

2007 Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest



Generations of Women Moving History Forward

Sponsored by:
Iowa Commission on the Status of Women
Iowa Department of Education
State Historical Society of Iowa

Celebration Day
Wednesday, April 11, 2007
8:15 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Iowa State Capitol



8:15 a.m.

Winners and their invited guests meet on the ground floor of the Capitol. Students, teachers, principals, and essay subjects are to pick up their nametags.

8:45 a.m.

Introduction in the Senate, second floor, and meet with Senators.

9 a.m.

Introduction in the House, second floor, and meet with Representatives.

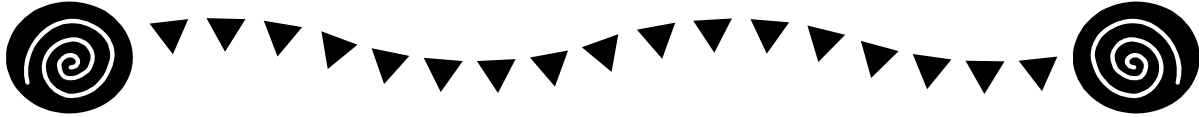
10:30 a.m.

Awards ceremony with Lt. Governor Patty Judge, Kennedy Conference Room, ground floor (G-9).

12 noon

Tour of the Capitol. (Optional) If we get separated, meet us at the desk on the first floor of the Rotunda for the start of the tour.

Awards Ceremony
10:30 a.m.
Kennedy Conference Room



Welcome

by Holly Sagar, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Chair, and Gail Sullivan, Iowa Department of Education Chief of Staff

Proclamation Reading by Lt. Governor Patty Judge

March as Women's History Month Proclamation

Awards Presentation

by Holly Sagar; Carol Heaverlo, Program for Women in Science and Engineering at Iowa State University; and Lisa Jones Hall, Women in Science and Engineering at the University of Iowa

(As the students' names are called, they should move forward to receive their prizes from Gail Sullivan, then approach Cyndi Pederson, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs Director, to receive their certificate. As the teachers' names are called, they should move forward to receive their prizes from Sullivan.)

Students/teachers will be recognized in the following order:

- 1) 6-7th Grade Category
- 2) 8-9th Grade Category
- 3) Women in Science & Engineering

Brayton Presentation

by Cyndi Pederson

Closing

by Holly Sagar

2007 Write Women Back Into History

Essay Contest Winners

6-7 Grade Category

- First Place: Kaylyn Barrett
Sponsoring Teacher: Shirley Jarzombek
Taft Middle School, Cedar Rapids
- Second Place: Laurel Fraser
Sponsoring Teacher: Kate Safris
Urbandale Middle School
- Third Place: Matthew Lee
Sponsoring Teacher: Katrina Brown
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

8-9 Grade Category

- First Place: Erica Christensen
Sponsoring Teacher: Jane Hanigan-Kinney
Thomas Jefferson High School, Council Bluffs
- Second Place: Emily Raecker
Sponsoring Teacher: John Parrott
Urbandale Middle School
- Third Place: Bobi Jo Rockwell
Sponsoring Teacher: Robin Hundt
Glenwood Middle School

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

- First Place: Taylor Soeken
Sponsoring Teacher: Jennifer Stoffer
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

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

- First Place: Kylene Carlson
Sponsoring Teacher: Jane Hanigan-Kinney
Thomas Jefferson High School, Council Bluffs
- Second Place: Katie Jobs
Sponsoring Teacher: Kristine Magel
Ames Middle School

Editor's Note: Essays were typed as submitted.



6-7 Grades: First Place



Victoria Woodhull: A Woman of the Future by Kaylyn Barrett

Once upon a time, there was a woman. She was a woman of the future, living beyond her time; a bold and courageous woman. A woman who spoke her mind, believed in equal rights for all, but especially for women and children. She had a troubled childhood, born in Homer, Ohio in 1838, but was dragged from town to town by a heavy-handed father who used his children to make money for the family. This woman's childhood not only made her stronger, but also made her who she became.

I heard about this woman when my mom came home from the bookstore, placed a children's book on the table and asked, "Did you know there was a woman who ran for president in 1872?"

I looked at the title of the book, [A Woman for President: The Story of Victoria Woodhull](#). I had never heard of her. She was the first woman to run for president, first woman, along with her sister Tennessee, to publish and run her own newspaper, first woman stockbroker, and the first to speak before Congress. That was a lot of firsts. I was shocked! Why had I never heard of her? Erased from history books, overlooked perhaps?? What a tragedy! But not today...here is my story, or shall I say... her story. Victoria Woodhull: A Woman of the Future.

Victoria Woodhull lived in a time where women wore corsets, wore dresses past their ankles, and pinned their long hair up on their head. Women couldn't vote and weren't allowed to even eat in a restaurant without being accompanied by a man. Victoria used her words and her actions to rebel against these societal injustices. She refused to wear a corset; she pinned up her dresses, cut her hair, and was arrested eight times for going against the "laws of society." She was an eloquent speaker, speaking out against the inequalities that women and children endured. She wasn't afraid to do things that "proper" women wouldn't dare do.

Her quest to become president was her biggest statement towards the betterment of women. Election day was on November 2, 1872. Victoria Woodhull, a presidential candidate, was hauled off to jail for voting.

Victoria Woodhull died in 1927 when she was 89 years old. This was only seven years after women could cast their first ballots to vote for the president of the United States. Only two women, since her, have run for President of the United States. I hope a woman will be President of the United States someday to move women forward in history. It could very well be because of the past actions of brave and courageous women, like Victoria Woodhull.

Victoria faced obstacles, but overcame them in a time where women's rights were limited. Victoria Woodhull was a woman who wanted to take a stand for women's rights. She was a very good role model for women, in history and today.

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6-7 Grades: Second Place



Emmeline Pankhurst: The Impossible Made Possible by Laurel Fraser

I wonder how it would feel...to walk among hundreds of women, to lead them. Her dreams were curdling her legs to keep her walking and to keep her leading. Emmeline Pankhurst led the crowd, and kept leading the crowd after every single time someone tried to stop her. She wouldn't – *couldn't* – give up because the fate of women's right to vote was in her hands.

“What we want is the combined intelligence of man and woman!” Emmeline Pankhurst spoke these words on January 14, 1912 when she gave a speech to emphasize the importance of equality for men and women. She was a suffragette in Great Britain where women idolized her for what she did that was believed to be impossible. Emmeline took charge in her life and was a leader to many. This is why I believe this amazing woman should be written back into history!

A woman born on July 14, 1858 – some would say, “How does that have to do with moving history *forward*?” It is true that the event of equal voting rights for men and women in Great Britain was established in 1928, more than 75 years ago! However, women's equality to men is a fairly new concept that, even today, not everyone accepts. How many times have you heard something referred to as being “girly” intended as an insult? I have heard this many times. I believe we should think of great women like Emmeline Pankhurst and remind ourselves that women are fabulous and strong and that men and women are not entirely different. In fact, we are much alike. Emmeline Pankhurst lived for the fact that women will help our world to be all the better! She said, “We have to free half the human race, the women, so that they can help to free the other half!” Emmeline Pankhurst must have known that by saying these life-inspiring words that women would someday be able to fight for what they believe in!

As a young woman myself, I believe that Emmeline was so strong and mighty for being able to endure what she did. She endured sickness, hunger strikes and force feedings in prison. She chose prison over paying fines to show her strength. She spoke inspiring words to all, even those she didn't know were listening, like myself. Emmeline made the impossible possible, and through her deeds, motivated me to be strong and mighty as well. She knew somehow that she would get her message through. Here, I am listening and know what she is saying!

Emmeline reminds us that girls will be independent and strong, women will know how to be as great and important as men, and all people will be equal in Iowa, America, and the world! It was, in fact, Emmeline who spoke to many women here in America. Because of her bold personality, I will someday be able to vote for my country. Because of what she did for me, I, along with many other women, can make a difference.

“Who is Emmeline Pankhurst?” That's what people have asked me. I have lifted my head and said to them proudly; “She won the equal rights for men and women!” Because of her, a new generation of women will take a stand and show everyone the impact of determination. Because of her, a twelve year old in Urbandale was inspired enough to write about a woman across the globe. Write Emmeline Pankhurst back into history so that someone who changed the world can inspire *everyone*.

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6-7 Grades: Third Place



Kate Shelley: An Iowa Heroine by Matthew Lee

Lightning flashed and thunder boomed through the valley. Water poured down the steep sides of the surrounding hills. Honey Creek overflowed its banks and the water rose to the bottom of the train bridge. Kate's mother assured her, "No train would be out on a night like this." Then, out of the dark stormy night came the hiss of the steam engine as it plunged into the cold water. With that sound, she knew the bridge was gone. Kate Shelley heard this noise. She knew she would feel responsible if the next train, the Atlantic Express would plunge down that same track.

Kate Shelley was an average fifteen-year-old farm girl. This was not the first time the Shelley family had been hit with a stroke of bad luck. First Kate Shelley's father died. He had spent most of the family's money searching for a cure to his illness. Then her oldest brother drowned a few months later. This meant that Kate was in charge of the farm as her mother's health was poor. Originally, the family was from Offaly County, Ireland, but immigrated to central Iowa when Kate was a small child. Before Mr. Shelley's death he worked for the railroad. The Chicago and Union Pacific Railroad had a station in Moingona, near Kate's farm. Kate's family and some hired help farmed the land and raised cattle and hogs.

During the terrible rainstorm on Wednesday, July 6, 1881, Kate decided she had to help the men on the crashed train, and stop the *Atlantic Express*. Kate threw on an old cloak and headed out to the crash site. While Kate was walking, she realized that the bridge was out and she could not get to the crash site. Therefore, Kate had to go back and climb the steep bluff behind her house. In the darkness of the storm, the only light came from her father's lantern that she brought with her. When she approached the washed out bridge, she saw two men clinging to the roots of a tree in the raging river. Kate knew she could not rescue them, so she went to the Moingona station to get help and to stop the Atlantic Express. Now Kate was nearing the 696-foot-long bridge across the Des Moines River. As she was crossing the bridge, her lantern was extinguished. With only lightning to guide her, she crawled the rest of the way. Kate's clothes caught on the spikes and nails that were on the bridge to discourage trespassing. Finally, she made it across the long trestle and ran the last half mile to the station.

Kate Shelley burst through the doors and told her whole story. Someone in the station exclaimed, "The girl is crazy!" Kate then fainted. When she woke up, a search and rescue mission was planned. Kate was going to lead the men to the crash site. The station had already halted the Atlantic Express and warned them of the crash. The rescue team then saved the two surviving men.

Because of her bravery in the face of danger, Kate received two medals for her heroism. She also received numerous awards. After the rescue mission, Kate never married but took a job at the station. Today, Kate is all but forgotten. She should be written into history, as she is a role model for all. She put other lives in front of her own. She is definitely an Iowa hero and should be remembered for years to come. We can all learn from her courage and bravery.

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8-9 Grades: First Place



Arabella Mansfield: Moving Women Forward through Practice of Law by Erica Christensen

The history of our great state includes the accomplishments of many fine Iowa women, though their stories do not always receive the attention which their achievements merit. Arabella Mansfield was one such famous woman from Iowa. A pioneer in the practice of law, Arabella Mansfield moved women forward by being the first female in the nation to be admitted to the bar.

Born on May 23, 1846, in Burlington, Iowa, Arabella's father moved to California so that he might work in the mines. When Arabella was four years old, however, her father died tragically in a mining accident. In 1860, Arabella's mother decided to move Belle (as she came to be known to her family) and her brother, Washington, back to the town of Mount Pleasant, where her mother believed the children would receive a better education.

As is the case in my own home, education was valued greatly by Belle's family. In a day when few women had the opportunity to seek higher education, Belle attended Iowa Wesleyan University and graduated with her degree in 1866. The following year, Belle herself took up teaching at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, then returned home to practice law with her brother. In 1868, Belle married John Mansfield, a fellow professor. Together, the Mansfields both passed the bar exam in Henry County on June 9, 1869.

Arabella Mansfield was truly someone who moved opportunities for women forward in the state of Iowa and throughout the nation. For a young woman living in her time, the things that Arabella accomplished were astounding. Belle was the first woman approved to study law in the United States of America. She also became the nation's first female lawyer. Arabella was lauded by other great women who have themselves fought for women's equality and the privilege to vote, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, both of whom personally recognized the famous Iowan's accomplishments.

In 1870, Belle followed Stanton and Anthony's examples and further took up the cause of women's equality by leading the Iowa Women's Suffrage Convention, which worked to gain voting rights for women.

Until her death in 1911, Arabella Mansfield worked tirelessly for women's causes. It is because of her conviction and strength that future generations of young women from Iowa, like myself, have the opportunity to participate in our democracy and cast of our own votes.

In 1980, Arabella Mansfield was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and in my opinion, it was an honor richly deserved. I feel that Arabella Mansfield proved to many people that women are capable of achieving more than just the traditional stereotypes to which some would limit us. Arabella demonstrated power in becoming the first woman to practice law and the country's first female lawyer.

Like Arabella, I have interest in a career in the legal profession. If I am able to someday achieve my own goals, I will have women like her – who moved history forward – to thank.

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8-9 Grades: Second Place



Billie Ray: Mother and Leader by **Emily Raecker**

I've been raised in a home where my mother is always there for me. Someday I hope to achieve being that strong mother, yet also affect my world in a positive way. During that journey, I want to find a positive role model that is all that I strive to be. I believe woman can effectively raise strong families and positively impact their world. Billie Ray is an example of this type of person. She knew what she wanted to do in life, but when her life took a different turn, she accepted it.

Born in Columbus Junction, Iowa, she grew up during a time when women didn't work outside the home. In 7th grade she met her future husband, Robert Ray. She graduated from Drake University and became an elementary teacher in the Des Moines Public Schools.

Right after she began teaching, her husband decided to run for governor. At first she didn't want to make speeches or go on the campaign trail, she wanted to stay home with her three young daughters. All of that changed when her husband was in a plane crash. While Robert Ray was in the hospital recovering, Billie Ray decided to take over for her husband, telling people what happened during the plane crash and why her husband would be a good governor. He won the primary election and went on to be our state's governor, serving five terms in office. Many people have said that if it weren't for Billie Ray's efforts, her husband would not have won the primary election and later become governor.

During her time as first lady, family always came first, but next came saving Terrace Hill. When she became first lady, the state wanted to make Terrace Hill a museum and build a new home on the capital grounds. Billie Ray believed that as a museum it would be more interesting if people lived there, and she had to "fight" legislators to make Terrace Hill the first family's home. When the legislature finally agreed she had to raise money to renovate Terrace Hill. Money was raised by selling two cookbooks and a needlepoint book that she created. Citizen's purchased many books, and Mrs. Ray canvassed the state autographing copies, eventually raising enough money for renovations. Without her efforts, many young women, such as myself, would not have had the chance to have tea with first ladies of Iowa at the first family's home, Terrace Hill.

Throughout her life, Billie Ray has also led many volunteer efforts supporting causes that were worthwhile to her. She has served on the board of directors for the Cedar Rapids Symphony, been the Honorary State Chair for the International Year of the Child, and been active in the Red Cross. She has been Chair of the Easter Seals and President of the Blank Park Zoo Foundation. Many of her accomplishments helped people not just in our state, but all around the world. She, along with President Carter's Mother, led the first group of the Friendship Force to Ireland. This trip was the first of many more to come. The Friendship Force is still active today.

Mrs. Ray demonstrates that you can raise a strong family while also having a positive impact on your world and that no one should be afraid of change. If I achieve only a fraction of what she has achieved, I will be content with my life. I believe Billie Ray should be written into our history books as a role model, not just for mothers or for first ladies, but for any young women striving to achieve.

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8-9 Grades: Third Place



A Woman With Willpower by Bobi Jo Rockwell

Carrie Chapman Catt may be a woman that significantly affected the outcome of women's suffrage, but she isn't widely known and so her history sits on shelves gathering dust. Carrie Lane was born January 9, 1859 in Ripon, Wisconsin. She was a leader in women's suffrage for many years and was well acquainted with powerful women such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Julia Ward Howe (Colleges). Catt was a role model to disadvantaged women everywhere because she fought for and believed in women's right to vote.

Lucious Lane and Maria Clinton Lane raised Catt as the second of three children. She lived in Ripon until the age of seven when her family moved to Charles City, Iowa. She attended school there until she graduated in 1877. After graduation she worked as a country school teacher to earn money for college (Colleges).

Carrie Chapman Catt attended what is now known as the Iowa State College where she majored in education (About). In 1880 she graduated as the only woman in her class after only three years of college. Catt briefly studied law after graduation until she became a high school principal in Mason City (Colleges). Two years later, in 1883, she became the first female superintendent of the Mason City district (Colleges). She married local newspaper editor and publisher, Leo Chapman in 1885 and helped him with his business. Soon after her marriage, they moved to San Francisco where he died in 1886.

Catt became passionate about women's rights when she found work as a newspaper reporter in San Francisco and became aware of the inequalities facing women in the business world (Colleges). Less than a year later, she moved back to Iowa to lecture on the status of women in America. Soon after joining the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association Catt was elected State Organizer. In 1890 she was invited to a National American Women Suffrage Association conference in Washington D.C. to address issues and meet important suffrage women such as Susan B. Anthony (Colleges). When Anthony retired as the president in 1900, Catt took her place. She called a conference in 1902 that led to her founding the International Women Suffrage Alliance (Colleges). By the time she retired in 1933, 40 countries had branches. Catt's "winning plan" meant campaigning for women's suffrage on federal and state levels. With support from the Senate and House the current president, Woodrow Wilson, finally converted to the cause and on August 18, 1920 the 19th Amendment became part of the Constitution, 144 years after the U.S. gained independence. This amendment declared that no citizen may be denied the right to vote because of their sex.

Carrie Chapman Catt is a role model to be put up with those such as Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks. When she first started into women's suffrage, she didn't sit on the sidelines and wait, she dove right in and pushed and pushed until she won. She was a brave, cunning woman who had a way with words. Defying all rules she achieved what she most wanted and was one of the first women to do many of the things in her life. I hadn't even heard of this lady until recently, and that makes me sad because Catt was a magnanimous woman to look up to and definitely a woman who needs to be written back into our nation's history.

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



Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming

by **Taylor Soeken**

Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming was a witty and clever woman. She was simple yet special. She was a person who could look up into the sky and find wonders so spectacular; you wouldn't believe your eyes. She was simply magnificent.

Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming was a beautiful baby girl born on May 15, 1857, in Dundee, Scotland. This bright young lady, known as Mina Fleming, attended public school in Dundee; she never experienced any formal higher education. She taught at the same public school she attended up until her marriage to James Fleming.

In 1877, when Mina turned twenty-one she and her husband immigrated to Boston, Massachusetts. One year later her husband abandoned her while she was pregnant with their child.

To support herself and her new baby son, Mina obtained work as a maid for Professor Edward Pickering, the director of the Harvard Observatory. Professor Pickering was unhappy with the quality of work his male workers were performing, so he hired Mina to do some mathematical work along with some clerical work for the observatory. Mina soon discovered that she was capable of doing scientific work. She invented a system used for classifying stars. This system categorized stars according to their own spectra; the pattern produced by every star when it's light is passed through a prism.

Mina used her system, called the Henry Draper Catalogue, to successfully catalog over 10,000 stars over the following nine years. Later her duties were expanded, and she was put in charge of dozens of young women who had been hired to do mathematical calculations for the observatory. The overall quality of her work was so exemplary that in 1898, the Harvard Corporation made her curator of all astronomical photographs.

In 1906, she became the first American woman to be elected to the royal Astronomical Society. That same year she published her discovery on "white dwarf" stars, stars that are very hot and dense and appear bluish or white in color. In 1907 alone, she was able to publish a study of 222 variable stars she had discovered. One British astronomer made an excellent observation of her. He said, "Many astronomers are deservedly proud to have discovered one...the discovery of 222... is an achievement bordering on the marvelous."

Mina was able to excel in a specific field that not many women worked in. She received many great rewards throughout her life. I especially admire her for all of the work that she was able to do with only a public school education. She was working in a field where you needed a higher education to perform in her career. I also admire how hard working and disciplined she was.

Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming deserves to be written back into history for all of which she has accomplished.

Mina Fleming was a witty and clever woman. She was simple, yet special. She was a person who could look into the sky and find wonders so magnificent, you wouldn't believe your eyes.

Williamina Paton Stevens Fleming died May 21, 1911, at the young age of fifty-four. She died at her longtime home in Boston, Massachusetts.

I'm not sure of the cause of Mina's death, but the impact of her love for astronomy will live on forever.

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



Ada Hayden, a Protector of Iowa's Prairies

by Kylene Carlson

Long ago, before settlers even came to this country, the land now known as Iowa was mostly prairie. Today, according to the Iowa Prairie Network, it is estimated that "less than 0.1 percent of Iowa's original prairie remains." The fact that any prairie land remains in Iowa at all is a direct result of the efforts of one Iowa woman.

Ada Hayden was born August 14, 1884, in rural Ames, Iowa. Her parents, David and Christina Hayden, set aside a tract of unplowed prairie on their family farm for their daughter, Ada. "In (this) small remnant of Iowa's largest pre-settlement ecosystem, Ada Hayden found her calling," according to Marcy M. Seavey, author of "A Protector of Iowa's Prairies."

While still a student at Ames High School, Ada met Dr. Louis Pammel, a man who would prove to be most influential in her life. Pammel, an Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) professor, later became known as the "father of the Iowa park system." It was Pammel who encouraged Ada to study botany. The two became close friends, and later collaborated on many botanical projects.

This was a time when women were still struggling against old traditional roles, and any woman attending college was a rare event. Ada not only graduated from ISC with a degree in botany, but later she became the first woman and fourth person ever to earn a Ph.D. from Iowa State.

Throughout her life, Ada crusaded for the preservation of Iowa's prairies. It wasn't until 1945, that Iowa purchased its first virgin prairie preserve. Today, there are over 20 prairie preserves owned by the state.

Like Ada, I am a native of Iowa. Also like Ada, I have a deep love for Iowa's prairies, and am grateful of the work she did to preserve them. Without her work, we would not have this living link to our great past.

I have had the good fortune to grow up in a place where there is still natural prairie land to experience and enjoy. Besides filling the landscape with colorful flowers and graceful grasses, the prairies have much to teach us about soil conservation and other invaluable lessons.

Today, as in Ada's time, there is still a need to stand up for the conservation of Iowa's prairies. Cemeteries are frequently some of the only remaining examples of prairie land, but it is rare to find large tracts of prairie land today. There is one such tract in my area, formerly abundant in prairie land, and that is at Vincent Bluffs in Council Bluffs, Iowa, which has been set aside to be reclaimed as a prairie reserve. As a member of the Franklin Ecology Club, I helped remove dead trees from this preserve so that new prairie grass could grow in its place. That work helped me learn firsthand how important prairies are and the kind of work required to keep them alive.

For these reasons I believe that Ada Hayden should be written into Iowa's history. Although she was not widely recognized for her work during her lifetime, it is to her credit that young Iowa women, like me, can enjoy this amazing living piece of history.

Work Cited

<http://www.reflectiveimages.com/AdaHayden.htm>
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~herbarium/adapage.html>



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



Marie Curie by Katie Jobes

Have you ever met or heard of someone who has done so much for society that you think they haven't been recognized enough for their talents? I know of two such women; one went by the name of Marie Curie. Most people only know that she was important in science, engineering, and math, but I will discuss some of her life's accomplishments.

The main reason that Marie Curie is important to me is that I have a personal connection to women of her field. My mother, a mother of two, is attending Iowa State University to become an aerospace engineer. My mother is on her way to becoming a woman of great mind and spirit, someone like Marie Curie.

Born on November 7, 1867 in Warsaw, Poland was Marya Sklodowska, or later, Marie Curie. The early years of Curie's life were tainted by the deaths of her sister and four years later, her mother. Marie Curie had a work ethic that, when faced with a problem, would force her to go without food and sleep. In 1882, Curie graduated at the top of her class in high school. After graduating from the College Sevigne, because of her gender, she was denied admission to a regular college. She then studied physics and mathematics at the Sorbonne. In the spring of 1893, she graduated first in her undergraduate class. A year later, also at the Sorbonne, she got her master's degree in mathematics.

After graduating, she became a governess while attending Warsaw's Flying University. Eventually with money from her sister, Bronislawa, she moved to Paris.

In 1903, under the watch of Henri Becquerel, she received her DSc from the ESPCI, Paris, becoming the first woman in France to complete a doctorate.

At the Sorbonne, she met and married Pierre Curie, a fellow-instructor. Together they studied radioactive materials. Over several years' unceasing labor, they processed several tons of pitchblende, the ore from which uranium was extracted eventually isolating the chloride salts (refining radium chloride on April 20, 1902) and identifying two new chemical elements. The first, they named "polonium," after Curie's native country, Poland, and the other—"radium," for its intense radioactivity.

Some of the accomplishments that Madame Curie did for society were winning the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1903 with her husband and Henri Becquerel for the discovery of radioactivity. She also won a second Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the isolation of pure radium, received the Davy Medal of the Royal Society in 1903, and working to develop radioactivity for medical uses. Along with those accomplishments, her work precurred the splitting of the atom, and she became the first woman lecturer at the Sorbonne. Curie was even the first woman to receive a Nobel Prize.

I might not want to go into that particular field, but I would still like to become a woman of great stature. I would like women to be recognized not only as homemakers, but as smart, bright, creative, and competent human beings, people who can do anything they set their minds to. Women are capable of achieving the same recognition as that of a man in the same field. Women have independent thoughts and ideas, too; ideas that can change the world as much as Marie Curie did.

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Judges

Christine Bertsch, General Public

Tom Andersen, Iowa Department of Education

Lora Allison Bird, General Public

Lora Leigh Chrystal, Iowa State University Program for Women in Science and Engineering

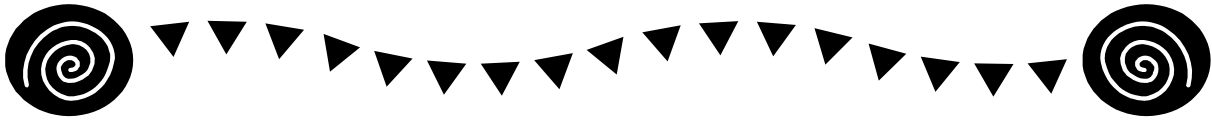
Charles Grigsby, Crime Victim Assistance Division

Heather Hawkins, Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center

Michael Kates, Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center

Kristin Clark Nolan, Iowa United Methodist Church

Michelle Rubin, General Public



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