

2009 Write Women Back Into History Essay Contest



Women: Taking the Lead to Ensure Our Rights

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

Celebration Day

Thursday, March 26, 2009

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Iowa State Capitol Complex

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 a.m.

Tour of the State Historical Museum of Iowa. (Optional) The museum is a short walk down the hill, or take the shuttle. Meet near the information desk on the first floor.

11:30 a.m.

Lunch on your own. (There is a cafeteria in the Capitol and State Historical Museum.)

1 p.m.

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

3 p.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.

Awards Ceremony

1 p.m.

Kennedy Conference Room

Welcome

by Lori SchraderBachar, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women 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 Lori SchraderBachar; Loraliegh Chrystal, 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 and certificate.)

Students 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

Brayton Presentation

by Mary Jane Olney, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs Deputy Director

Closing

by Lori SchraderBachar

2009 *Write Women Back Into History* Essay Contest Winners

6-7 Grade Category Essays

First Place: Brandon Farr
Teacher: Katrina Brown
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

Second Place: Madison Noble
Teacher: Sara Lockie
Parkview Middle School, Ankeny

Third Place: Maddie Fields
Teacher: Jennifer Stoffer
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

8-9 Grade Category Essay

Kelsiann Halbloom
Teacher: Betsy Buck
West Marshall Middle School, State Center

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

First Place: Aaron Christensen
Teacher: Katrina Brown
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

Second Place: Morgan Exline
Teacher: Katrina Brown
Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids

Editor's Note: Essays were typed as submitted.



6-7 Grades: First Place



Margaret Wragg Sloss: First Female Veterinarian in Iowa by Brandon Farr

"I hope you will set your goal just a little bit higher and then put forth a real effort to attain or surpass it. Do a little each day toward your goal. Most people never get to their objective for the simple reason they quit too soon!"

—Margaret Wragg Sloss.

Margaret Wragg Sloss was a great leader for women in veterinary science. Not only was she the first female veterinarian in Iowa, but she also helped change the admissions policy for other women to Iowa State University so that they could not be denied admission based on gender. Margaret had strong character, and was a very determined person with a good sense of humor. She had a great philosophy about life, which she lived herself and also shared with other women to inspire them to pursue their dreams.

On October 28, 1901, Margaret Sloss was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. When she was nine years old, she moved to Ames, Iowa, when her father became the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds for the Iowa State University (ISU) campus. She dedicated herself to her career and never married. Margaret was a natural leader. Indeed, she was an incredible leader for other women to follow, especially in veterinary science. She was a very inspirational person for many. After all of her many career accomplishments, she passed away on December 11, 1979, at the age of 78.

During her education, Margaret applied for the veterinary program at ISU and was denied, but she was still determined. Based on research on the federal requirements for ISU as a land-grant college, she found proof that they could not legally deny her admission based on gender, and then was accepted to the college. Even after she was accepted, she was still not allowed to take some classes that the male students could take. A lot of people discouraged her from pursuing this career. But she ignored them, and the discrimination, and stayed focused on achieving her goals. She was very busy as a professor in the veterinary school, and participating in many activities outside her career. In 1938, her father died and Margaret was left to take care of her mother. This means she had to balance her work and caring for her mother.

In 1923, Margaret earned her Bachelor's degree in zoology from ISU. The same year, she became the first female staff member in the veterinary college at ISU as a veterinary pathology laboratory technician. In 1932, she earned her Master's degree in microscopic anatomy. Then in 1938 she became the first woman at ISU to get a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree. In 1947, she helped found the Women's Veterinary Association and served two terms as its president. Out of her own generosity, she used her time to help the wives of male veterinary students learn procedures to help in their husband's practices. She helped influence the idea of men and women having the same standards for admission to the School of Veterinary Medicine. She authored and co-authored many professional publications. She also gave a lot of speeches, and usually started them with jokes. Not only did Margaret become widely known in Iowa, but also all around the United States. For example, she was invited to dine at the White House with Eleanor Roosevelt at a luncheon.

What impressed me the most about Margaret Sloss was that even though she was so determined and serious about her career, she still had a great sense of humor. Many people remembered her for her sense of humor. She had a joke or story for everything! Once, when she was giving a speech to a fourth grade class, one kid even asked why she wasn't a stand-up comedian. She

didn't feel she had time for marriage because she was so busy with her career. She said the only marriage she would consider would be to "a rich, old man with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel."

One of the ways that I relate to Margaret Sloss is that we both love animals and set our goals on becoming a veterinarian. We also both enjoy science, and try our hardest at everything we do. A few things I've learned is that you should never give up even when things aren't going your way, and that you can still have a sense of humor as long as you get your work done first.

There are many reasons why I think Margaret Wragg Sloss should be remembered in history. She changed many people's thinking about women's rights to be equal with men in all the things they do. But are all people equal today, no matter what gender, color or religion they are? We've come a long way, but there is still work to be done.

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6-7 Grades: Second Place



Representative Patsy Takemoto Mink

by Madison Noble

Welcomed into poverty's embrace on December 6, 1927, in Paia, Hawaii, a little Asian-American girl was born. She went on to help many women and girls just like me. Her name is going to be remembered for years and years. Her name is Patsy Takemoto Mink.

To the average person, one might say her life was full of losses, as she ran for numerous elected positions that included President of the United States and many others, but she persevered to achieve her visionary goals. At an early age, in her junior year of high school to be precise, she won her first election, becoming the new student body president. This was a major accomplishment because most of the student body hated everything Japanese-oriented. This dilemma would have stopped most people, but "go-getter" Patsy Mink knew that was just the beginning.

A snapshot of her visions and successes include that she became the first Asian-American woman to practice law in Hawaii in 1953. This accomplishment was met with resistance as at that time, women were treated like property. Upon returning to Hawaii from Pennsylvania to marry her husband, it was the opinion of the Hawaiian government that she had forfeited her Hawaiian citizenship and could not apply to take the bar. With Patsy's never-give-up attitude, she was able to convince the Hawaiian Territorial Bar that she did qualify and she did become an attorney. In 1956 through 1958, she ran, was elected, and served in Hawaii's Territorial House of Representatives and was the first Asian-American woman elected to the Legislature. In 1964 through 1976, she ran, was elected, and served in the United States House of Representatives. She was the first Asian-American woman elected into Congress.

Throughout her elected career, Patsy Mink was often "the first" or a "lone voice". She spoke out against the Vietnam War when most others supported it. She also supported environmental concerns even when most others did not. Additionally, she supported civil liberties when others

shrugged off the problems. Also, she supported working and poor families, especially those in rustic areas, even as the nation turned greedy. Throughout her career, she was ever smart and savvy, but always with the interests of the less fortunate in mind. She was truly a feminist before feminism became "cool".

For any female who plays "boy's sports," like football, baseball, or soccer, you would not be playing it if it were not for Patsy Mink. When she was in high school, she played basketball when girls only played half-court because, as she put it, "They said it was too strenuous for us." Later, she learned women were not allowed to play sports due to the fact that physical activity would damage women's reproductive organs.

Because of the discrimination she endured and witnessed firsthand, she co-authored legislation called Title IX.

By its own definition, Title IX assured girls and women an equal opportunity in education, including access to higher education. For example, prior to the enactment of Title IX, nine percent of medical degrees were awarded to women. Two decades later, 41 percent of the medical degrees were awarded to women. Also, prior to Title IX, the percentage of women receiving law degrees was a mere seven percent, as compared to 44 percent two decades after its passage. Ironically, Patsy Mink's career choice to become a lawyer was determined by the repeated rejections of her applications to attend medical school because male applicants were preferred.

Title IX states, "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Considering the unprecedented breakthroughs garnered by this legislation, 16 states adopted similar legislation at the state level, one of which was her home state of Hawaii.

Sadly, on September 28, 2002, Patsy Mink passed away in Honolulu because of viral pneumonia at the age of 74. However, her dreams and aspirations continue on today. Upon Patsy Mink's death, Congress officially on October 29, 2002, renamed Title IX, "The Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act."

"Patsy Mink was one of the pioneers who transformed Hawaii and the nation. Her legacy survives on every school and college campus in America. More profoundly, it lives on in the hope, progress, and improvement she brought to the lives of millions," U.S. Representative Neil Abercrombie, her friend and colleague, stated.

It is through the hard work of Patsy Mink that I and millions of other girls have had the "educational doors" opened to us. For this, I am very thankful.

Patsy Mink was born just another poor, unknown, minority female in Hawaii; it was only through her hopes, goals, and persistence that she became an American icon for girls and women everywhere and the "Mother" of Equal Educational Opportunities.

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6-7 Grades: Third Place



Charity Hansel by Maddie Fields

Did you know that according to statistics from the Crimes Against Children Research Center that one in every twelve children are victims of some form of sexual abuse crime? Did you ever wonder about who handles the investigations for those crimes, and why they are not recognized for doing it very often? Well, that would be Cedar Rapids Police Investigator, Charity Hansel, and I am hoping to make it so that she is recognized as a part of history for all of the things that she does.

While growing up Charity had six sisters, so she learned how to work well with others and how to help them. Charity decided that she wanted to help people in her life, so when she went to college she studied law enforcement. Right after she graduated college, Charity was hired onto the Cedar Rapids Police Department. Once hired she had to attend a thirteen week academy, spend five months with an FTO (Field Training Officer), and for four months she had to ride solo while being evaluated each month, prior to being considered an official full time sworn police officer. Not only was all of the training hard, but it was also a hardship to be a female police officer because they do not always get the automatic respect that the male officers receive from people. Another thing that make her job somewhat nerve racking is that, recently, before Charity was hired onto the police force, one of the other female officers sued the police department for harassment.

Charity has had her share of difficulties, but she has also had many accomplishments within her career. One of her greatest accomplishments was handling the Jetseta Gage case. Even though it was a challenging case to do because the victim was not able to speak of what happened to her, it was still investigated and eventually her killer was put into prison. To Charity, it does not matter whether something is a big case or not, as long as a child is taken away from their abuser and is put in a place where they are and feel safe. Charity said, and I quote, "Every time that a child is removed from an abusive place it is a huge accomplishment."

Charity has been very courageous as well. It takes an enormous amount of courage to do the right thing in a bad or frightening situation, but Charity always helps to get children away from their abusers. She is also very courageous every time that she must deal with a dangerous situation because she might have to put her life on the line to stop a child from being abused. Charity has also changed the world in a great way. She thinks that it is a massive change when a harmful person is taken away from a place where they may hurt people. Even though Charity changes the world one person at a time, after a while all of those people start to add up.

There are quite a few things that fascinated or surprised me about Charity, but there is one that I really wanted to point out. That would be the award that Charity received for her work with sexually abused children. Charity was very humble when she accepted the award by thanking the people who gave her the award many times and she did not go around bragging to every person that she saw. That made me even more positive that I made a good choice in deciding to write my essay on her.

As you can probably see Charity Hansel should be a woman in history because she is constantly helping to make people's lives better through what she does in her career. She stands for the good of children and makes our world a safer place for all of us to live in. It is because of all of the things that Charity has done throughout her career for us and especially children; that I feel that she has earned a place as a woman in history.

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8-9 Grade



Write Women Back Into History: Edna Griffin **by Kelsiann Halbloom**

How would you like to stand up for what you believe in and not be afraid of what people thought of you? Well, that's exactly what Edna Griffin did. Edna was refused service because she was African-American. In Iowa, African-Americans could go to white schools by the 1940's. By the time Edna moved to Des Moines, African-Americans could go to public restaurants where whites were.

After graduating from Fisk University and marrying Stanley Griffin, Edna moved to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1947. When Edna moved to Des Moines she helped with the Progressive Party when they tried to end discrimination against African-Americans. On July 4, 1948, Edna, her daughter, Phyllis, and two of Edna's friends went to Katz Drugstore to buy sodas. When Edna was refused service because the owner said they were not equipped to serve "colored people," Edna was furious. Edna was not the only one who had been refused service before. Later, Edna filed charges against the owner, Maurice Katz, under the 1884 Iowa Civil Rights Act. After a long trial and lots of publicity, the judge ruled in Edna's favor.

Edna was still active in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's and 1960's. In 1963, Edna Griffin founded a chapter of the Iowa Congress for Racial Equality and organized Iowans for the march on Washington led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Edna Griffin was dubbed "Rosa Parks of Iowa" because of the many impressive things she had done for African-Americans.

Edna Griffin was a leader to a lot of people because she had the ability to stand up for what she believed. Edna didn't care what people thought about her. All she cared about was that everyone was treated equally and fairly. She was a role model for other African-Americans.

Edna has gotten some recognition for her outstanding work to end discrimination. In 1985, Edna was named to the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame. In 1999, she was named to the Iowan African-American Hall of Fame. In 1988, the Flynn Building, formerly the Katz Drugstore, was renamed to honor her. The Des Moines mayor even declared May 15 as Edna Griffin Day in 1998. More people need to know of the brave things that Edna Griffin has done so they might encouraged to stand up for what they believe. Edna Griffin sadly died in 2000.

Edna Griffin should be written in history because she has encouraged others to fight for what they believe is right. Edna has helped me to overcome my fears and to not worry about what other people think of me, just to be myself. Edna has led the way for others to follow in her footsteps. Let's let Edna's legacy live on through history.

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



Darleane C. Hoffman

by Aaron Christensen

Of the few elements created in labs, it is amazing that three of them can be linked to the work of one person. Darleane C. Hoffman was one of the most important and influential women in Nuclear Chemistry, yet she has fallen from fame. Her contributions to the world were tremendous, and Hoffman definitely deserves a place in history.

Born to Carl and Elverna Christian on November 8th, 1926, Darleane had one sibling, Sherril. Growing up in Terril, Iowa, she went to Iowa State University after she finished high school. She originally wished to become an art major, but an inspiring chemistry teacher named Neillie Naylor changed that desire, and she decided to become a chemistry student. Darleane admired Marie Curie, and wanted to become an influential female chemist like Curie. Hoffman was interested in Nuclear Physics and the effects radiation had on different elements. In 1948, she graduated Iowa State with a BS degree in chemistry. She continued to stay at Iowa State for graduate school, earning a PhD in 1951. Shortly afterwards, she married Marvin Hoffman, a fellow nuclear physics student. She went to work at Tennessee's Oak Ridge National Laboratory for a short while, until Her husband received a job at Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico. Marvin was accepted for the job in 1952, but when Darleane tried to apply, she was turned away, told "We don't hire women in that division." Undiscouraged, she finally was able to receive the job in early 1953. Working at Los Alamos, she was the first person to discover a natural isotope heavier than uranium. At the time, uranium was considered the heaviest natural substance in the universe. Hoffman's next major discovery was about nuclear fission, or the splitting of an atom's nucleus. She discovered that the element Fermium, element 100, could split naturally, a breakthrough in the scientific community. Afraid of radiation's effect on the environment, she joined a team that investigated whether nuclear waste could be stored in Nevada's Yucca Mountains. After 31 years of work, she left Los Alamos in 1984. Hoffman became a professor at the University of California, and also worked at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. There, her most prestigious accomplishments occurred. She led a group that confirmed that Seaborgium, element 106, existed. Later, she co-led a team of researchers that discovered super heavy elements 114, 116, and 118, Ununquadium, Ununhexium, and Ununoctium, respectively, in debris from nuclear exposed materials.

After decades of working, Hoffman retired in 1991. But she still was not finished with her career. She helped establish the Glenn T. Seaborg Institute for Transactinium Science, and became its first director. The chemist continued to work at Berkeley even after her retirement. Soon, she was showered with awards. In 1997, she received the National Medal of Science. Hoffman was given the Priestly Medal, one of chemistry's highest honors, in 2000. The American Chemistry Society (ACS) gave her the ACS Award for Nuclear Chemistry, making her the first women in history to receive the award. Countless others followed, including some awards from Norway. Today Hoffman continues to live in Southern California.

Darleane C. Hoffman is indeed an amazing chemist, but her legacy lies outside of her research. Hoffman encouraged other women to be interested in science, and broke down the age old walls preventing women from being scientists. She wrote over 260 papers, and won countless awards. I feel a connection to Hoffman because I am very much interested in chemistry, and the history of science is

another favorite topic. Due to this, I can understand her enthusiasm about science, and better understand Hoffman. She should be remembered in history because of how much she aided modern science, and brought women into chemistry.

Hoffman might have never had the fame of the woman she admired most, Marie Curie. But we can be sure on one thing. Darleane C. Hoffman was one of the most important and influential women in Nuclear Chemistry. Hopefully, her place in the history books will be remembered.

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



Ellen Ochoa
by Morgan Exline

Houston we have a problem. The problem is, most everyone knows the names of John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, and Buzz Aldrin. But, few people are familiar with the name Ellen Ochoa. She became the first Hispanic American woman astronaut. Not to mention an electrical engineer, inventor, and award winning classical flutist!

Ellen Ochoa was born May 10, 1958. Ellen came from a Hispanic family and grew up in La Mesa, California, where she and her family endured Hispanic heritage discrimination. For example, when her father was a child, he was only allowed to swim in a pool before the pool was cleaned. People thought that Hispanics would make the pool "filthy". She graduated from Grossmont High school in 1975. Ellen then went to San Diego State University where she considered a career as a classical flutist. However, her mother insisted that she continue her education. Ellen decided to apply for graduate school to study science at Stanford University.

NASA initially turned Ellen down when she applied for the space program. She didn't let that slow her down, though. Ellen worked hard and in 1988 she was accepted. Within 6 months she was made chief of Intelligent Systems Technology. In 1990, she was chosen for the astronaut class and became an astronaut in 1991. Ellen's first flight was on the space shuttle Discovery in 1993, making her the first Hispanic American woman in space. On that flight she was the only female on a five-person team. They conducted atmospheric and solar studies to see how these effect our earth's environment. On another flight in 1999, she was on a 10-day mission and was part of the crew that performed the first docking to the International Space Station. All of these missions and studies will lead us to better understand our planet and advance current and future space exploration.

In 1999, Ellen was given a Women in Science and Engineering achievement award. In that same year, she was selected by president Clinton to serve on the presidential commission on the celebration of woman in American history.

Surprisingly, Ellen Ochoa wasn't even interested in science as a teen. She even thought she might wind up being a classical flutist, but instead she became an award winning scientist and

astronaut. Recently, Ellen Ochoa became the first woman to receive the 2008 Engineer of the Year award by the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards conference. She is currently married to Coe Fulmer and has two children.

I believe Ellen Ochoa should be remembered in history because of her hard work and determination, her studies, missions, awards, and accomplishments that she made while being an astronaut. She inspires me to do my best and not give up. I also think her interest for our planets future is something we both have in common. Someday Houston may not have a problem, and the name Ellen Ochoa will be as well known as John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, and Buzz Aldrin.

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JUDGES

Lora Allison Bird, General Public
Millie Frese, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
Carol Heaverlo, Iowa State University Program for Women in Science and Engineering
Michael Kates, Fort Des Moines Museum & Education Center
Henny Ohr, Status of Iowans of Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage
Kathy Tumpek, Grandview College



iowa commission on the status of women

Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
Tel: 515/281-4461, 800/558-4427
Fax: 515/242-6119
women@iowa.gov
www.women.iowa.gov

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