



**2001**

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

**Sponsored by:**

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

# 2001 *Write Women Back Into History* Essay Contest Winners



## 6-7 Grade Category

- 1st place: **Carla Schaffer**, Parkview Middle School, Ankeny  
2nd place: **Melissa Dunlap**, Colo-Nesco Middle School  
3rd place: **Caitlyn Levetzow**, Wood Intermediate School, Davenport

## 8-9 Grade Category

- 1st place: **Katie Bartlett**, Central Academy, Des Moines  
2nd place: **Molly Gallentine**, BCLUW High School, Conrad  
3rd place: **Erin Wonder**, Indianola Middle School

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

- 1st place: **Valerie Brophy**, Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids  
2nd place: **Emily A. Nagle**, Jefferson Junior High School, Dubuque

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

- 1st place: **Kathleen M. Vonderhaar**, Marquette Junior/Senior High School, West Point  
2nd place: **Daniela Vigliotti**, Lourdes Catholic School, Bettendorf

## Edith Rose Murphy Sackett Award for the Best Essay on a Woman Volunteer

**Iman El Khatib**, Jefferson Junior High School, Dubuque

6-7 Grades: **M**y essay is about American artist Mary Cassatt. Mary, as the first  
First Place American Impressionist, was an inspiration to women artists of her time  
and those that followed. Her art explained what women did during their days  
by Carla Schaffer in the 1800's and the 1900's, and therefore had a real historical significance.  
Grade 7 Her paintings also opened a lot of eyes to what womanhood was all about.

Parkview Middle School, Ankeny  
Sponsoring teacher: Nicholas Pauly  
Mary Cassatt was born on May 22, 1844, in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. Her parents, Robert and Katherine, also had four other children; Lydia, Aleck, Robert, and Joseph. Her father's job consisted of traveling all around Europe, especially to Paris. The family visited wonderful art galleries, and Mary decided she wanted to become a professional artist. After a death in the family, the Cassatts moved back to their home state of Pennsylvania. Mary enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Unsatisfied with how the school saw women artists, Mary went back to Paris to seek professional guidance. Turned down by high-ranking art schools because she was a woman, Mary studied with private teachers. She was first recognized professionally when the Paris Salon accepted one of her paintings for an exhibition in 1868. Her personal style of painting was different than the others, though. Mary painted with larger brush strokes, brighter colors, and more lighting. Edgar Degas came across Mary's work, contacted her, and they became close friends. Later, Mary left the Paris Salon to join Degas in a group of painters known as Impressionists.

In 1879, Mary held the first Impressionist exhibit in the United States. In 1892, she painted a twelve by fifty-eight foot mural for the Woman's Building of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. This event increased Mary Cassatt's fame in the United States, although her work was not really appreciated until after her death.

Mary Cassatt once said, "A woman artist must be capable of making the primary sacrifice." Mary gave up a marriage and children of her own to dedicate time to her art. Instead, her art subjects became her family and friends, especially her sister Lydia and her brother Aleck's four children. She painted women doing their normal daily activities, such as having tea, getting dressed, preparing meals, and bathing children. The theme of mothers and children was in some of her most famous works.

Mary Cassatt was forced to stop painting in 1915 because of her failing eyesight. She died in 1926. She will always be remembered for her great artistic ability and for her effort in obtaining equal status for women artists.

To me, Mary Cassatt used her art in support of women's rights. When art schools discouraged her by not letting her take a certain class, she found another place that would. She never gave up on her dream of being a famous artist. Her paintings captured in detail the beauty of women's lives, from how gracefully they would sew to how gently they would hold a child. Mary Cassatt changed the way Americans looked at art, and that is why she should be written into history.

Works Cited:

Eisenberg, Bonnie and Mary Ruthsdotter. Her Story: Women Who Changed the World. New York: Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc., 1995. 132-134.

Mancoff, Debra N. Mary Cassatt: Reflections of Women's Lives. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1998. 7-91.



## Amelia Earhart: Overcoming Turbulences

6-7 Grades: **A**melia Earhart was born July 24, 1897, in Atchison, Kansas. In 1905,  
Second Place Amelia's dad got a job with a railroad in Des Moines, Iowa, but Amelia and  
her sister would not come to Iowa until 1908.

by Melissa Dunlap  
Grade 6 Amelia was ten when she saw her first plane at the Iowa State Fair.  
She couldn't believe that thing made of wood and wires could fly. Her interest  
was sparked. She fell in love with planes and decided to fly one someday.

Colo-Nesco Middle  
School In 1914 Amy, her mom, and the girls packed up and left Edwin, her  
dad, because of his drinking problem and headed for Chicago. It probably  
took her strength to overcome a split like that. I know it would be hard for  
me.

Sponsoring teacher:  
Cassandra Green When Amelia moved to Los Angeles she decided to fulfill her life long  
dream, fly a plane. In 1920, Amelia took her first flight (ten minutes) over Los  
Angeles. She didn't pilot this flight.

On April 27, 1926, while living in Boston, Amelia got a call from  
Captain H.C. Railey. He asked her, "How would you like to be the first  
woman to fly across the Atlantic?" Of course, like any adventurous young  
person she said, "Yes."

Amelia would fly, as a passenger, with two men, Lou Gordon and Bill  
Stultz. On June 18, 1928, their plane left Halifax. They traveled in dense fog  
for most of the trip. They had planned to land in Ireland, but instead landed in  
Burry Port.

On February 7, 1931 Amelia married her other love, a man named  
George Putnam.

On May 20, 1932 Amelia flew solo across the Atlantic.

This passion grew. Then, Amelia started thinking of doing something  
more adventurous, and on June 1, 1937 Amelia and her navigator left Miami,  
Florida for her trip around the world.

At 20:14 GMT, Itasca received the last voice transmission from  
Amelia, "KHAQQ calling Itasca. We must be on you but cannot see you. . .  
Gas is running low. . ."

The Electra was the last plane to hold Amelia Earhart.

Amelia's last note to George read: "Please know I am quite aware of  
the hazards. . . I want to do it because I want to do it. Woman must try do  
things as men have tried. When they fail their failure must be but a challenge

to others. “

There are various theories about what happened to her, but no one really knows what happened to Amelia Earhart.

I think Amelia Earhart should be written into history because she did courageous things most woman could only dream of doing at that time. I wish I could have been as daring and as adventurous as she was. She should also be written into history as a role model for girls who want to take wings and fly.

I can relate to Amelia in a way because I really like dirt track racing. I know some people think, “You’re a girl. You can’t like racing. Boys like racing, not girls.” Like Amelia, I don’t listen to their rude comments. I stand out in my class because I’m the only girl that knows anything about racing.

Even though Amelia is gone, she can still inspire young girls to follow their dreams even if they are out of the ordinary. My dream is to be a flagman, even though I’m a girl, and an orthodontist. Like Amelia, I have chosen to travel a path that has been mostly flown by men.



6-7 Grades: **M**om... To most people, that word means someone who is there to take  
Third Place care of you and protect you. To me, the definition of a mom goes much  
by Caitlyn Levetzow deeper. She doesn’t just take care of me and protect me, but she gives me  
Grade 7 the love and support I need to go through life. She is like a best friend who I  
can talk to 24/7 about absolutely anything.

Wood Intermediate My relationship with my mom is built on many things. The first and  
School, Davenport foremost being love. It is a wonderful feeling to know that no matter what I  
do, my mom will still love me. She may not like what I have done, but the  
love is still there even when she disciplines me. There is no greater feeling  
Sponsoring teacher: than to be loved unconditionally.

Matthew DeBaene Our relationship is also based on trust. I can trust that when I tell her  
something private, she will not tell anyone. I also trust that no matter what,  
she will be there for me. She also has a great deal of trust in me, and she  
knows that I would never lie to her - I couldn’t. There is just something  
about our relationship that keeps me from ever telling her a lie. I can’t explain  
it, but we both appreciate it.

Not only is my mom honest in our relationship, but she is honest in all  
aspects of her life. I remember one time after getting home from shopping,  
she found something in our shopping bags that was not ours, and she noticed  
from the receipt that we had not paid for it. She went straight back to the  
store to return it. The person behind the counter looked at her like she was  
crazy, but that is the way my mom is...honest.

My mom is always there for me. Whether it be a personal question

that I could not ask anyone else or a problem at school, she is always there to help me. She works six days a week for the president of a real estate company, but still finds the time to help me and share in my experiences. She attends my chorus performances, award ceremonies, and any other functions that may come up. She is right there with camera in hand, clapping louder than anyone.

I have two sisters, and the three of us keep my mom very busy. As if that isn't enough, she also helps other people as well. She cooks and delivers food regularly to her mom and dad. She helps another older couple we know by taking food to them and sometimes helping them financially, when we can afford it. She also gives money, when possible, to various charities like United Way, Heart Association, and the Boys & Girls Club. One time, a lady at work was very sick with a serious illness, and my mom took special food items to her and a health book that contained helpful suggestions about the lady's illness. That is just the way she is. She helps when she can, and I greatly admire that about her.

Nothing could ever replace my mom and the wonderful relationship I have with her. She has done so many wonderful things for me, our family, and the people around her. I think my mom should be written into the history books as the best mom in the world. I am so proud of everything she is and has done. She is not only a mother, a wife, a daughter, and a secretary, but she is my friend...there is no better reason than that.



## Write Women Into History Essay

8-9 Grades: **C**an you imagine a world where everyone is the same? Can you imagine living in a world without racial diversity or ethnic differences? That is the kind of world many Iowans sought to maintain in the years following World War II. African-Americans were not allowed to eat in restaurants that served whites. Blacks had to sit in the back of the bus, and black and white children went to separate schools. All of these injustices changed because of the strength and conviction of a petite, black woman named Edna Griffin.

First Place  
by Katie Bartlett  
Grade 8  
Central Academy,  
Des Moines

Sponsoring teacher:  
Jan Williams

In July of 1948, Edna Griffin, her baby, and two friends went into Katz Drug Store in downtown Des Moines. Katz had a lunch counter that did not serve African-American people. Nevertheless, Edna ordered a soda for herself and her friends. The waitress refused to serve Edna. Edna asked to see the floor manager and his reply was the same. So, Edna left Katz Drug Store without being served but determined to fight for her civil rights.

In a Des Moines Register article by Rekha Basu published January 26, 1998, Mrs. Griffin said, "Just because it was right was why I was there. It really wasn't a matter of bravery." However, Edna Griffin was brave when she challenged authority and created an atmosphere of unrest and imminent change. Many Iowans were afraid of the change and fought against it. Fortunately, many more Iowans found an overwhelming hunger for the equality of rights for African-Americans all over the state. Within days of the news of the Katz incident, hundreds of people all over Iowa participated in sit-ins, protests, and marches. Shortly after the incident, Edna filed a lawsuit against Katz Drug Store. The lawsuit that Edna filed found its way to the Iowa Supreme Court and Edna was at the center of the controversy. Ultimately, Katz was convicted of violating Iowa's civil rights laws by the Iowa Supreme Court. Later in a civil suit, an all-white jury awarded Griffin the sum of one dollar. It may not seem like much of an award, but it proved segregation was wrong.

Edna Griffin was born in 1909 in Kentucky and raised on the East Coast. She attended the all-black Fisk University and had been protected from racial discrimination until she came to Des Moines with her husband. Following the conclusion of the Katz case, Mrs. Griffin volunteered for many organizations which fought to bring equal rights to all Iowans. Mrs. Griffin's success in fighting against prejudice has helped bring closer the end of segregation and discrimination. She used the Iowa Courts to affirm that segregation is wrong. She helped to change the everyday lives of people for generations to come.

My life is very different because of Edna Griffin's strength and conviction. The middle school I attend is racially and ethnically diverse. I enjoy the friendship and benefit from the contributions of people from many races and countries. My life is made richer by these experiences and I have people like Edna Griffin to thank for the opportunity.

Edna Griffin died February 2, 2000 at a nursing home in Des Moines. She died quietly and almost forgotten. She fought all of her life against discrimination and injustice. Her willingness to put herself at risk of persecution, file a law suit, and challenge the conventional thinking of the day had a direct impact on the quality of many lives. Although Edna Griffin has been honored with awards and plaques, her true legacy can be found in the many shapes and colors of the faces in my classroom.



8-9 Grades: **E**xcellent teachers are often forgotten in the course of history, but not in the  
Second Place minds of their students. My role model is a teacher. She doesn't have a glamorous  
job and hasn't defeated any bad-guys with laser beams. However, this middle  
aged woman has befriended a 15 year old girl, and that can sometimes be more  
by Molly Gallentine important.  
Grade 9

BCLUW High admit that her classes could be dirt boring. Her belief was that students must  
School hear something twenty times before they learn it. She drove everything into the  
ground, but all of her students could write a proper sentence! Once in a while,  
Sponoring teacher: she would let us free-write. To my surprise I found myself actually writing  
Shaelynn Bonwell stories instead of notes to my friends. One day Mrs. Pieper had me stay after  
class. She had read one of my stories and told me that with a little bit of help,  
I could have a great piece of literature. This became a turning point for me,  
helping my self esteem. We worked so hard on making my story perfect. Mrs.  
Pieper probably looked it over hundreds of times. In the end, I won first place  
in the 1998 Iowa Reading Association creative writing contest.

During the same time Mrs. Pieper noticed that our small rural school  
was faced with a big problem. If students excelled in sports there were many  
extracurricular opportunities for them, but if a student's strong points were in  
the fine arts there were few programs available. School was getting really hard  
for me since I was struggling to find a place where I belonged. Then Mrs.  
Pieper proposed a plan for a fine arts enrichment class in our middle school.  
Never before had there been any attempt to teach journalism or theater. I was  
thrilled. Mrs. Pieper, ignoring her already packed schedule, began to choose  
students eligible for the class. I was added to her list.

Her book-filled room became a sanctuary for many of us. For me, it  
was the one time in the day that I could look forward to, no matter what  
adolescent troubles I was having. We could walk into the room and do what  
we loved best: writing and acting. We published our middle school's first  
newspaper; I did a comical advice column. My class performed many skits,  
but we were most proud of our full-scale production of "Alice in  
Wonderland". Mrs. Pieper would stay up all night long making the costumes  
and then have to teach the next day.

Mrs. Pieper also helped us learn the importance of being a volunteer. We produced and performed puppet shows for the elementary children teaching them about the diseases and disabilities of some of the students. We video taped ourselves reading our favorite books and sent it to homeless shelters. Mrs. Pieper helped us make giant steps as writers and performers in just a short period of time.

I know Mrs. Pieper not just as an English teacher, but as a bubbly person who has great ideas and strives to make them a reality. She wants the best for all of the kids who come into her classroom each day, and she will go out of her way for each and every one of them. There have been many good teachers in the world, but most are not mentioned in history books. Who taught Betsy Ross how to sew or Louisa May Alcott her alphabet? I think that by writing about the contributions Mrs. Pieper has made, I am also honoring all of those forgotten teachers.



## Carrie Chapman Catt: Constant Service to a Great Cause

8-9 Grades: **O**n a brisk fall morning in 1872, a young girl watched as her father  
Third Place readied himself to make the trip into town and vote for the next President of  
the United States. She also saw her mother sitting patiently at the table, and  
by Erin Wonder asked out loud why her mother wasn't getting ready to vote, too. Her  
Grade 8 innocent question was greeted with laughter. "Women can't vote," she was  
told. "That is how it always has been and that is how it always will be." The  
Indianola Middle girl was shocked at the acceptance of the lower status of women, and this  
School revelation changed the course of her life, as well as the entire nation.

Sponsoring teacher: The little girl was Carrie Clinton Lane, a headstrong and confident  
Anthony Asmus child living on her family's farm in rural Charles City, Iowa. Her parents did  
not approve of Carrie's outgoing nature, but she continually pushed the limits  
of acceptance in society, and would do so throughout her life. Carrie made  
her mark on Iowa State University by earning women the right to make  
speeches in the school's literary society. In one of her first speeches, Carrie  
asked "How is it possible that a woman who is unfit to vote, should be the  
mother of, and bring up, a man who is?" These words were Carrie's first  
steps toward becoming a leader in the fight for women's suffrage. After  
college, Carrie moved back to Charles City and worked as a teacher and  
principal in Mason City, and, in 1883, she became one of the first women in  
the nation appointed superintendent of a school district.

After Carrie's first husband, Leo Chapman, died, Carrie joined the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association. It was then that Carrie met George Catt, a supporter of women's suffrage, whom she married shortly after. In 1890,

Carrie made her National American Woman Suffrage Association debut at a convention by giving a rousing speech.

As a new century dawned, NAWSA president Susan B. Anthony stepped down and offered the honorary position to Carrie, who eagerly accepted the job and moved to New York with her husband. Unfortunately, George Catt's health was failing, and Carrie turned the NAWSA presidency over to Anna Howard Shaw while she cared for her ailing husband. Sadly, George died, and Carrie fell into a deep depression. She quit her work, and her friends and doctor encouraged her to go abroad. During her travels, Carrie established the International Women's Suffrage Alliance. While traveling as president for the IWSA, she was asked to return as president for the NAWSA, which had come upon hard times while Carrie was gone.

When she returned, Carrie soon released her "Winning Plan", a plan that would help them win the women's suffrage vote. Her plan worked, and in 1920 Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the nineteenth Amendment. After the victory, Carrie proudly stated, "This is a glorious and wonderful day. Now that we have the vote let us remember we are...free and equal citizens."

Carrie Chapman Catt made many great contributions to women's rights and suffrage. Without Carrie's strong determination and will, women would not be voting in elections today. Carrie paved the way for women in the present day.

Carrie became very private in her old age. She seemed to want no credit for her actions, just results. Carrie died alone of a heart attack on the evening of March 9, 1947. Her funeral was simple, as she requested, and she was buried in a New York cemetery under a monument that simply said, "Constant Service To A Great Cause." And what a great cause it was.

Works Cited:

Moss, Joyce and George Wilson. Profiles in American History: Significant Events and the People Who Shaped Them. New York, New York: ITP, 1994.

David F. McCartney. "About Carrie Chapman Catt". 2000: Internet Explorer. 11/14/00. [www.catt.org](http://www.catt.org)



## My Essay on Hilda Irene Brophy

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

by Valerie Brophy  
Grade 6

Prairie Middle  
School, Cedar  
Rapids

Sponsoring teacher:  
Gwen Gano

This is an essay about a person I admire very much. Her name is Irene Brophy, and she is my great aunt, and when I say “great” I mean *great!* She is the most remarkable person I’ve ever met.

Irene was born on November 30, 1919, on a small farm in Minnesota. She was born before the Great Depression; all she says she can remember is, “My family was poor to begin with so we never seemed to get much poorer. Whatever problems my parents had, they never talked about it around us. My parents just made it seem like nothing was wrong and made the best of the situation.”

She remembers that once her family was going to Fergus Falls, Minnesota, to buy Christmas presents, and she was going to get a pair of ice shoes. They were of polished black leather, with shiny, sham steel blades, and cream colored laces. They were something that every kid wanted.

“We got to Fergus Falls and went to get some money at the bank, but right before we got there the bank closed. All the money we had was the money in our pockets. I still got a pair of ice shoes though.”

In 1940, Irene went to Minnesota College of Art and graduated in 1943 with a degree in drafting. She started working at a naval factory. Then, she chose to join the Marine Corp. She left for the San Diego base on Christmas Eve, 1943. While at the base Irene became an engineer and car specialist. She drove many different types of military vehicles like the 6 x 6, 30-40, regular pick-ups, jeeps, and armored vehicles. She even drove a movie star named Robert Ryan to a new base! May 15, 1946, was the end of Irene’s contract, so she moved to Boulder, Colorado, and later started working for the United States Government. While working for the government, Irene was involved with many interesting projects like the Project Mercury. Irene was one of the eleven people chosen from Boulder to help train the astronauts that were to go on that mission. One of the astronauts, Scott Carpenter, went to school with Irene in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

From 1957 to 1959, Irene was chosen to help train some of the young scientists that went to Antarctica. The sixteen people she helped train were from all over the world.

During the time that Irene worked for the United States Government she received numerous calls from the CIA and famous scientists to help them work on some of their projects.

Irene is special to me not only because she’s my great aunt, but also because she’s been so active with projects and decisions that affect all of our lives. Just think what things would be like without her help and knowledge! Irene’s involvement in multiple worldwide experiences makes her a wonderful role model for the adventurous spirit within all of us.

Irene has done so many interesting things in her life that I think

someone should award her. In her life she has been given only one award, which was Woman of the Year in 1980. I feel that she deserves more. Irene would never say her contributions deserve an award. She feels the love she gives and receives is awarding enough and her courage and wisdom are a reward to us all.



## Marie Curie

Best Essays on  
Women in Science  
and Engineering  
for 6-7th Grades:  
Second Place  
by Emily A. Nagle  
Grade 7

Jefferson Junior  
High School,  
Dubuque  
Sponsoring teacher:  
Kristen Koeller

**M**anya Sklodowkli, was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1867. Manya was the youngest out of five children, and with teachers for parents, she learned at a young age the importance of education. Her mother died when Manya was young. At this time Poland was controlled by Russia, and since her father violated the law by teaching Polish, Manya and her siblings had to get jobs to support the family. After going through many jobs, Manya became a tutor in another city. She liked it and was able to send her father and her sister Bronya money for support.

Bronya was studying medicine in Paris, where she got married to another student. Bronya and her husband then set up practice in Paris, and invited Manya to live with them. Manya moved to Paris and attended the Sorbonne, a famous Parisian University. To better fit in, Manya changed her name to the French version which is Marie. Marie received her Masters' Degree for mathematics and physics, and stayed in Paris to do research on magnetism. She needed more room to do further research.

Marie was introduced to Pierre Curie and moved her equipment into his lab. Soon after they fell in love and married. A friend of the Curie's, A. Henri Becquerel, had been playing with some currently detected properties of an element called uranium. He told Pierre and Marie about the element and they became interested. Marie set about questioning the effect of uranium for her Doctorate and called it "radio-activity". She started to check out other elements, to conclude whether they too were radioactive. She found one named Thorium, and she came across a source of radiation in a mixture called "pitch-blend", which was more forceful than either uranium or thorium. It took Pierre and Marie four years of working together to isolate the radioactive source in the pitch-blend, which she named radium.

For their discovery of radium, Pierre and Marie won a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903, which they shared with A. Henri Becquerel. (After quite a struggle) she was able to isolate the element. She found that what she had discovered was not pure radium. For this she was given the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1911. Marie also detected that radiation could kill human cells. She reasoned that it could not only kill healthy human cells but also diseased cells, so she went about isolating radium for use in killing tumors.

In 1906 Marie's husband was offered a position of director of the Physics Laboratory at the Sorbonne. Unfortunately Pierre was killed by a carriage before he could take the job. After his death, Marie was offered the position and took it. She became the first woman to become director of a research laboratory. During World War 1, Marie Curie worked for the French building and designing X-ray machines. she knew that moving soldiers to a hospital before they needed surgery was not always possible, so she designed the first mobile X-ray machine.

On July 4, 1934, Marie died in Paris. she was killed by the radiation poison from her experiments and may have been the first person to do so. Marie Curie is someone who brought herself from poverty, to a good education and become known for her brilliance. I think that she was an amazing and dedicated women, who made me realize that no matter what the circumstances, you can do anything if you set your mind to it.



## Dr. Linda Lee

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

by Kathleen M.  
Vonderhaar  
Grade 8

Marquette Junior/  
Senior High School,  
West Point

Sponoring teacher:  
Holly Sanders

There are many women in Iowa who have made significant contributions to our society. The woman I have chosen for my report has not only effected my life in a positive way, but also many others. She has achieved success in a very demanding profession along with the extra responsibilities of a family. This great role model is Dr. Linda Lee, a cardiologist at Mercy Hospital, in Iowa City, Iowa.

Dr. Lee was born in New York City on April 11, 1959. She attended elementary school in New York City and attended high school in New Jersey. Dr. Lee's graduating class in high school consisted of approximately 400 students and she was honored as Valedictorian. From high school she went onto the University of Michigan where she studied medicine. At Michigan she did her undergraduate, graduate, internal medicine training and her cardiology fellowship in approximately 14 years. While in Michigan she married Thomas Gross and had one boy whom was born on August 4, 1981. In 1991 they moved to Iowa. Dr. Lee worked at the University of Iowa for one year before moving onto Mercy in 1992. At Mercy she primarily practices general cardiology. On June 5, 1996 she had her second son. Her husband remains at the University of Iowa as a Pulmonary Specialist. They live in Solon, Iowa, and their two children are currently in kindergarten and sixth grade.

Professionally, Dr. Lee has achieved much and helped many people. She has also shown me that a woman can be successful in a demanding career and still enjoy a family. However, the most personal reason Dr. Lee is important to me is that she successfully performed angioplasty and heart bypass surgery on my grandfather. This has allowed my grandfather to

continue to enjoy a healthy life and me to continue to get to know and learn from a great guy. Dr. Lee has given me a special gift and it's a gift she continues to give to many other families - time with those we love. Women who succeed in politics, art, music, and literature receive a significant amount of publicity, which they deserve. They are thought of as the typical historical figures. I think it is also important to remember those women who make very special quiet contributions to our society. Because of what Dr. Lee has done for me and my family, as well as many others, I believe she should be remembered, appreciated, and acknowledged. By this report I hope I have helped to do so.

Sources:

Dr. Linda Lee, personal interview, January 3, 2001

Curriculum Vitae, Dr. Linda Lee

Dr. Lee's personal assistant, personal interview, January 3, 2001



## Peggy Knight

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

by Daniela Vigliotti  
Grade 8

Lourdes Catholic  
School, Bettendorf

Sponsoring teacher:  
Rachel Smith

The woman that has made an impact on my life is Peggy Knight. Peggy is the founder of a nationwide organization called Locks of Love. This is an organization where people with Alopecia Areata (hair loss) or cancer can go to have a custom fit wig made.

When Peggy was 14, she lost her first strand of hair overnight. She was told that she had Alopecia Areata, an autoimmune condition that causes hair loss. Peggy tried many alternatives, even a wig sutured to her head. While visiting doctors, she realized that there had to be another solution. So she started a company to help herself and others. She founded the Peggy Knight International in 1978, in San Francisco. Creating this company helped Peggy overcome her denial and embarrassment. It also renewed hope and faith for many others who are hair loss victims.

In 1997, Peggy formed a not-for-profit charity called Locks of Love. She is now presently the president and the head of research and development. Over 38 years of testing helped develop natural and comfortable hairpieces. These hairpieces have changed the lives of hundreds of victims of alopecia or cancer.

The hairpieces that are worn by hundreds daily are custom made for each customer. They are made with natural human hair fixed in a comfortable, non-irritating silicone base. The base is created from a plaster mold of the customer's head, creating a vacuum seal for a secure fit.

Peggy Knight has made an impact on my life for many reasons. The first is because Peggy made the company and charity unselfishly. She made both these organizations to help others. Peggy began finding a new solution to sutured wigs

because she felt there was a better way. Peggy did want to find a comfortable wig for herself, but she used herself as an example. When people go for information about the hairpieces, Peggy often takes off her wig so the customer knows that she can relate with them. She wants the customer to understand that they are not alone.

Another reason why I feel Peggy is a very important role model in our world today is because her hairpieces are for everyone. Customers can be adults or children. Peggy understands that people of all ages want to be rid of their embarrassment and grief. Many customers who were once embarrassed to walk the streets are confident and strong. Many of the customers of Peggy's have become dealers. All the dealers wear hairpieces and have alopecia areata. They travel the country and help others with alopecia find an alternative to baldness. Now more people experience the love and kindness from everyone involved with either Peggy Knight International or Locks of Love.

The third and final reason I believe Peggy Knight is a wonderful woman is because she gives the public the opportunity to help. Men and woman, young and old, all colors, and all races can donate hair. There are only few restrictions. Donating hair is what started my interest in Peggy Knight. I heard of the organization, Locks of Love, and I longed to donate my hair. I felt I could help Peggy Knight's organization, even if just a little.

What Peggy Knight has done has helped a part of people that seems to be forgotten too often: a person's pride. Peggy has helped restore that in children and adults alike. That is why I believe Peggy Knight is an important woman in our world today.

Sources:

<http://www.locksoflove.org>



Edith Rose Murphy  
Sackett Award for  
the Best Essay on a  
Woman  
Volunteer

by I man El Khatib  
Grade 8

Jefferson Junior  
High School,  
Dubuque

Sponsoring teacher:  
Art Miller

When most people think of women they envision housewives, cooking, cleaning, and a stay-at-home mom. They aren't aware of the difference that women make in our lives today, and they need to know how important they are. One Iowa woman that I see as a very caring, courageous, and outstanding person in my life and in the lives of others is my mother. She has touched many hearts and reached out to people of all ages. She looks into the future and thinks of the best. A mother of three children and a woman strong in volunteerism, my mother Janet El Khatib should be written down into history.

I am very fortunate to have a mother who doesn't work outside the home. Most people think that moms stay at home doing nothing all day; that isn't true at all. My mother isn't home half of the day, she is volunteering. Actually, she says cleaning the house comes last after she finds the time to do all of her volunteer work. Most of her work goes into the International Family Night that she is in charge of at an elementary school. She does it to expose children to other cultures so they will be more accepting of differences. She says, "I want them to see beyond their cultures and let them know that diversity is good."

She is very involved in schools and works with children in a student-learning lab that she developed to have children work one on one with volunteers. She also helps at the junior high and high school level with fundraisers in order to make money for their school. My mother is in organizations such as PTA and PSA. These organizations fulfill the needs of schools while helping others be involved parents. She is very in touch with children, proven by the fact she was a Girl Scout leader for five years, dealing with wild and uncontrollable, but loveable girls.

My mother also joined many women's organizations which benefit young girls. These include TTT, which sends less fortunate girls to a summer camp so they have a chance to meet other girls. She is also part of the Finley Sunshine Circle that supports Finley hospital and its' out reach program, to give money to people who can't pay their bills. My mom is also a member of P.E.O, an organization that supports a woman's junior college.

With all of the organizations and schools that she helps, you would think that she wouldn't have much time for her family, but she finds it. She is one of the most important people in my life. My mother is one of those types who always will push you to do your best. If you are down she'll bring you back up. She has a way of pleasing people. Not only that but she seems to be a taxi for us children. After school, she is in the car most of the time driving us between activities, appointments, and sports. I don't know what I would do without her. I didn't always understand why volunteer work is so important and worthwhile, but she made me understand. Children these days are less respectful to their elders and some don't have a desire to learn. By volunteering, she reaches out to them. She says, "If I made a difference touching any child's life as setting a desire to learn look into the future, and make your dreams true it gives me self satisfaction." For these reasons Janet El Khatib should be in the history books.