paperwork she had to fill out for the county files. Martha was responsible for collecting the fines and court costs. Periodically, she would turn in the money and paperwork to the county auditor's office. Besides traffic and criminal cases Martha also handled simple small claims, unpaid bill collections, and weddings. Her only jury trial, over stolen chickens, and a Jewish wedding are especially memorable events for her.

From teacher, to farm wife and mother, to Justice of the Peace at a time when women were not commonly seen as judges, Martha Peterson helped pioneer the role of women in the judicial system. I believe that she should be written into history because even though she was in a small judicial position, she was able to impact many lives through her work on a local level. She is a great example of being independent, caring, and standing up for what you feel is right. Martha Peterson has set an amazing example for me and other young women to follow.



**Alice Coachman: Women Pioneering the Future
by Rachel Nilles, Grade 7**

LeMars Community Middle School

Sponsoring Teacher: Tina Gray

Have you ever wondered if you could ever be an Olympic winner? Alice Coachman was an Olympic track winner.

Alice Coachman was an African-American to win a gold medal in the 1948 Olympics in London. She was born on November 9, 1923 in Albany, Georgia. She was the fifth of ten children. When Alice was young, blacks could not participate in organized athletic activities in Southern schools and YMCAs.

Despite the troubles, in 1939, at age of 19, she received a scholarship to attend Tuskegee Preparatory School. Also at Tuskegee, she ran on the national champion 4 X 100 meter relay team in 1941 and 1942. In 1943, she won the AAU nationals in the running high jump and the fifty-yard dash. In 1946, she received a trade degree from Tuskegee Institute and enrolled in Albany State College.

Alice Coachman won 25 national titles, mainly from the high jump. She ran indoors and outdoors. Coachman trained for sprint events on dirt roads and in fields and practiced barefoot for the high jump at a neighborhood playground. Alice Coachman was the national high jump champion for 10 years though her chances to win an Olympic medal were slimmed because of World War II effect on the Olympic games. In the high jump finals, Alice Coachman leaped 5 feet 6 1/8 inches on her first try. She excelled in the sprints and basketball as well while competing at Tuskegee Institute.

Alice Coachman said, "I was poor and black and I had no track shoes – but my eyes are on the prize." She retired from track after the 1948 Olympics, earned a degree from Albany State College, and later worked as a teacher and track coach. Alice Coachman began teaching the high jump physical education in Albany, Georgia.

Alice Coachman was magnificent track star. Running is something that I like to do. I hope to be a person who has a positive attitude like Alice. She had to work hard to overcome not being able

to participate in school activities or the YMCA. She had to be able to push her and develop good work habits because of this. Try and try again was the Alice lived, and she became a good runner. That is what I would like to learn from her example. Alice did not get mad or give up because she did not win or get into the finals. This shows what athletics are about, competing, but you don't have to win every time. Alice was proud of her life and accomplishments. She has affected my life by setting the example that if things don't go right at first, don't give up.

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First Place

**Jackie Cochran: Traveling with the Wind
by Caitlin Oponski, Grade 8**

Indianola Middle School

Sponsoring Teacher: Karen Shayer

With only minutes of gas left in the tank, Jackie Cochran and her P-35 flew across the finish line of the Bendix race. It was 1938; she had won the race from Cleveland to Los Angeles. In doing so she became the first woman to win the race and the first person to complete it nonstop. When asked about this accomplishment, she replied, "If I had conceded on this, women would be barred from racing for years, maybe even forever."

Jackie was an orphan and had grown up with foster parents. She learned that money could get her places, so she began work as a hairdressers' apprentice around age eleven. By 14 she was fully trained in hairstyling. In 1932, she set out for New York to start her own company. There she met Floyd Odium, her future husband, who encouraged her to take flight lessons.

She took his advice, and after her very first lesson she replied, "A beauty operator ceased to exist and an aviator was born." She set nine international speed records, and won the Harmon, a very prestigious trophy, three years in a row. Jackie then decided it was time to set her sights on serving her country. Cochran wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt about her feelings, and how women were capable of being pilots in the war. Alas, this had no results.

After being denied by America, Cochran and other lady pilots helped Britain. The Royal Air Force was drastically short on pilots, and recognized how helpful women were. After serving the British, Jackie created a program in the U.S.

In 1943, Cochran organized the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS,) to train women to fly. Of the 25,000 women who applied, she could only accept 2,000. Jackie was thrilled with the outcome; her girls were now flying, ferrying, training, and repairing. Cochran presented this to Congress, but it proved frivolous; they would not recognize the WASPS as a military group, and the program was terminated. In December 1944, the WASPS were sent home from duty.

Though WASPS was over, Jackie wasn't. She kept flying and setting new records. "I was determined to travel with the wind and the stars." In 1946, she again completed the Bendix, coming in second, and in 1953 she became the first woman to break the sound barrier. She had proved she was as good as the guys. She was finally "grounded" when her health began to fail. Floyd died in 1976, and Jackie, heartbroken, died soon after. She had asked to be buried with a sword presented to her by the Air Force so she could keep on fighting. Cochran became the first woman honored by the Air Force Academy in 1975, and in 1977 the WASPS finally earned the recognition they deserved. They were honored as war veterans.

Jackie Cochran has become an inspiration to me, because she set her goals high, and nothing stopped her. My dream is to become a fighter pilot with the Air Force, and thanks to Jackie, it is a possibility. Next year, in high school, I will be able to take Ground School classes where I can learn about flight.

Jackie set many records for the future to break. She holds the most records today, man or woman. Without Jackie's bravery, would women still be banned from plane races? Would women be able to serve their country in battle? She had a fighting spirit and never gave up. We all can change the future, like women before us, for women that will come after us.

Second Place

A Person that Changed My Life
by Amy Williams, Grade 8
Indianola Middle School
Sponsoring Teacher: Karen Shayer

For every Madame Curie, there was an encouraging teacher. For every Helen Keller, there was a patient teacher. For me, there was an encouraging, patient teacher who changed my life by changing my outlook on school.

Mrs. Johnson started teaching in 1954 and taught for 39 years, retiring in 1998. She taught in Ames, Webster City, Des Moines and Indianola, mostly teaching second grade. She knew she could make a difference in the way her young students thought of school through her patient and encouraging teaching methods. She predicted if a person in 2nd grade hated school, he or she would probably hate school in middle school. If she could teach them to love school, they would be more easy and fun to teach. You could sense that Mrs. Johnson really loved her job.

My second grade teacher, Mrs. Sandra Johnson taught me to love school, work hard for my grades and do more than I thought was possible. The year before, as a new, shy first grader, I had a horrible experience. I absolutely hated school. I was with the rowdy kids; the first-year teacher yelled at the top of her lungs for my class to be quiet. I didn't know what to do to be successful.

When I entered second grade my life took a turn for the better. When I interviewed Mrs. Johnson for this essay, she told me her goals were "That each day you want to come to school, that the lessons we shared would make a difference in your life, and that you left feeling good about yourself." This is exactly what my hero, 2nd grade teacher Mrs. Johnson, did through her patient and encouraging methods of teaching.

Third Place

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt
by Amy Xu, Grade 9
Fort Dodge Senior High
Sponsoring Teacher: Diane Pratt

Anna was a plain and homely child. From the moment she was born, she was a disappointment to everyone. Many said that she was the ugly duckling of the family. Who could imagine that this shy, awkward child would become a First Lady, and charm the world? Who was this lady? Her name was Anne Eleanor Roosevelt.

Eleanor Roosevelt was a truly amazing woman! The differences she made in her lifetime touch and affect us everyday. She makes us look at our lives and wonder how we can change the world like she did. In spite of all she accomplished, Eleanor wasn't always the brave and courageous

woman she appeared to be. As a child, Eleanor was scared of most everything. Because of insecurities about her physical appearance, family, and herself in general, Eleanor never made any friends when she was young.

As she grew older, Eleanor became more confident. She soon became the wife of her cousin, Franklin Roosevelt, who became President in 1933. When he was struck with polio, Eleanor became his eyes, ears, and legs. During the depression, she traveled throughout the country inspecting coal mines, soup kitchens, prisons, and hospitals. It was hard work, but serving others was what she loved to do. Eleanor once wrote, "I learned that true happiness lies in doing something useful with your life." During his terms, Eleanor urged Franklin to appoint the first woman cabinet member, Francis Perkins. This sensitive woman paved the way for improvement in lives of all, but especially the overlooked and the underprivileged. She had compassion towards people of all races, nations, and creeds. Because of this, she was one of the most loved public figures of all time.

In 1945, Franklin Roosevelt died, and Harry Truman was forced to step in. Eleanor Roosevelt was no longer the First Lady, but her service to the people did not die along with her husband. She was chosen to go to the first meeting of the United Nations, and her daily newspaper column, "My Day" frankly expressed her opinions to the public. Sixteen years after Franklin's death, Eleanor was still America's most admired woman. On November 27th, 1962, that little girl who had turned into such a great woman, died peacefully in her sleep.

Behind every great man there's a great woman. In Franklin's case, it was Eleanor that urged him to go on when the polio seemed too much to stand. She was the hope and strength behind one of our most successful presidents. This First Lady paved the way for fair treatment for even the most neglected in society. Added to her roles of a social activist, humanitarian, and crusader for human rights, Eleanor was a role model for all, because she proved that the seemingly most unimportant people can make the most important contributions to society. I think she is one of the few citizens that showed Americans during the Depression that some people really cared, and really did want to help others. Added to her gift of true compassion and her many improvements to the United States we know today, Eleanor Roosevelt is undeniably one of the most influential women of all time.

Perhaps ugly ducklings really do turn into swans...

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First Place

Grace Hopper

by David Maffett, Grade 7

Parkview Middle School, Ankeny

Sponsoring Teacher: Jen Yates

Grace Hopper has changed all of our lives. She was a pioneer in the field of computer programming that changed the world of information. She was the co-inventor of COBOL (common-business-oriented language), a computer language that is still used by many businesses today. This unlocked the potential for today's computers to provide information in all areas of work and play. A computer helps me to get information, shop online and talk to other people. I listen to music on the computer and play games. Grace Hopper's contributions to the field of computer programming made these things possible.

Grace Hopper was born on December 9, 1906. Her parents were named Walter and Mary Murray. At a young age, Grace showed a love for science and math. She wanted to know how things worked. Her father encouraged all of his children to do their best. This inspired Grace to get a better education and look at opportunities that were not typical of women at that time. When she was 16, Grace applied to Vassar College, but was rejected because she failed a Latin exam. She had to wait a year to get back in. In 1928, she graduated from Vassar College with a Bachelors degree in math. Two years later she got her Master's degree from Yale. A year later, Vassar hired her to be a math instructor for a salary of \$800 a year. She married Vincent Foster Hopper, an English teacher at New York School of Commerce. She taught at Vassar for twelve years. During this time, she earned her PhD in mathematics from Yale.

When World War II started, Grace made a life-altering decision to join the Navy to help her country. She was not really Navy material, being older and under weight. It was hard for her to get into the Navy. With a lot a hard work, she finally got in. She was sent to a Naval school. She graduated first in her class. Her job in the Navy was to put machine code into the Navy's computers, Mark I, II and III. Machine code was very difficult and time consuming.

In 1946, she left the Navy's active service and joined Eckert-Mauchly Computer Corporation as a senior mathematician. There, she and her company developed BINAC, Binary Automatic Computer. BINAC used a compiler that translated mathematical code into machine code. Mathematical code was easier than machine code, but still time consuming. BINAC paved the way for UNIVAC, the first commercial large-scale electronic computer. Hopper said that UNIVAC could be programmed using words instead of numbers. She developed a compiler that used words to program UNIVAC. This compiler was then used to develop a programming language called COBOL that used words instead of numbers to tell the computer what to do.

In 1966, the Naval Reserves forced her to retire. But the Navy soon hired her again because they needed her to help standardize COBOL. By 1983, she was promoted to the rank of Commodore. Then two years later she was promoted to Rear Admiral. In 1986, she officially retired from the Navy. She spent the rest of her life as a senior consultant for the Digital Equipment Corporation. Grace died on January 1, 1992.

Grace Hopper made major contributions to the field of computer programming. She won numerous awards, including the National Science and Technology Award. Throughout her amazing life, Grace always lived up to her motto, "Dare and Do."



Second Place

The Capturer of Creation: Rosalind Franklin

by Dianna Krejsa, Grade 6

Indianola Middle School

Sponsoring Teacher: Karen Shayer

Rosalind Franklin's discovery made important contributions to human genetics and chemistry. She developed the concept that DNA is made up of two chains twisted around each other to make a double helix. These two chains are held with hydrogen bonds from adenine, thiamine, guanine, and cytosine or A, T, G, and C. The DNA looks like a twisted ladder.

Rosalind Franklin was born in 1920 into a London banking family where the boys *and* girls were both encouraged developing their individual aptitudes. She attended St. Paul's Girl's School and learned about the international political situation happening when her parents adopted two Jewish children from Nazi, Germany. The children's father had been sent to a concentration camp in Germany. Later Franklin studied chemistry and physics at Newnham College, Cambridge. In Rosalind Franklin gave up a scholarship to help in World War II to work for the Coal Utilization Research Association. When there, Rosalind Franklin performed fundamental investigations on properties of coal and graphite.

In 1953 Rosalind Franklin, James Watson, Francis Crick, and Maurice Wilkins were thought to discover the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA. She produced X-ray diffraction pictures of DNA. Franklin was the only one who had degrees in chemistry and truly deserved recognition for her work, but she died in 1958 at the age of 37 because of cancer. Watson, Crick, and Wilkins won the Nobel prize jointly in medicine or physiology in 1962, but Franklin was not awarded since she had died and Nobel prizes can only be rewarded to live people.

Even though the Nobel Prize did not recognize Rosalind Franklin for her outstanding discoveries, I hope I have made her name a little more known so she can be remembered in history as the women who first determined the structure of DNA. In Franklin's time, the woman of the communities were rarely recognized for their accomplishments. She overcame this strong tradition and made a difference, paving the way for others after her. I hope to be like her in that I am not held back and I am able to make my own mark in the world.

First Place

Dr. Gladys B. Black

by Desmond Strooh, Grade 8

Central Academy, Des Moines

Sponsoring Teacher: Jerry Leventhal

I look out over the golden, rippling sea of tall grass. I see a world, seemingly calm, and know that under this small patch of tranquility there is a world teeming with life. Birds fly out of the trees, crickets chirp hidden in the ground, and butterflies flit between flowers. I think about a remarkable woman named Gladys B. Black, who helped educate an entire state about its natural heritage, and for that she should be written into history.

Gladys was born in 1909 near Pleasantville, Iowa, within sight of the Red Rock Bluffs. These were her first mountains, as she liked to say. These bluffs and the natural beauty of the area made a lasting impression on her life. Her mother, Jerusha Bowery, was an avid bird-watcher and taught Gladys many things about the countryside. She was a gifted teacher, and Gladys was an eager learner. By the time she was seven, Gladys could identify and name 25 different birds from Iowa.

She graduated from Pleasantville High School. In 1930 she received a degree in nursing from Mercy Hospital. Two years later she completed a three-year program and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Health Nursing from the University of Minnesota. While working as a public health nurse in Clarke County, Iowa, she met and later married Wayne Black. Subsequent to their marriage, they moved to Warner Robbins, Georgia, where Gladys furthered her career as a public health nurse and became an active volunteer in the community. The people of Warner Robbins named Gladys Woman of the Year in 1953, honoring her years of tireless volunteer work.

Because Wayne died suddenly in 1956, Gladys moved back to Pleasantville where she took responsibility for the care of her mother. There she continued her career as a Public Health Nurse as well as a volunteer. When Gladys moved home, Iowa regained a stalwart citizen and an environmental activist.

Gladys has arguably done more than any other single person to protect Iowa's wildlife and natural resources. She was a driving force in the Iowa Ornithologists Union. As a member she was always doing something to improve people's awareness of the bird population and their increased chances for survival. She always threw herself full-force into causes dear to her heart. She campaigned ceaselessly to ban lead shot and dove hunting in the state of Iowa. During this time she received an honorary doctorate from Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. Her efforts also helped save the Great Blue Heron and Bald Eagle from extinction due to the pesticides in the water; and consequently, the pesticides poisoned the fish that they ate. Mrs. Black's unstinting labors raised the public's awareness of the threat to Iowa's natural resources and animals.

While in Georgia she became interested in tagging birds. Back in Iowa she also became involved in tagging butterflies and monitoring their migration patterns, as she did with birds. Mrs. Black was a pioneer in her field, though she would often declare, "I'm just an amateur, Bub, just an amateur."

She accomplished many things that most people would not even consider tackling as an ordinary citizen. Her extraordinary bank of knowledge about flora and fauna would have amazed

even the most learned scientists in some fields. Gladys became a true ‘citizen-scientist’ in her later years, a term that could have been coined just for her. She could name almost every tree common to Iowa. She knew nearly every type of bird, the bird’s habitat, and where and when each nested. Gladys was a veritable encyclopedia. Her spontaneous know-how and insights, along with fascinating stories of Iowa’s wildlife, would entrance audiences everywhere.

Mrs. Black further increased awareness and pioneered conservationism almost single handedly through the media in Iowa. She wrote a regular column in what is now the Des Moines Register, and many outdoor radio programs would depend on her to call in every week at a certain time to answer questions about conservation in Iowa. This gave her many opportunities to raise her latest issues. She was a spearhead of the many legal brawls that arose from ecological hazards and issues of her day, and when necessary, she took her incredible knowledge to the State Legislature to lobby assertively for changes that would benefit Iowa’s wildlife.

In her role as a teacher, she also led hundreds of Marion County school children on extensive field trips into the countryside. Mrs. Black’s popularity with the children was later revealed in one of their teachers’ comments when he said, “They would stick to Gladys like magnets, drawing on her immense knowledge.”

As a teacher, conservationist, writer, volunteer and resource bank Mrs. Black had no equal. She helped to preserve for another generation many species of birds that, but for her efforts, would now be extinct. Dr. Gladys B. Black bequeathed her love for Iowa to several succeeding generations. I am grateful for the gift of Iowa’s natural heritage that, but for her efforts, would not be nearly as beautiful or as diverse. For that, and for being a delightfully eccentric lady who changed the future of Iowa, I will always be thankful.



Second Place

Women in History by Tabby Pauly, Grade 8

Wilson Junior High School, Council Bluffs
Sponsoring Teacher: Sue Griswold

The woman I choose for this essay is Margaret Sloss. She was the twenty seventh woman in the nation to complete a veterinary curriculum and was the first woman to graduate from veterinary medicine at Iowa State University. First, I will tell you a little about her early life.

Margaret Wragg Sloss was born October 28, 1901 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 1910, she moved to Ames, Iowa where Thomas Sloss, her father, was hired as the superintendent of buildings, grounds, and construction at Iowa State University.

Sloss received her Bachelor of Science degree in zoology in 1923. In 1932, she received her Master of Science degree in microscopic anatomy. Then in 1938, Margaret received her doctorate in veterinary medicine. All of those were from Iowa State University.

Margaret Sloss began her career as a Technician in Veterinary Pathology at Iowa State University, and was promoted to Assistant in 1930, Instructor in 1941, Assistant Professor in 1943, Associate Professor in 1958, Professor in 1965, and Professor Emeritus in 1972.

Sloss was the author of many publications and papers, including “Women in the Veterinary Profession” and “Biography of Charles Henry Stange.” In 1948, Dr. Sloss also coauthored “Veterinary

Clinical Parasitology” with Dr. Edward A. Benbrook and she later wrote the fourth edition of that book.

Dr. Sloss was very active in numerous professional associations like the American Veterinary Medical Association, Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Delta Epsilon, and Phi Zeta. She also co established the Women’s Veterinary Medical Association in 1947 and was elected president in 1950.

In 1940, Dr. Margaret Sloss was honored by the Women’s Centennial congress as one of the one hundred women in the United States to successfully follow careers, which was unheard of about one hundred years before then. She also received many awards and citation for her services, such as the Iowa State Faculty Citation in 1959 and the Stange Award for Meritorious Service in 1974. In addition, in 1981 Iowa State University named the Margaret Women’s Center in her honor.

Dr. Margaret Wragg Sloss passed away December 11, 1979. She is buried in the Iowa State University Cemetery.

The reason I choose to write this essay about Margaret Sloss is because she was a woman pioneer in the field in study I wish to pursue. Also, because she received many awards and helped a lot of people and places.

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Top Prize

Help to the Helpless
by Caitlin Hillyard, Grade 8
Central Academy, Des Moines
Sponsoring Teacher: Jerry Leventhal

Sam loped casually down the still-damp street. He was famished almost to a wilting point without mercy, but found he was not too dignified to tend to his worsening dehydration through deep, quenching sips of ubiquitous, muddy puddle water, remnant from recent showers. He was so confused and so painfully alone, like a goldfish in a deserted lake. It had been so recently his family loved him, kissed him, hugged him, worshiped his every move, sought him out constantly, yearning for his eternal presence. Yet it was also still afresh that Sam found himself less and less coveted, more and more simply tolerated, then increasingly ignored. It was so recently his family banished him from the corridors of their hectic lives, without so much as a formal goodbye. Sam loved them still, even after they denied him their adoration. Homeless, hungry, baffled by sudden neglect, and beaten by fatigue, he was hopeful, but doubtful, that a perfect home complete with a warm bed, fresh water, food, and of course a loving family would discover him. Wonderfully, a miracle embraced Sam, and he was found by the friendly neighbor of the woman capable of handing him heaven in a dog bowl. Sam, the red Chesapeake Bay retriever, ran eccentric circles around his new savior in a state of complete ecstasy. That was the day Ava Bothe found she could help the those unable to ask for aid; therefore, she should be recognized for her achievements in saving and loving the animals neglected and deserted, as they praise her automatically already.

Started in 1987, upon the adoption of Sam, and officially opened two years later, Animal Lifeline of Iowa was a proclamation of hope for animals stray, abused, neglected, unwanted, or handicapped. It began voluntarily in Ava Bothe's home, and has grown into an association with around seven hundred volunteers. Ava depends on adoption fees and donation money to care for the animals, denied helpful federal funds. The shelter, occupying most of a transformed house and yard containing a small shed, is one of a disappointing total of two no-kill shelters in Iowa. These shelters obtain policies banning the disposal of animals in event of the shelter becoming full to capacity. Located in Carlisle, Animal Lifeline possesses an unwavering emphasis on disabled animals and the no-kill policy. Ava does not accuse shelters such as the Animal Rescue League of Iowa for destroying in event of overcrowding, however, sympathizing with her own conflicts in space. Her objective is to minimize the need for these disposals, by accepting some of the ARL's more needy or unadoptable guests.

Ava Bothe grew up around animals, as much a part of her family as her mother. Born in McComb, Illinois, she was an only child in an almost migratory family, never in one place for too many years. She eventually ended up in Iowa, attending Drake University in Des Moines for her degree in journalism, and later settling Animal Lifeline in Carlisle. Her mother always had a poorly-eclipsed love of animals, a trait obviously inherited by her daughter. Ava's first dog was Ginger, a boxer, and due to a love of horses and Western riding, had another companion, her own horse, Mr. Tony.

Scanning over the extensive, explanatory, and witty website of Animal Lifeline, the emotion that Ava's organization is extremely assertive about granting animals a good stay, seeking permanent homes for them, and confirming adopters-to-be as worthy pet owners, attacked me like one of the

hopeful, lively dogs in the photographs. Ava, who writes the website and ARI newsletters due to her journalism degree, clearly has dedicated her life to helping the needy residents of the shelter. Along with touching stories of animals' rescues and adoptions, adorable photographs, and poems are Ava's policies on adoptions, pleas for volunteers and donations, and general information about animal lifeline. Ava considers herself a matchmaker, bringing together animals with the perfect humans. Her regulations on pet adoption are very strict, and include a mandatory interview with the potential adopter. Her system regulates adoptions so well, the pet is guaranteed a permanent, quality home. However, due to the stress imposed upon disabled animals at Animal Lifeline, sometimes adoptions are hard to come by, not to say they never do. ALI also offers temporary shelter and care for pets of those displaced, travelers, and domestic violence victims, many educational opportunities, and the Pet Food Drive for those with low and set incomes with pets' mouths to feed in addition to the adoptive services.

I have seen stray dogs and cats, wandering aimlessly through Des Moines, so pathetic and helpless. Yet the only reason they are wandering, pathetic or helpless is that they lack in love and care. I have also been to the Animal Rescue League and seen the begging faces, gazing longingly at the faces of passing people tantalizing them with their potential love. I experience a frustrating need to reach out to them, while I know I cannot adopt twenty neglected animals. I feel much better knowing someone is taking them in and helping in their tedious search for adoration. Ava Bothe even takes animals doomed for death in most shelters that kill their animals upon expiration of an animal's stay. Her work with pet-overpopulation education, and adoption service are also bringing salvation for animals closer into reality. Whenever I see a pet being loved I smile with the knowledge that more animals will be cared for through Ava's work

All of Animal Lifeline's accomplishments are connected to Ava Bothe in some way. When wandering Sam trod into her life wagging tail, smiling, begging face, he swept her into helping him and those like him in one wet dog kiss. Whether she is feeding the most minuscule orphan, writing a newsletter, or interviewing potential pet owners, Ava is doing a favor for all lost, confused, edacious, lonely pets that need a home and a friend. Reducing the stray pet population, adoring and helping hundreds of animals over the years is no insignificant feat. Ava Bothe should be thanked and applauded in gratitude for her lifesaving work, because she helps those that need help the most, and are not equipped to cry for it.

Top Prize

A Legacy That Lives
by April Sauls, Grade 8
Central Academy, Des Moines
Sponsoring Teacher: Janet B. Williams

Aldeen Davis, born April 30, 1916, is a woman who deserves to be written back into history. She was born and raised in the small town of Centerville, Iowa. It was there that she met a man by the name of William Henry Davis, lovingly known as Heenie. William came from Leavenworth, Kansas. Aldeen and William married on April 9, 1939. They had five daughters, all of which were girls. (Billie, Bonnie, Penny, Diana Kay, and LeeAnn) William's job caused him to do a lot of work in Muscatine, Iowa. His family loved the time they spent in Muscatine with him, so after much consideration, they moved from Centerville to Muscatine. Aldeen Davis should be written back into history for many reasons. It is difficult to find a person with as humble a spirit as Aldeen. She was a very generous, family oriented, Christian woman, who felt that it was very important to give back to the community and did so in many ways.

Aldeen was a member of many clubs and organizations. She was a member of the Eastern Stars, a female Masonic organization that does services for the community. She served on the State Care Review board, which ensures quality care in nursing homes. Aldeen was the recording secretary for the Iowa Association Club of Women. In 1974 she was elected to the YWCA board of officers. She was also a member of the Muscatine Human Rights Commission. Former Governor Terry Branstad recognized her talents by appointing her to the Governor's Commission on Aging. In 1989 she received the Governor's Volunteer Award.

Aldeen was also an accomplished writer, who wrote a weekly column for the Muscatine Journal entitled "Soul Food for the Thought". "Soul Food for the Thought" first appeared in the Muscatine Journal in 1978. Eventually she released a book also entitled Soul Food for the Thought. This book was a combination of soul food recipes and short stories of our African- American history. At one time this book could be purchased at bookstores in the state of Iowa, but it is no longer available in stores. In the book entitled Notes on the Kitchen Table, a book of short stories, letters and poems, Aldeen wrote a letter to her five daughters entitled "My Darling Girls". Notes on the Kitchen Table can still be purchased at bookstores such as Barnes and Nobles, and Borders. Aldeen is also one of the famous Iowan's in the book Outside In - African American History in Iowa 1838-2000. She shares this honor with her father Schuyler Jones, and her daughters Billie Lloyd and Diana Lloyd, all of whom are also mentioned and pictured in this publication. Aldeen was also active in the Alexander Clark Memorial. Alexander Clark was the first African- American to graduate from the University of Iowa. She was active in having his house restored.

For fun Aldeen would paint. She received the honor of artist of the month by the Commission of Aging for Mountain Majesty the title for her collection of paintings on display in the Clark House (a historical home in Muscatine). She received many awards for her artwork, including several Governor Awards, one of which my mother has hanging in our home. Several of her art pieces are hanging at the Musser Public Library in Muscatine Iowa, and many of her daughters and grandchildren have her paintings hanging in their homes.

Aldeen even earned a spot in the women's archives at the University of Iowa. As involved as Aldeen was in her community, she even found time to teach a course at the Muscatine Community

College on black history. She was also a Sunday school teacher at her church and a volunteer grandparent at the elementary schools in Muscatine. She always stressed the importance of literacy. She also served on the board of Musser Public Library. Lyn Jackson of Muscatine became friends with Aldeen through a senior citizens writing course which Jackson taught. Jackson said of Aldeen, "She was a gracious and strong person and she withstood adversity with grace." Sally Stiles remembers Davis as "Working tirelessly to promote religious awareness and racial relations. "

Aldeen always made time for family. She was a mother of five, a grandmother of nineteen, and a great grandmother of forty-nine. I am one of Aldeen's forty-nine great grandchildren, I am very proud of everything my grandmother has done. She gave back to Muscatine in many ways, and she was very earnest and sincere. My grandmother passed on Sunday August 13, 2000. Mayor Richard O'Brien of Muscatine declared January 14, 2001 Aldeen Davis Day in Muscatine Iowa.

This day has been set-aside for future years to remember and celebrate her for all the wonderful things she did. The African- American Museum of History that is being built in Cedar Rapids, Iowa has also dedicated a hall in her name, "The Aldeen Davis Memorial Hall". This hall will display some of her art works, writings, and memorabilia which she has left behind. It was sad for her family and community to see her go, but her legacy lives! A wonderful person was lost on August 13, 2000, but for my family and myself, she will always be our Angel in the midst