

2000
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

2000 *Write Women Back Into History* Essay Contest Winners



6-7 Grade Category

- 1st place: **Xue Cheung**, Grinnell Middle School
2nd place: **Matt Egesdal**, Prairie Middle School, Cedar Rapids
3rd place: **Eric Peyton**, Urbandale Middle School

8-9 Grade Category

- 1st place: **Ashley Hecox**, Keokuk High School
2nd place: **Ryan Gourley**, Dowling High School, West Des Moines
3rd place: **Lidia Chamale**, Hiatt Middle School, Des Moines

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

- 1st place: **Melissa Puls**, Jefferson Junior High School, Dubuque
2nd place: **Elizabeth Schlichte**, Manning Junior High School

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

- 1st place: **Jenna Anderson**, Woodrow Wilson Junior High School, Council Bluffs
2nd place: **Lauren Adams**, Central Academy, Des Moines

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

- Megan McCarthy**, Durant Middle School
Caitie Rumberger, Hoover Middle School, Sioux City

6-7 Grades:
First Place
by Xue Cheung
Grade 7
Grinnell Middle
School
Sponoring teacher:
Tom Dayton

Segregation. Discrimination. Women's rights. You probably think these are just a part of history and not a part of present day. That's totally untrue. Have you ever been teased because you're weird looking or a certain size? Or because you're a woman, turned away from an opportunity? Or gotten lousy service because you're from another race? Or maybe seen these things happen? Well, Andrea Jung surpassed all of them since the announcement on November 4th.

Andrea held Avon's top marketing position ever since joining in 1994. Avon is the world's huge and famous leading direct seller of beauty products. It's the largest manufacturer of women's fragrances and bath products, and one of the leading marketers of fashion jewelry. In fact more beauty products carry Avon's brand name than any other in the world!

Andrea accepted many awards while bolstering Avon's image. In 1997 she received the National Outstanding Mother Award and was identified as one of "25 Women to Watch." She was named one of Fortune "50 Most Powerful Women in American Business" in 1998 and 1999. She obtained many more! Andrea became president and chief operating officer of Avon in 1998! She even serves on the Board of Directors. Because of her effort and keen marketing strategies, Avon had announced Andrea Jung president and chief executive officer!

In the '90s, of all the Fortune 500 companies, 83 have no women on their Board of Directors. 417 have a few women on its board. 1/5 of these companies have all male boards and typically no women in the top jobs. Women hold only 626 (10.2%) of the 6123 seats at the largest companies! Only 17 of Avon's 54 officers are women (32%), and 4 of them are on its Board of Directors, and Avon is considered the top Fortune 500 company for the most women!

It's ridiculous! Comparing the numbers above, I think it's really unfair, don't you? It's as if our sociality is like a pyramid of ranks even if the law says otherwise. Men on top with the most freedom and luxury. Women are a step down with barriers between. Men from other races next with harder barricades. The bottom one would be the women from different races with the toughest barriers. People can break the barriers, but it's really difficult. Only a few succeed especially with "discouragement" from above. It's okay if you assume men to be better, but what you do about it is what counts.

What happened for Andrea was very important. It's important to women. It's important to races. It's important to discrimination. And it's especially important to me. It might be important to history and civil rights, as we know it!

Andrea Jung, a Chinese women with two kids, had the guts and the intelligence to step up and not be ashamed of her sex or race while doing her job. All the years she stuck with it even when it got rough. Even with "discouragement" from people it didn't unnerve her one bit. She had tolerance and patience. She didn't let anything get in her way. She did the best

on her part. And look where it got her. She's now one of three women to run a big company. I really admire her for that.

All of her effort changed a lot of things. It showed that people that are different can also succeed in anything. It gave me, a Chinese girl, hope that I can do anything I want if I keep my chin high and do the best I can. It also gives us hope for a better future.



Write Women Back Into History Essay

6-7 Grades:
Second Place

by Matt Egesdal
Grade 6

Prairie Middle
School,
Cedar Rapids

Sponsoring teacher:
Gwen Gano

My essay is about my great grandmother, Oma Edith Shaull Cram. Although she never lived more than fifty miles from where she was born, her life was an inspiration to her family, her students and her community.

Oma Edith Shaull was born November 7, 1904 to Oscar and Laura Shaull. She grew up on a small farm near Keswick, Iowa. There were no modern conveniences and hard work was abundant. Her mother taught her to churn her own butter, cook, bake bread, cure meat and can food. Her father taught her how to care for livestock and how to grow gardens and crops. She attended a one-room country school until eighth grade, and graduated from Keswick High School in 1922.

After graduation, Oma taught in a one-room country school near Armar Township until her marriage to Clarence Cram in 1926. They moved to a small near Millersburg, Iowa and operated a general store in New Sharon. The following year, the first of her five children, Lois, was born. In 1929, the Great Depression hit. They closed the store and farmed full time to grow enough food for their growing family. Vagrants would stop by the farm to do chores in exchange for a meal, and Oma fed as many as she could. In the meantime, three more children, Katherine, Doris and Charles, were born.

World War II began and Oma made certain that her family aided the war effort. Each week her children took a dime to school to buy war bonds. The whole family gathered milkweed pods so the seed silk could be dried and used for flight jacket insulation. Rationing meant that all the farm work was done the pioneer way because they could not get a tractor, gasoline or tires. Still cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, geese, rabbits and bees were raised and oats, hay, soybeans and corn were grown. A large garden was a must, and Oma did the butchering, canning, cooking, baking, and butter churning herself.

After the war, Oma and her husband opened a general store in Montezuma, and their last child, James, was born. Shortly after they opened the store, it burned to the ground. The years of struggling took their toll on

the marriage, and Clarence and Oma divorced in 1949. Oma was left alone with five children to raise and a farm to run, but she did not give up. She attended William Penn College in Oskaloosa until she obtained her teaching degree. She taught fourth and fifth grade for the Deep River/Millersburg School District from 1957-1976. All the while, she ran the farm and raised her children. She was very proud of the fact that all of her children graduated from high school and became productive members of society.

After retiring, Oma continued to farm. She always had a very large garden with an apple orchard and raised cows and chickens. She enjoyed politics, and spending time with her many grandchildren. When a stroke slowed her in her seventies, she moved into Millersburg until her death in May 1993. In 1995, a stained glass window was dedicated in her memory at the First Methodist Church in Millersburg.

In conclusion, Oma Edith Cram should be written in history. She inspired everyone who knew her by her commitment to family, teaching and farming through the hardest times our country ever saw.



Joy Corning

6-7 Grades:
Third Place

by Eric Peyton
Grade 6

Urbandale Middle
School

Sponoring teacher:
Kelly McNace

My grandmother, Joy Corning, was Lieutenant Governor of the state of Iowa. Joy Corning was born on September 7, 1932 in Bridgewater, Iowa. She went to Bridgewater High School and to college at the University of Northern Iowa majoring in Elementary Education. Joy Cole was married to Burt Corning (deceased) and has three children Carol, Claudia, and Ann. She raised her family in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where she lived for 35 years. Now she lives in Des Moines, Iowa.

Lieutenant Governor Joy Corning was in office from 1991-1999. She ran in the first race that the Lieutenant Governor and Governor ran together. Joy was in elective office for 25 years, 11 on the school board, 6 in the Iowa State Senate, and 8 as Lieutenant Governor. She served as Lieutenant Governor longer than anyone in Iowa State history did.

Joy Corning has received many awards such as: Iowa Talented and Gifted Distinguished Service Award, University of Northern Iowa Alumni Achievements Award, Iowa State Education Association Human Relations Award, Governors Affirmative Action Award, National Foster Parent Association Special Recognition Award, Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa 1996 Public Service Award, and more.

All of her life she has been involved with children, family, and education issues. She has also helped in issues concerning human and civil rights. She helped recruit foster parents, she helped get more

children adopted, and she began changes in Iowa adoption laws.

People who met and worked with her viewed her as a kind and friendly person with an open mind. She listened to all peoples' points of view.

When she was growing up her biggest influence was her mother. My Great Grandmother taught her kindness and because Great Grandmother Cole was sick a lot, my grandmother learned how to clean, cook, and do other things around the house. Joy's mother would say, "A woman ought to be able to support herself, she should get an education, and be able to earn a living." Grandmother is most proud of her family, she likes to see her daughters and their husbands being active in the community but to her the most important thing is seeing her daughters be good parents.

My Grandmother helped Iowa in many ways. She helped write the first Iowa state plan for talented and gifted education, she was president of the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association, and she founded the Lieutenant Governor's Conference on Diversity. The conference meets every year and talks about different races. Joy is the president of this conference. To be president she has to plan for and attend the meetings. Every year people from all over the state of Iowa come to learn more about diversity.

Even though Joy Corning is retired she is still active in her community. She is the Chair of the chapel fund raising for the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women, is on the Institution for Character Development Board of Directors, is the Chair of Stop Violence Against Women Coordinating Council, is on the Des Moines Symphony Board of Directors, and is on the University of Northern Iowa Foundation Board of Trustees. She does much more.

Of course one reason my Grandmother Joy Corning is important to me is because she is my grandmother. I learned about Iowa government at a very early age. By being a good citizen and being active in the community she has taught me the importance of being a good citizen. And finally, my grandmother is special to me because she flew the state flag over the Iowa State Capitol on the day I was born. Lieutenant Governor Joy Corning is a big help to Iowans.

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2. Biographical Summary of Lieutenant Governor Joy Corning, May 13, 1998.
3. Interview with Joy Corning, November 29, 1999.



Nellie Verne Walker

8-9 Grades: **A** short walk from my house there is a man, rugged and imposing, who
First Place faces the rising sun. His stare is that of one who looked upon death
by Ashley Hecox wishes it was. Into a seeming eternity he stares across the Mississippi,
Grade 9 form frozen on a pedestal, a monument to himself and his people. Keokuk
Keokuk High he was, is, and will be as long as the memory remains and the statue stands.
School Beholding its power, it seems to breathe the clean midwest air. Who, you
wonder, crafted such a piece for a town? Nellie Verne Walker lived not far
from this point, and with her hands puffed life into a block of stone. That is
Sponsoring teacher: why she is my choice for a woman to write into history.
Ellie Vets

Nellie was born in 1874, and at age sixteen began to show interest in the arts. She asked her father for a scrap of rock in his workshop with which to form something. Initially, his answer was “no”, but after much persuasion he relented. A year later, working only from an engraving, she carved a bust of Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, and had it shown at the World Colombian Exposition in Chicago. It was shown under the label “Work of an Iowa Girl”. At nineteen she had come to a crossroad between either a career in business or art, choosing the latter. After her parents heard this, her father set up an interview with the world-renowned sculptor, Lorado Taft. According to the book Good-bye My Keokuk Lady by R.E. Garrison, he said that she was determined to reach her goal of being an artist, no matter how much work it entailed.

Taft was very impressed, and she became his protégé and pupil. She also became his secretary, dealing with correspondence, and lived with the Taft family. Eventually she became an instructor in the Art Institute of Chicago. When approached with the project to make a memorial for Keokuk’s namesake by the Daughters of the American Revolution, she was 39 years old and a bachelor maid. She submitted a working model in clay and was officially commissioned for the job. When the stone statue of the chief was complete, it was turned over to an Italian firm for casting in bronze. A dedication was held in Rand Park for the unveiling of the new monument on October 22, 1913. However the weather prevailed so that part of the ceremony was moved to the Grand Theater downtown.

Later, Nellie Walker became the first person to be commissioned to make art for Iowa State University, producing bas-reliefs that are still in the library, which depict both men and women’s occupations. A bronze recreation of her bust of Lincoln is in the same park as her Chief Keokuk carving. She lived out the rest of her life in other parts of the country, and never married. She died at age ninety-nine in 1973.

Nellie Walker has influenced the life of everyone in my town of Keokuk. Not only is the monument one of our finest attractions, but it provides an honorable resting place for our peace-loving namesake. Nellie Walker helped us repay our huge debt to the rightful inhabitants of this

land, and I am honored to reside so close to such a symbol. Her message also encompasses the female population, as she is a figure of women's empowerment. She shows that even under gender discrimination as there was then, we can be whatever we want to be.



Who Said She Couldn't Do It?

8-9 Grades: **A**melia Earhart – who hasn't heard of her? She is probably one of the most legendary female pioneers in all of history. Therefore, she can't

Second Place

by Ryan Gourley

Grade 9

Dowling High

School,

West Des Moines

Sponsoring teacher:

Susan Busch

really be written back into history, since she already holds her place there, and what a high place it is. But who put her in such a high place? She didn't just wake up one morning, able to fly a plane. She didn't just "all-of-a-sudden" possess the groundbreaking maneuverability that she exemplified throughout her short-lived career. *Someone* had to have taught her, and that someone was Neta Snook, a former resident of Iowa's city of Ames. Without Neta, there would be no "Amelia," and the advances in female pioneering would not be as far as they are today.

Neta was born in Mt. Carroll, Illinois in 1896, a year before the woman she helped to gain world fame. As early as a toddler she enjoyed mechanical devices rather than dolls, which, by some unwritten code of law, were to be the object of every girl's affection. At a very early age, Neta built a small mechanical automobile, which proved to run.

While in her teens, Neta and her family move to Ames, Iowa. She graduated from Ames High School in 1915 and attended Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) until June 1917. She then became the first women to attend the Davenport Aviation School, and did so from her graduation until the closing of the school in September. Then – after countless obstacles and barriers – she was allowed into the Curtiss Aviation School in Virginia – the only female to be admitted at the time.

She attempted to enlist in the Army's Flying Corps, but this proved impossible as once again she fell victim to gender-based discrimination. Instead she became an instructor at the factory of the British Air Ministry in New York. She worked there until the end of the war in 1918, and upon her departure she was honored with a certificate of appreciation from the British War Mission. Neta then received her pilot license, becoming one of the first women in the U.S. to attain one.

In 1920, Neta flew to Los Angeles, for a career with a flying service. There she met Amelia Earhart. Neta began teaching Amelia to fly in January 1921, a large addition to her instructing duties of four other

students and the operation of her own flying field. Snook was the only woman operating a commercial airfield at the time. She was also the first woman on the Pacific Coast to attempt an altitude record, reaching a height of 15,000 feet!

Neta continued to tutor Earhart and take charge of the wing department of the Davis-Douglas Aviation Company until 1922, when she left the aviation field for good, to focus on her new marriage and family. In 1974, Neta wrote her autobiography, I Taught Amelia to Fly, from which this information is drawn. In 1992, one year after her death, Neta became one of the first people to be named to the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame, located at the Iowa Aviation Museum.

Neta Snook was an extraordinary, devoted, and determined woman who has shaped our history, yet in its recording, a woman who has been greatly overlooked. As a woman who fought for equal opportunity, setting many firsts in her lifetime, and teaching the world renowned Amelia Earhart everything she knew, I believe she should be written back into history where she duly belongs. For Neta Snook, with a teacher's all-knowing coolness and nonchalance once said of her student, Amelia Earhart, *Lady of the Skies*, "I found her a natural, if a bit reckless at first."



8-9 Grades: **R**igoberta Menchú is a woman ready to accomplish her goals. Rigoberta and her family are descended from the Maya who lived in Central America. "I hadn't had a childhood at all. I hadn't been to school, I hadn't had enough food to grow properly. I had nothing." said Rigoberta. In 1971 when she was twelve, she went to work as a maid for a family in Guatemala City.

Third Place
by Lidia Chamale
Grade 8
Hiatt Middle School,
Des Moines
Sponoring teacher:
Karen Presswood

As Rigoberta grew older, her life was even harder. Wealthy landowners wanted to take the land in which the Mayans lived, and had the few things that they owned. Her father got very interested in this. He asked some workers' unions to help him improve the horrible situation that Mayan people were going through.

Rigoberta often traveled with her father. In 1979 she became a member of the Committee of Peasant Unity. Which by its Spanish initials is called CUC. She persuade people in every village to join the CUC. By doing this Rigoberta was risking her own life. When she was 20 years old, soldiers kidnapped her younger brother. They torture him, and killed him in front of Rigoberta's and her family's face. In 1980 her father was killed by soldiers, a few months later the soldiers also killed her mother. In spite of the loss of her family, she continued to fight against the oppression of the Mayan people.

As the leader of the CUC, Rigoberta also organized protests. Soon, she heard that the army was looking for her. She was no longer safe in

Guatemala. “I was a hunted woman The army were looking for me in various places.” she said.

In 1981 she left the country and went to live in Mexico. There another group arranged a trip to Europe, there she told the things happening in Guatemala. While in Europe, during 1983, she told the story to an author who wrote it into a book called *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. This book was translated into a dozen languages and read all over the world.

With others, in 1987 she formed the National Committee for Reconciliation, which tried to stop the violence in Guatemala. For this and other things, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. With the money awarded she set up a fund in memory of her father, called, the Vicente Menchú Foundation. She also helped educate the Quiché and other native Guatemalans.

Rigoberta is the native woman who has traveled to the most countries. Because of this she was able to tell other countries about the horrible situation in Guatemala. She was pleased when the rebels and the government finally signed a peace treaty in 1996. But she knew it would take many years until people could forget the violence.

Rigoberta fought for what she believed in, she worked hard until she achieved her goal. Although she never had an education, she still became well known for the contributions she made to her community and the whole world. And because of all this, she has well earn to be written into history.

She is very important for me and my family. We have a background of Maya, most of my family are Guatemalans. She fought for the liberty of part of my family. If she wouldn't have done anything, I might not even be here. It really hurts to hear how soldiers torture my people, but thanks to women like Rigoberta Menchú most of Central America is now happy, because people were willing to follow her steps. She introduced PEACE to many countries in Central America. We should be very proud of Rigoberta and other women, that even though women haven't always had our rights, she still didn't stoped searching for peace, love, and rights. She is a woman you can't forget. She gaved our people the most important thing in lifepeace.



Shannon Lucid: Woman Astronaut

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

Jefferson Junior
High School,
Dubuque
Sponsoring teacher:
Kristen Koeller

I did my report on Shannon Lucid, who was born on January 14 (fourteenth of 1943 (nineteen forty-three). She was born in Shanghai, China. She married and now has two daughters and a son. She enjoys flying, camping, hiking, and reading. She graduated from Bethany High School in 1960. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Oklahoma in 1963, and a Master of Science and doctor of philosophy degrees in biochemistry from the University of Oklahoma in 1970 and 1973.

Shannon was the recipient of many awards. The most recent award she was given was the Congressional Space Medal of Honor by the president of the United States. She is the first and only woman to have earned this prestigious award. Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, also awarded her the Order of Friendship Medal. This is one of the highest Russian civilian awards and the highest award that can be presented to a non-citizen.

In 1974 Lucid was selected to be in the astronaut candidate-training program. She is a commercial, instrument, and multi-engine rated pilot.

Shannon was selected by NASA in January of 1978, and became and astronaut in August of 1979. She qualified as a mission specialist on space shuttle flight crews. Some of her technical assignments have been: Shuttle testing, launch countdowns, spacecraft communicator in the JCS Mission Control Center during numerous Space Shuttle missions, Chief of Mission Support, and Chief of Astronaut Appearances. A veteran of five space flights, Lucid has logged 5,354 hours (223 days) in space. She served as a mission specialist on STS-51G, STS-34, STS-43, STS-58, and most recently served as Board Engineer 2 on Russia's Space Station Mir. She owns the records for the most flight hours in orbit by any non-Russian and most flight hours in orbit by any woman in the world.

I think Shannon Lucid should, and has all ready been, written into history because she proved to the world that if you put your mind to it you can accomplish it. She also showed us that no matter what you are you can do anything as good as anyone else. Shannon is important to all students because she has showed us that all women are equally talented in engineering as men. She also showed us to follow your dreams and become what you want.



Marie Curie: A Great Woman Scientist

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

by Elizabeth
Schlichte
Grade 7

Manning Junior
High School

Sponsoring teacher:
James Heithoff

Marie Curie was a great and honourable woman. She is one of the most well-know woman scientist. Curie was a physicists who performed ground breaking studies of radioactive elements. Along with her husband, Pierre Curie, she discovered two new elements, radium and polonium.

She was born on November 7, 1867 in Warsaw. Her original name was Marja Sklodowska, but when she went to Paris in 1891, she changed her name to Marie. While in Paris she enrolled in Sorbonne. About two years later, she passed the examination for her degree in physics. Curie ranked in first place. In 1894, she met Pierre Curie, and one year later they were married. Curie was most interested in what was then the recent studies of radiation. She began to study uranium after it had been discovered that uranium gives off radiation. Using piezoelectric techniques, which were designed by her husband, she carefully measured the radiation in pitchblende, an ore which contains uranium. Curie was the first to use the term radioactive to describe elements that give off radiation. Her husband quit his work to join his wife, and in 1898, they announced the discovery of two new elements: radium and polonium. Polonium was named by Marie in honour of Poland. Marie Curie, with her husband, share the 1903 Nobel Prize with Antoine Becquerel for the discovery of radioactive elements. Marie went on to win another Nobel Prize, this time in chemistry, for all her work on radium and radium compounds. She was the first women to win a Nobel Prize. Marie Curie was diagnosed with pernicious aneima, which is caused by overexposure to radiation. She died on July 4, 1934.

Marie Curie is important to me, because she was a very important woman scientist. She is one of the most well known woman scientist. If Marie Curie hadn't found the elements radium and polonium when she did, scientific studies would be that much more behind. When her husband died, she took over the classes he taught, which was an unusual position for a woman to hold then. She was a woman ahead of her time. How many women have won Nobel Prizes? Not a lot of people know about Marie Curie. She needs to be written back into history for her great scientific efforts.



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

by Jenna Anderson
Grade 8

Woodrow Wilson
Junior High
School,
Council Bluffs

Sponsoring teacher:
Sue Griswold

I think the woman that should be written back into history is Susan LaFlesche Picotte. She was the first Native American woman doctor. To succeed, she not only had to overcome the prejudices of being a woman, but she also had to fight the prejudices of being a Native American.

Born in Walthill, Nebraska, Picotte was the daughter of an Omaha chieftain by the name of Chief Joseph "Iron Eye" LaFlesche. Susan had six brothers and sisters. She was the youngest out of four girls.

After missionary school, Picotte attended the Elizabeth Institute for Young Women from 1879 to 1882. After graduation, she became a teacher. In 1884, Picotte enrolled at the Hampton Institute. In 1886, Susan was accepted into the Woman's Medical College in Philadelphia. She graduated in 1889.

Picotte then became a vital link between the people of her tribe and the white people as a translator, healer, lobbyist, and tribal social leader. In 1906, with help from Picotte, congress passed a law banning alcohol sale in the reservation towns of Rosalie and Walthill that remained in effect for 50 years.

Many times, Susan had to send her patients many miles away. So, with the help of a friend, Picotte raised \$10,000 and, in 1913, her hospital opened in Walthill. Unfortunately, two years later, Susan died of bone cancer.

Today, people in Walthill have an annual festival in honor of the well-known physician, Susan LaFlesche Picotte. There is also a school named after her. Susan's beloved hospital, started in 1913, is still standing today and is now called the Picotte Center. Walthill people know who Susan LaFlesche Picotte is, and I think everyone else should, too!

Because of Susan LaFlesche Picotte and her dedication to achieve a goal, as a female today, I know that women can be anything they want to be. A person's sex or ethnicity is not an obstacle as long as you believe in yourself.

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"100 Extraordinary People of Nebraska"
November 28, 1999
Section R; Pg. 28



Laura Charlotte Higman

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

by Lauren Adams
Grade 8

Central Academy,
Des Moines

Sponsoring teacher:
Jerry Leventhal

Laura Charlotte Higman was a woman of determination. Even though she cannot be found in history books, she is remembered by several generations. My grandmother told me about Laura's work with patients in a hospital when not much information was available on treatments. I admire my great-great-great-great-grandmother for her caring personality and courage.

Laura was born in 1884 in Plymouth, England. She was always a thoughtful and hard-working individual. As she became older, her father wanted her to marry the squire's son so the family would have more money. Laura refused to marry this man and instead married a sailor named James Higman. It took great confidence to do this. Laura's father was outraged and disowned Laura. In his will, he left her the amount of money equivalent to a single dollar. James and Laura then went to Holland and earned passage to come to London, Ontario. Unfortunately, a short while later, James Higman cut his thumb and died of tetanus.

With several children to support, Laura Charlotte became a seamstress. This provided her with little money, so she switched careers and became a nurse, working mostly with doctors to deliver babies. Laura was different from other nurses because she insisted on the doctors changing their aprons and washing their hands before dealing with her patients. Laura Higman did not know much about spreading germs, but she thought it could have to do with cleanliness.

One baby Laura helped deliver had an infection, and with no available treatment, was going to die. Laura refused to let this happen. Without knowing what to do for sure, she washed the child in carbolic acid to possibly clear up the infection. She knew just how strong to make the acid because she made it just strong enough to nip her tongue. Her technique worked, and the baby survived. Laura Charlotte had a lot of courage because she did not know if the acid would help any.

Another technique Laura developed was how to treat burned patients. Around the 1880s, very little was known about burns and how to treat them. To ease the pain of the burns, Laura took the film of hard boiled egg directly underneath the shell and placed it on the burnt skin. This resulted in less pain on the burns and the skin that healed faster.

An episode in my life that helped me be confident and have courage, similar to Laura Charlotte's occurred a few weeks ago when I gave a presentation to my church congregation. Now I relate that presentation to Laura's work in the hospital.

Laura Charlotte was an admired wife, mother, and nurse. Her common sense and caring acts spread to many patients in the hospital. She is important to me because she is a great role model of confidence and courage.



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

by Megan
McCarthy
Grade 7

Durant Middle
School

Sponsoring teacher:
Nancy Moore

The woman I think should be written into history is Dr. Ruth McAndrews. She believes in helping others and donating her time and knowledge to people who would otherwise not receive the medical attention that they need.

Dr. McAndrews was born in southern Iowa where she lived on a farm. As a child she was in 4H, band, and church affairs. Her father worked on the farm and did other odd jobs to support his family. They were very rural people who cared about their family, friends, and the land. She decided that she wanted to become an eye doctor when she was almost out of college. She was interested in science and the health care field. She had talked to an eye doctor and decided that was what she wanted to be.

Dr. Ruth McAndrews has made an impact on the world in many different ways. She is an optometrist that owns her own eye clinic in Durant, Iowa. While at work Dr. McAndrews services people of and around Durant. In her spare time she volunteers for an organization called VOS IOWA. This stands for Volunteer Optometry Services for Iowa. Dr. McAndrews has participated in volunteer missions to different parts of the world for twenty years. For instance, she has gone to Mexico, Haiti, South Africa, Argentina, and Thailand. She has been to Mexico many times. She does this because she supports the organization and gets a refreshing feeling while and after helping those needy people.

On these missions, Dr. McAndrews along with other volunteers collect used eyeglasses from different people and clean and repair them. Before they leave for their mission, they must catalog and label each pair of glasses. When they arrive to their destination, they set up a clinic, do eye exams, and distribute glasses to the less fortunate.

I believe what Dr. McAndrews does is extraordinary, and I support her role in VOS IOWA one hundred percent. Dr. McAndrews is a role model for me. I look up to her. The human eye has never really been of interest to me until my interview with Dr. McAndrews. The knowledge I acquired has made me respect it much more.

Dr. McAndrews should be written into history because she is a positive role model towards our society and she is a good person overall. She has most definitely made an impact on our community and on the world. I just hope that someday people like this do get recognized. Anyone that does what Dr. Ruth McAndrews does for people really deserves to be written into history.



Hardships to Triumphs

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

by Caitie
Rumberger
Grade 8

Hoover Middle
School,
Sioux City

Sponsoring teacher:
Carloe Johnston

She helped hundreds of people for years working in a handicapped school. She raised her three brothers. She bore four children and watched one die. Yes, her whole childhood showed nothing but hardships and hurts. Yet Valinda Rumberger used these hardships to witness to many needy people in this country later in her life.

I think Valinda Rumberger should be marked down in history because she helped give hope to so many lost people and taught me the importance of reaching out to other people and loving them for who they are.

Mrs. Rumberger experienced many tragedies in her childhood. Her sister died of spinal meningitis when Valinda was not much over five. Shortly after, her mother left, and the children were sent to a foster home because their father could not look after them.

When she was twenty-one, she married William Rumberger. She had four children, the youngest being my father, Daniel Rumberger. During the early years of her marriage, my grandmother volunteered along with her husband to work for the Appalachian Mission Service. There, she taught the poor, needy children of the area to read and write, as well as teaching adults various things. Working there, she felt a great drive and purpose to work and witness to the needy. This purpose guided the course of her later life.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Rumberger became involved in many different mission and church activities. These included teaching numerous Bible studies, volunteering for the Philadelphia Sunday School Society, and working for the New Lisbon School for the Handicapped. At this job, she willingly taught the most severe cases of deaf men how to read, how to communicate by using sign language, and how to talk.

When my grandmother was in her late seventies early eighties, she suffered from arthritis in her knees. This, however, did not stop her from wanting to help people. After working as a receptionist at the local health department for a number of years, Mrs. Rumberger went to work for a primary elementary school. There, she tutored a number of students on an individual basis.

It was during her later years that I remember my grandmother best. Being the only grandparent alive during my childhood, she impacted me greatly. I remember fondly the times during summer vacation when we would visit her at her little home in New Jersey. Grandma would always greet us with big hugs as we entered our second home. My sister and I have many memories of our childhood in her home. To this day, even though it has been almost four years since my grandmother passed away; I still remember every line of her face, the smell of her clothes, and the brightness of her eyes.

Valinda Rumberger was always pouring her love out to us in every possible way. This might be how she influenced me the most. She

provided a steady example that, even though I was just a child at the time, has stayed with me ever since. I can only hope to touch a few people like she touched me and many others, throughout my life. Yes, Valinda Rumberger deserves to be marked down in history. In her own, quiet way, she already stands with the great leaders in history.

