

2008 *Write Women Back Into* History Essay Contest



Women's Art: Women's Vision

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

Celebration Day
Tuesday, March 4, 2008
8:15 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Iowa State Capitol

8:30 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.

9:15 a.m.

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

10:30 a.m.

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.

11:45 a.m.

Lunch on your own. (There is a cafeteria in the Capitol.)

1 p.m.

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

Awards Ceremony

1 p.m.

Kennedy Conference Room

Welcome

by Rachel Scott, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Division Administrator 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 Rachel Scott; Carol Heaverlo, Program for Women in Science and Engineering at Iowa State University; and Chris Brus, 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 Mary Jane Olney, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs Deputy 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, Technology, Engineering, and Math 6-7 Grade Category
- 4) Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math 8-9 Grade Category

Brayton Presentation

by Mary Jane Olney

Closing

by Rachel Scott

2008 Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest Winners

6-7 Grade Category

- First Place: Tyler Hupp
Sponsoring Teacher: Ed Lala
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids
- Second Place: Meghan Busswit
Sponsoring Teacher: Jennifer Stoffer
College Community Schools/Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids
- Third Place: Connor Drahos
Sponsoring Teacher: Katie Brown
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

8-9 Grade Category

- First Place: Ryan Watters
Sponsoring Teacher: Bonnie Dodge
Vernon Middle School, Marion
- Second Place: Jordan Schill
Sponsoring Teacher: Jon Parrott
Urbandale Middle School
- Third Place: Kaitlin Moews
Sponsoring Teacher: Kathy Turnball
Indianola Middle School

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

- First Place: Madison Noble
Sponsoring Teacher: Jane Kennedy
Parkview Middle School, Ankeny
- Second Place: Lauren M. Cepelcha
Sponsoring Teacher: Jane Kennedy
Parkview Middle School, Ankeny

Best Essay on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math for 8-9 Grades

- First Place: Rachel Henning
Sponsoring Teacher: Vanessa Wamsley
Central-Clinton Community High School, DeWitt

Editor's Note: Essays were typed as submitted.



6-7 Grades: First Place



Write Woman Back into History: Ruth Harris Urban by Tyler Hupp

Imagine this: you cheer people up with your constant sense of humor through your art, and you amaze people with your sculptures and paintings. Did I mention you can't feel your hands or feet? Sound impossible? Nope, that's how my Aunt Ruth lived half of her life. This is the story of Ruth Harris Urban of Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Ruth was known to have a good sense of humor. She used common sayings as she visualized them for her paintings. For example, a painting titled "Off Your Rocker" consisted of people standing on a lawn next to rocking chairs. Another example was when she painted her walking cane with five ducks in a row. She also used funny perspectives. One painting entitled "A View From Under the Sidewalk", looks as if people are standing above you. People thought of her art as quirky, whimsical, and sometimes warped. She even had an article written about her sense of humor.

Ruth did many different types of artwork, ranging from realistic mannequins to pastel portraits. One of her mannequins was named "Uncle Oscar". Nobody knew that Oscar would be a troublemaker! Ruth's brother borrowed Oscar to put in the lobby of his tax office. One day, the office was closed and Oscar fell out of his chair. A client walked by and saw Oscar. She called 911, and the police broke the door down to rescue what they found to be a dummy. Oscar has even been known to lurk in Ruth's basement, scaring plumbers and relatives.

Ruth was asked to paint pictures of five schools that were going to be torn down. These pictures now hang in the new combined school. One of her first pieces of art was a painting of a pheasant on a wooden plaque. She wanted to throw away a picture of her son holding a baby, because she thought it wasn't very good. Her husband told her not to so she kept it. It actually won her a 'Best of Show' award. Her favorite painting was a picture of her son playing piano.

Ruth had severe health conditions. In her late 30's she was no longer able to work away from home. She had peripheral neuropathy. Basically, it means she couldn't feel her hands or feet except for pain. It just got worse. It was at this time that her husband, Paul, encouraged her to concentrate on art by buying her paints and lessons at the Josilyn Art Museum. Paul told her "Stop whining and start painting!" She was too weak to keep a steady hand, so Paul built her an arm rest to help her paint. She had problems reaching the lower parts of the painting, so she lifted the canvas using tissue boxes. She used a converted drafting table as an easel. Ruth became a member of the Artist Cooperative Gallery. She was also a member of the Disabled Artist Network (DAN), and became friends with the founder. She fought for change of law that would make buildings more handicapped accessible. Ruth died in the spring of 2003.

Ruth Harris Urban should be written into history because she has influenced society in many ways. By painting pictures of the soon-to-be-torn-down schools, by cheering people up through her paintings, and displaying her art through the DAN, galleries, and shows, she has shared her talent with many. One of my favorite hobbies is art. She has influenced me to excel and possibly use art in my career.

Source List

Paul Urban, 20205 Greenview Road, Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Julie Harris Hupp, 1927 Marietta Road, Ely, IA 52227

Jess Harris, 1003 N. Kentucky Ave., Mason City, IA 50401

“Urban Illustrates Sense of Humor”, by Carla Chance, (1983) *Daily Nonpareil*, Council Bluffs, IA



6-7 Grades: Second Place



Lametta Wynn
by Meghan Busswitz

Mayor of Clinton, Iowa. Her only dream was of change and making a difference. Lametta isn't just an ordinary mayor, she is the first African-American mayor in the state of Iowa. “I think I won because people were looking for a change,” said Lametta Wynn after the elections. Lametta Wynn, being who she is, has made a considerable impact to change some of Iowa's “ways” and deserves to be written into history.

Lametta Wynn, 74, has lived in Clinton since about 1955. Before moving to Clinton, Lametta was born and raised in Galena, IL. Prior to being elected as mayor, Lametta served 40 years in the health care field at Mercy Hospital in Clinton. She graduated from St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing located in Cedar Rapids. She also served on the Clinton School Board for twelve years and three years as chairman, or chairwoman. Lametta, on top of being mayor and being a member of many boards, manages ten children as well (nine daughters and one son).

In addition to being the mayor of Clinton, being a member of many boards, and raising ten kids, Lametta has accomplished other great things. She has been on the African-American Museum Board for seven years, which for three of those seven years she was president of the museum. She planned many trips to Washington D.C. for a mayor summit to receive help to keep their city running smoothly. With help from Washington, Clinton is building a new casino, many new restaurants, and a new addition to ADM, a major employer in Clinton. Lametta was also a member of the Vision Iowa program. She completed many projects in Clinton including: construction of a skate park, improvements to the Riverview Pool and the Alliant Energy Field and a marina which is under construction. To honor Lametta, Clinton has named a street after her. Although she accomplished many things, her greatest is becoming the first African-American mayor in the state of Iowa. Lametta has completed three successful terms as mayor, which is twelve years in office. Lametta was inspired to run for office by overhearing city council members laughing and joking about Clinton. She knew that Clinton could do better and she strives for this. Lametta hopes other African-Americans will follow in her footsteps to stand for what they know is right.

Lametta Wynn proved to the region that it doesn't matter what color of skin you have you can make a difference and be a leader. She proved the theory, “nothing's impossible” by doing what some people felt was impossible. She changed the way Clinton and Iowa viewed African-Americans, and how Clinton viewed itself.

Lametta has helped me see the future. She has helped me see that the future is a good place if we open our hearts. Lametta is a person who will listen to what you have to say and do something about it. She made a change for the better, by looking to the future.

Lametta K. Wynn, mother, wife, and first African-American mayor in Iowa, is a woman that deserves to be recognized. She was recognized as the CLINTON HERALD'S PERSON OF THE YEAR 2007 for her leadership skills and her ability to see what needs to be changed. Lametta has now

retired from office. “I would’ve run again if I felt there were things left to change,” she said. Lametta Wynn opened the doors to tomorrow, today.

Work Cited

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Holland, Scott T. Wynn Run for State Senate. 3 January 2008. < [www.clintonherald.com/
homepage/local](http://www.clintonherald.com/homepage/local) >

Martens, Steven. Mayor Making Run for State Senate. 6 January 2008. < [http://www.qctimes.com/
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Martens, Steven. Clinton Mayor Lametta Wynn Prepares to Step Down. 3 January 2008. < [http//
www.quadcitytimes.com/articles](http://www.quadcitytimes.com/articles) >.

Wynn, Lametta. Personal Interview. 12 January 2008.



6-7 Grades: Third Place



Robin Roberts

by Connor Drahos

“Dream big, but focus small. Never play the race, gender or any other card. Focus on the solution, not the problem.” These are three of the seven rules to live by according to the talented tennis player and journalist, Robin Roberts. Robin Roberts was born on September 30th, 1960, in Pass Christian, Mississippi. She is the daughter of the late Lawrence Roberts and Lucimarian Roberts. Robin graduated from high school as the salutatorian and chose to enroll at Southern Louisiana University. She received scholarships for both tennis and journalism, which proves that someone can be strong in athletics and academics. This is something that I admire.

Robin Roberts has worked in many broadcasting jobs and covered events since her collegiate years. Some of these jobs have included sports reporter on ESPN’s *Sportscenter*, the co-anchor of ABC’s *Good Morning America*, and courtside reports on the men’s NCAA Final Four. From 1990 to 1995, Roberts worked both as a co-anchor on *Good Morning America* and a part-time reporter on ESPN. She even earned an Emmy for her work at ESPN. In 2005, Roberts was offered a job as the co-anchor of “Good Morning America”. Many people, including me, consider Roberts to be a very accomplished person.

One day in July, 2007, Roberts did a report on fellow correspondent Joel Siegel of *Good Morning America*, who died of cancer. That same night, Roberts did a self breast-exam and found a lump. She thought that it was a mistake, but then faced the truth. She would eventually tell a national T.V. audience and her fellow co-workers at *Good Morning America* that she had breast cancer. Everyone around the nation was shocked. While going through treatment, she tried to maintain a sense of normalcy by continuing to work. She composed and reported special stories about women who have or had cancer and are fighting to keep healthy and live happily. One of Robert’s fans wrote into the Black News Magazine.Com Blog, “What a blessing that you have this opportunity to make such an impact and to facilitate the healing of many, many people.” Another wrote “Just know that thousands of your viewers have conducted overdue self-examinations and are demanding further examination outside of a routine mammogram. You are an inspiration.”

When her treatment was almost finished, Roberts said, “Now I join the ranks of millions of Americans who are fighting the same battle every day. I thank you for your courage and your example.” I think she is a great role model for other women struggling with breast cancer. She shows women to be aware even if healthy. She also shows that they can be confident and open going through treatment and that they don’t have to be enclosed and non-social.

Robin Roberts has fought cancer to continue her dream working as a reporter. She needs to be written into history for fighting through a disease that hits 180,510 Americans per year. She gives women a sense of hope. She has touched my family because my mom, too, had breast cancer. My aunt also died of cancer and probably would have lived if detected earlier. I was worried because it seemed like they were suffering harshly from the treatment. I think that cancer is existent in the lives of all families in a way. By sharing her struggles with people on national television, she showed that anybody can be diagnosed with cancer. That is why Robin Roberts deserves to be engraved into history for years to come.

Women in History Works Cited

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8-9 Grades: First Place



An Artist That Changes the World: Myrna Balk by Ryan Watters

When a woman has been abused or neglected, people are there to help. But how many of these helpful people take these women's stories and turn them into art? Myrna Balk comes to the aid of such women by sharing their stories and turning them into art to show the horrors of abuse and neglect.

For nine years, Myrna Balk has been helping abused women everywhere share their stories. After majoring in art and sociology at the University of Iowa, Myrna traveled to Nepal in 1998, 2000, and 2001. There she learned about sex trafficking from some Nepali women who had been raped. Their suffering was Myrna's first inspiration to make art out of horror, to make creations out of pain.

After her first Nepal trip, Myrna began creating art to help these women divulge their stories to the world. She felt that her art would help these victims and society learn about sex trafficking and the horrors that accompany it. She asked these women to sketch a drawing of what their terrible situation was. This was the key that empowered these women to break the bonds that restricted them to their previous life.

The stories of these women are now horrifyingly splendid etchings, collages, and woodcuts. Myrna can take a terrifying story and transform it to make art so graphic it causes people to cringe. She can take a woman's sketch and enhance it to make it much more powerful than the original crayon sketch that evolved into the masterpiece. Myrna's art is not just a typical piece of work; it conveys a message to the gallery-goer that informs society of sexist acts that are going on all over our modern day world.

Myrna's art is both wonderful and depressing at the same time. Her art is painful, especially in "The Buyers" and "Waiting for the Prey." Both of these pieces show just how far men will go to exploit women. In "Waiting for the Prey," she created nine foamcore cutouts depicting pimps waiting for their victims. "Buyers" is a collage done on packing paper which shows that women are the focal point of the whole business of money making. The abuse of women would not exist except for the demand by men.

Myrna's art has been viewed and highly regarded on many continents, and for this reason, she deserves to be written into history. Her art doesn't just help women express their feeling of pain, it helps everyone empathize with these women and understand the monstrosities of these terrible crimes, these traumatic events occurring today.

Myrna Balk is a great role model because of her unique gift to society. She is helping to enlighten society to these terrible crimes. Sex trafficking is everywhere. Women are being abused by men everywhere. Sex for profit is everywhere. These abominations need to be stopped!

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Balk, Myrna. Home page. 2004. 3 January, 2008. www.myrnabalk.com



8-9 Grades: Second Place



Betty Fitzsimmons by Jordan Schill

I'm inspired by strong and talented women that can make a difference in the world. I have role models like my mom and grandmother, but I never imagined having a role model that was someone I had only just met. One such woman is Elizabeth "Betty" Fitzsimmons, a stimulating, Des Moines resident artist. Betty has shown me that I shouldn't always put myself first, and that I can do anything if I just set my mind to it. She has opened new doors for me, whether it's on helping others or just on life. Betty has motivated me to be the best I can be, no matter what anyone says.

Betty Fitzsimmons was born on April 1, 1926. This octogenarian was born and raised in Vermillion, South Dakota with a traditional family. Even at a young age she was devoted to art and volunteering. Betty told me she doesn't remember a time when she wasn't using her hands. She said, "The reason I get up in the morning is because of art."

She thinks everything that she experiences can be an influence for her art. "As an artist, I feel like I'm an explorer," was what she said to me. But her main influences are people. She loves the variety in people and thinks the world would be boring if we were all the same. Two other inspiring things to her are poverty and Robert Scott. Scott was an explorer that was lost in a blizzard in Antarctica; he kept a journal that expressed color on his journey. Inspired by his adventure, Betty created a few pieces based around it. The problem of poverty has also been a stimulus in her life. "I'm disgusted that there are people starving, and we're throwing away food," Betty told me. She has always been doing projects on people affected by poverty, and is still working on them today. She worked at the Iowa Homeless Youth Drop-In Center for a while. She doesn't work there anymore because of her immobility, but she always wishes she still could.

First impressions are key, and her house was what I imagined a typical artist house to be. It was all white with bright purple trim, shutters, and porch. When her welcoming face brought me inside, I wasn't surprised. There were pictures covering almost all of the walls, sculptures and carvings all over, projects lying here and there, and a cat running under the couch. All was what I expected. She even said herself that it was a cluttered house, but it looked to me that everything was in its rightful place, where she'd know where to find it.

Betty Fitzsimmons encouraged me to dream big. Her motto in life is, "All I can do is try." I completely believe that. If you don't succeed just try again, you really can't fail. Whether you try new foods, or try new art, or try to save the world, all that counts is the effort. Betty said, "You don't have to be brilliant to succeed." I entirely agree with what she is saying.

This was more than just an interview for me. She gave me more than just facts. She shared life stories, art ideas, great quotes, and how artists live. She has sparked my ideas on everything from painting, to volunteering, to living life. Betty Fitzsimmons has changed my life in many ways. I want everyone to know about her and how miraculous she is.

Sources

Information from personal interview.



8-9 Grades: Third Place



Donna Reed
by Kaitlin Moews

“When you handle yourself, use your head; when you handle others, use your heart.” This was just one of Donna Reed’s inspiring quotes, and she’s absolutely right. I learned of her from a field trip to the Iowa Hall of Pride. I was instantly fascinated, not only because she had many accomplishments, but because she lived the dream that I’ve always had since I was very young, to be a successful actress.

Donna was born and raised in the tiny town of Denison. It was home to barely 3,000 people. Growing up, she was just an average girl with above average dreams, just like me! She enjoyed living in Iowa as much as I do, but she, like many others, envisioned herself becoming something great. This was important enough to convince her to leave. She wanted to pursue a career as an actress, something we have in common. At 16, she left Iowa to study in Los Angeles.

Donna left everything behind to get a chance at living her fantasy. I envy her bravery and hope that one day I, too, can do the same. At college, she was voted ‘Campus Queen’ and got her picture in the paper. This all led to her signing a contract with MGM and the start of a long journey to many of her dreams coming true, as well. She was in various movies and musicals, including *Shadow of the Thin Man*, and *Babes on Broadway*.

In this industry, it’s incredibly hard to get even that far, but Donna Reed went farther. She went all the way to starring in movies such as the classic films *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *From Here to Eternity*, which won her the one thing I want more than anything else in the world, an Oscar. I can’t imagine the kind of commitment she must have had. I’ve always wondered whether there were times when she just felt like giving up. I’ve felt that way before. Even more, I wonder what it was that kept her going.

Something else she taught me is that sometimes you have to be brave and take risks when you want to progress. She started her own company and launched *The Donna Reed Show*. It was a great success! Donna received four Emmy Nominations for it.

Like everyone else, she had ups and downs in her career. She was fired from a three-year contract for the popular TV series *Dallas* after only one season. She and her husband got divorced, as well. This showed me that strength can’t be measured by how many times you’ve fallen, but how you pick yourself back up again.

She never lost her spark, though. She was an enthusiastic anti-nuclear weapon and anti-war activist. In fact, she founded the “Another Mother for Peace” organization. I especially admire this impassioned feature to her character. It proved that even though she had fame and fortune, she never lost sight of what she felt was important. Whether it was her dreams, her goals, or her visions of the future, she would work hard and fight if she believed in it.

Donna Reed was an excellent example of following your dreams. She’s inspired me to remember that if I work hard enough, stay dedicated, and don’t give up, I, too, may live to fulfill my greatest, most fantastic ambitions. Anyone’s goals can become reality no matter where you’re from, whether it’s New York, Los Angeles, or even Denison, Iowa. Donna Reed has taught me that you only fail when you stop trying. This is a lesson that I’ll always remember.

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Best Essays on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math for 6-7 Grades: First Place



Dr. Peggy Annette Whitson
by Madison Noble

A small town girl, Dr. Peggy Annette Whitson, should not be remembered for being the first woman commander of a space station, but she should be remembered for her dream. Her dream was when she saw the men on the moon, she said, “I want to do that.” It could have been a dream that would last only a year or so, but her dream was to infinity and beyond. Her first mission was June 5, 2002. She is now on another mission in space.

She was born in Mt. Ayr, Iowa on February 9, 1960. She is still living her dream today. She lived in Beaconsfield, Iowa. She is married to Clarence F. Sams. She graduated from Mt. Ayr Community High school in 1978.

Peggy was a student with a positive attitude who set goals and then worked hard to achieve them. One of her teachers reported that Peggy did not believe in the word “can’t.” She believed she could do anything.

Peggy thought a great deal of her parents. “The hardest working people I know are my parents. They are great role models. Luckily for me, I had a mother who said that I could be anything I wanted to be if I would put my mind to it.” Her mom was right. Peggy worked hard and has achieved her dream. Nevertheless, she is the same old Peggy, the outgoing girl that her family and friends love. Whenever she is at home, she looks at the stars and says, “I know that constellation, Leo. I know that star, Lyra.”

Although she can name the stars and has orbited the earth, she has taught me and all the other children to “shoot for the moon” with our dreams — even if we miss, there is still hope. Peggy’s persistence sets a good example for all students.

RESOURCES

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- “peggy whitson.” history. 17 Jan 2008 <http://www.history.com/search.do?searchText+Peggy+Whitson>
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Best Essays on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math for 6-7 Grades: Second Place



Elizabeth Blackwell, The First Woman Doctor

by Lauren M. Ceplecha

Elizabeth Blackwell was born in England in 1821. Elizabeth had four sisters named Anna Blackwell, Marianne Blackwell, Emily Blackwell, and Sarah Blackwell, and three brothers named Henry Blackwell, Samuel C. Blackwell, and George Washington Blackwell who was the only child in the family born in the U.S.A. In 1832 their father moved the family to the United States. Elizabeth's father died in Cincinnati. There Elizabeth, two of her sisters, and her mother opened up a private school to support the family. A couple years later Elizabeth went to Kentucky, as a teacher, and then to North and South Carolina, where she taught school while she secretly read about medicine (privately). Elizabeth said, "The idea of winning a doctor's degree gradually assumed the aspect of a great moral struggle, and the moral fight possessed immense attraction for me." But Elizabeth was rejected by all the leading schools she had applied to. She returned to England to work and St. Bartholomew's Hospital with Dr. James Paget. Elizabeth finally returned to New York in the year of 1851. As she developed her practice, she wrote a book called The Law of Life; With Special References to the Physical Education of Girls. Having to avoid marriage, Elizabeth nevertheless sought a family. In the year of 1854, Elizabeth adopted an orphan named Katharine Barry, also known as Kitty. In 1875, Elizabeth was appointed professor of gynecology at London School of Medicine for Children. Elizabeth remained there until 1907 when she retired after a serious fall. Three years later, Elizabeth Blackwell died in Sussex.

The reason why I chose Elizabeth is when I graduate from collage I hope I can get a doctor's degree so I can be a children's doctor, just like my grandpa, but he was an adult doctor, but he was a doctor to some children. The reason Elizabeth inspirers me the most is she had the gusts to do something most women won't want to do. (since back then all men would hold jobs and not women.)

Lewis, Jane Johnson womenhistory.about.com/od/blackwellelizabether/a/eliz_blackwell.htm 15
January, 2007.



Best Essay on Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math for 8-9 Grades



Women in Science and Engineering Life Saver of Millions

by Rachel Henning

Dr. Helen Taussig might not be well known, but she has directly and indirectly changed the lives of millions. Though you may not know it, the person sitting next to you or your best friend could be alive because of the accomplishments she made during her life.

Helen was born in 1898, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Frank W. Taussig, an economics professor at Harvard University, and Edith Guild (“Dr. Helen”). At the early age of eleven, her mother passed away due to tuberculosis. With the death of Helen’s mother, her father became the most important influence in her early life. Encouraged by her father to pursue her professional goals, Helen applied to Harvard Medical School. After being rejected by Harvard because she was a woman, Helen went to Johns Hopkins where she became interested in the field of cardiology (“Women”). Even though she suffered from dyslexia, she managed to excel in her higher education (“Dr. Helen”).

By the time she graduated from Johns Hopkins in 1925, she had lost her hearing and had to rely on lip-reading and hearing aids for the rest of her career (“Dr. Helen”). She became the chief of the Heart Clinic at Johns Hopkins after completing her education there. While at the clinic, she saw children born with education there. While at the clinic, she saw children born with heart defects on a regular basis. The ones that tugged on her heart the most were the cyanotic, or “blue babies.” These infants were condemned to invalidism and an early death. In an effort to give these infants an opportunity to fully live their lives, Dr. Taussig began to theorize about the nature of the anatomical defects involved in the heart defects. She was able to devise possible surgical solutions (“Women”).

In 1944, Dr. Taussig together with Alfred Blalock, a heart surgeon, invented the Blalock-Taussig operation (“Women”). The sight of the ten pound one year old, their first patient, developing a healthy pink glow for the first time, gave Dr. Taussig a rush of excitement.

The operation soon became extensively performed (“Women”) Her accomplishments and scientific breakthroughs intertwined with her caring and inventiveness gave many infants a second chance at life.

So why should Dr. Taussig be put in the history books with the Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubmans? For all I know, the reason I am sitting here and writing this is that my parents or my grandparents are alive as a result of Dr. Taussig’s accomplishments. Without those that I just mentioned, I would not be here right now.

Even though Dr. Taussig faced so many challenges, she persevered, defied the odds of not having a motherly figure growing up but also coping with having a learning disability, and proved those who told her she could not achieve her dreams all wrong (“Dr. Helen”). Not only did she succeed in a field that had previously been dominated by men, but out-shined all the rest. The job of helping innocent, helpless children live their lives is one of the noblest things I think a person can do. My dream is to become a pediatric oncologist. Along my Journey, I know I will be faced with over-whelming challenges, but if I remember all she went through, my challenges will seem insignificant in comparison. Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig is an amazing woman and role model and far surpasses the right to have her story told.

Work Cited Page

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“Women of the Hall.” National Women’s Hall of Fame. 9 Jan. 2008 <http://www.greatwomen.org/women.php?action=viewone&id=157>.



JUDGES

Allison Amphlett, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

Lora Allison Bird, General Public

Harriet Aten, General Public

Carol Heaverlo, Iowa State University Program for Women in Science and Engineering

Kristin Clark Nolan, Iowa United Methodist Church

Kathy Tumpek, Grandview College



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