

Women's History Month

CELEBRATING WOMEN
WHO TELL OUR STORIES



Women's History Month Origin

Each March, the Department of Defense (DoD) pays tribute to the women who, through their determination and contributions, have shaped America's history and whose efforts continue to pave the way forward.

Women's History Month originated in 1981 when Congress passed Public Law 97-28, which authorized and requested the President to proclaim the week beginning March 7, 1982, as "Women's History Week."

After being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, Congress passed Public Law 100-9 which designated the month of March 1987 as "Women's History Month."

Theme

This year's theme, chosen by the National Women's History Alliance (NWHHA) (formerly the National Women's History Project), is:
Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories.

The NWHHA press release reflects, *“From the earliest storytellers through pioneering journalists, our experiences have been captured by a wide variety of artists and teachers. These include authors, songwriters, scholars, playwrights, performers, and grandmothers throughout time.”*

Presentation

This presentation features historic achievers Betty White, Rita Moreno, Bebe Moore Campbell, and Winona LaDuke. In their own unique way, each woman has added to and enriched the American story.

Betty White (1 of 3)

Actress Betty White was best known for her comedic work on numerous television sitcoms.

Through her lifetime she won: five Primetime Emmy Awards, two Daytime Emmy Awards and the Daytime Emmy for Lifetime Achievement. She was the only woman to have received an Emmy in all performing comedic categories. She also holds the record for longest span between Emmy nominations—her first was in 1951 and her last was in 2014, a span of over 60 years.



Betty White (2 of 3)

Additionally, White won three American Comedy Awards (including a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990), and two Viewers for Quality Television Awards.

She was inducted into the Television Hall of Fame in 1995 and her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at Hollywood Boulevard rests alongside the star of her late husband Allen Ludden.

In 2009, she received the Television Critics Associations Career Achievement Award.

Betty White (3 of 3)

White's Hollywood accomplishments are well documented. What is less known is that in 1941, a month before her 20th birthday, she volunteered with the American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS) for duty during WWII.

After her death in 2022, the U.S. Army lauded her for her service, “*A true legend on and off the screen.*”



Rita Moreno (1 of 2)

Rita Moreno has achieved what is called the Triple Crown of Acting, with individual Academy, Emmy, and Tony awards for acting.

In 1962, she won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for *West Side Story*. In 1972, she received a Grammy Award for Best Children's Album for *The Electric Company*.



Rita Moreno (2 of 2)



Moreno has received numerous other honors, including various lifetime achievement awards and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor.

In 2009, she was presented with the National Medal of Arts.

In 2015, she was awarded a Kennedy Center Honors Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award for her contribution to American culture, through the performing arts.

Winona LaDuke (1 of 3)

Winona LaDuke is an activist, environmentalist, economist, politician, and author. She has spent her career working at a national level to advocate, raise public support, and create funding for environmental groups. A graduate of Harvard and Antioch Universities, she has become known as a voice for Native American economic and environmental concerns around the globe.



Winona LaDuke (2 of 3)

At the age of 18, LaDuke spoke to the United Nations regarding Native American interests.

After graduating Harvard, she served as the principal at the White Earth Ojibwe reservation high school in Minnesota.

While there, she became involved in a lawsuit to recover lands promised to the Anishinaabeg people by an 1867 federal treaty. After the case was dismissed, she founded the White Earth Land Recovery Project. The project focuses on land recovery, preservation, and restoration of traditional practices, and the strengthening of spiritual and cultural heritage.

Winona LaDuke (3 of 3)

In 1985, she helped establish the Indigenous Women's Network, a coalition of Native women activists and groups dedicated to strengthening the visibility of Native women and empowering them to take active roles in tribal politics and culture.

In 1994, Time Magazine nominated her as one of the country's fifty most promising leaders under the age of 40.

In 1998, she was named Woman of the Year by *Ms. Magazine*. And in 2007, she was honored by the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Bebe Moore Campbell (1 of 2)

Bebe Moore Campbell was an author, journalist, and teacher.

During the 1970s, she was published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, and *Seventeen*, among other publications. She also appeared as a regular commentator on National Public Radio.

Her books were often based on her own experiences and issues of interpersonal relationships.



Bebe Moore Campbell (2 of 2)

Her most critically acclaimed novel, *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*, was an exploration of southern racism and the conflicts sparked by the murder of a fifteen-year-old boy, Emmett Till. The book won an NAACP Image Award and was named a New York Times Notable book for 1992.

Through her life, she wrote eight books, three of which became *New York Times* best sellers. Her awards included a 1978 Professional Woman's Literature Award and a 1980 National Endowment for the Arts Literature grant.

Conclusion

Women have long been instrumental in passing on our heritage in word and in print to communicate the lessons of those who came before us. Women's stories, and the larger human story, expand our understanding and strengthen our connections with each other. Generations of women have broken-down barriers, shattered stereotypes, and changed our society.

During Women's History Month, we honor the women who continue to tell our stories.

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