

## The Path of the Movement

### A Timeline of the Movement 1848 - 2002

- 1848** The world's first women's rights convention is held in Seneca Falls, New York, July 19 and 20. *A Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* is debated and ultimately signed by 68 women and 32 men, setting the agenda for the women's rights movement that followed.
- 1848-** When the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo brings the Southwest under U.S. law, married women living in the region lose their property rights, and can no longer enter into contracts, sue in court, or operate their own businesses.
- 1848-** Astronomer Maria Mitchell becomes the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; almost a century passes before a second woman is elected.
- 1849** Amelia Jenks Bloomer publishes and edits "Lily," the first prominent women's rights newspaper.
- 1850** The first national women's rights convention attracts over 1,000 participants to Worcester, Massachusetts, from as far away as California. Annual national conferences are held through 1860 (except 1857).
- 1850-** Quaker physicians establish the Female (later Woman's) Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia to give women a chance to learn medicine. Due to threats against them, the first women graduated under police guard.
- 1851** Sojourner Truth gives her spontaneous "Ain't I A Woman?" speech at the women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio.
- 1851-** Myrtilla Minder opens the first school to train black women as teachers, in Washington, D.C.

- 1855** Lucy Stone becomes the first woman on record to keep her own name after marriage, setting a trend among women who are consequently known as “Lucy Stoners.”
- 1855** The University of Iowa becomes the first state school to admit women. In 1858, the Board of Managers attempts, but fails, to exclude women.
- 1860** Of 2,225,086 Black women, 1,971,135 are held in slavery.
- 1862** The Homestead Act promises 160 acres of free land to anyone who lives on it for five years. Many single women “prove up claims,” especially teachers who work the land in the summer and teach school in the winter.
- 1862-** Mary Jane Patterson is the first African-American woman to receive a full baccalaureate degree, from Oberlin College. Three European-American women graduated in 1841 from Oberlin College: Mary Hosford, Elizabeth Smith Prall, and Caroline Mary Rudd.
- 1862-** Congress passed the Morrill Act, which established land grant colleges in rural areas, allowing millions of women to earn low-cost degrees.
- 1866** 14th Amendment is passed by Congress (ratified by the states in 1868), the first time “citizens” and “voters” are defined as “male” in the Constitution.
- 1866-** The American Equal Rights Association is founded, the first organization in the U.S. to advocate national woman suffrage.
- 1868** Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony begin publishing *The Revolution*, an important women’s movement periodical.
- 1869** The first woman suffrage law in the U.S. is passed in the territory of Wyoming.
- 1869-** The American Woman Suffrage Association is founded to secure the vote through each state constitution.

- 1870** The 15th Amendment receives final ratification.
- 1870-** The first issue of the Woman's Journal appears, sponsored by the American Woman Suffrage Association and edited by Mary Livermore. It is published until 1917.
- 1870-** In March, for the first time in the history of jurisprudence, women serve on juries in the Wyoming Territory.
- 1872** Susan B. Anthony and fourteen women register and vote in the presidential election to test whether the recently adopted Fourteenth Amendment can be interpreted as protecting women's rights. Anthony is arrested, tried, found guilty, and fined \$100, which she refuses to pay.
- 1873** The Association for the Advancement of Women is formed to promote higher education and professional possibilities for women.
- 1875** Using inherited wealth, Sophia Smith is the first woman to found and endow a women's college. Smith College was chartered in 1871 and opened in 1875.
- 1875-** In *Minor v. Happersett*, 88 U.S. 162 (1874), the Supreme Court denies women voting rights, in contradiction to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- 1876** Matilda Joselyn Gage writes a *Declaration of the Rights of Women*, distributed on July 4 by the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).
- 1876-** Ellen Swallow Richards opens the Woman's Laboratory at MIT, which supports women's participation in science. It lasts until the school admits women in 1883.
- 1877** Helen Magill is the first woman to receive a Ph.D. at a U.S. school, a doctorate in Greek from Boston University.
- 1878** The Susan B. Anthony Amendment, to grant women the vote, is first introduced in the U.S. Congress.

- 1880** The 1870s have seen an 80% increase in the number of women teachers, mainly in the West.
- 1883** Mary Hoyt earns the top score on the first civil service exam and becomes the first woman (and second person) appointed under this new merit system. She starts out as a clerk in the Treasury Department.
- 1884** Belva Lockwood, presidential candidate of the National Equal Rights Party, is the first woman to receive votes in a presidential election (approx. 4,000 in six states).
- 1887** For the first and only time in the 19th century, the U.S. Senate votes on woman suffrage. The bill loses 34 to 16.
- 1888** Led by Lillie Devereux Blake, New York suffragists win passage of a law requiring women doctors for women patients in mental institutions.
- 1890** The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) coalesces about 200 local clubs, many supporting a wide range of reform activities.
- 1890-** National Woman Suffrage Association and American Woman Suffrage Association merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), becoming the movement's mainstream organization.
- 1892** In New City, New York, women gain the right to have matrons in all police stations.
- 1892-** The University of Kansas offers an early example of a “women's studies” course through the sociology department: “Status of Women in the United States.”
- 1893** Colorado is the first state to adopt an amendment enfranchising women.
- 1896** The National Association of Colored Women, founded by Margaret Murray Washington, unites Black women's organizations, with Mary Church Terrell as its first president.

- 1900** Two-thirds of divorce cases are initiated by women. A century earlier, most women lacked the right to sue.
- 1910** In Washington State, women win the vote.
- 1911** The most elaborate campaign ever mounted for suffrage succeeds in California by 3,587 votes, an average of one vote in every precinct.
- 1913** Ida Bell Wells-Barnett founds the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago, the first Black woman suffrage association in Illinois, through which she pressed for integration of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.
- 1913-** Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organize the Congressional Union, which later becomes the National Women's Party.
- 1917** Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress.
- 1919** The House of Representatives passes the woman suffrage amendment 304 to 89; the Senate passes the amendment 56 to 25.
- 1920** On August 26, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, guaranteeing American women citizens the right to vote.
- 1921** The American Association of University Women is formed.
- 1923** The Supreme Court strikes down a 1918 minimum-wage law for District of Columbia women because, with the vote, women are considered equal to men. This ruling voids all state minimum wage laws.
- 1923-** Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party succeed in having a constitutional amendment introduced in Congress which says: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction." In 1943 the wording is revised to what we know today as the Equal Rights Amendment.

- 1924** The National Association of College Women is formed by Black women, to parallel the AAUW.
- 1924-** Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming becomes the first woman elected governor of a state (Wyoming). She is elected after her husband, the governor, dies in the middle of his term of office.
- 1926** Bertha Knight Landes is the first woman elected mayor of a sizable U.S. city (Seattle).
- 1932** The National Recovery Act forbids more than one family member from holding a government job, resulting in many women losing their jobs.
- 1932-** Hattie Wyatt Caraway is the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate. She represents Arkansas for three terms.
- 1935** Mary McLeod Bethune organizes the National Council of Negro Women as a lobbying coalition of Black women's groups, and serves as president until 1949.
- 1938** Crystal Bird Fauset of Pennsylvania becomes the first Black woman elected to a state legislature.
- 1941** A massive government and industry media campaign persuades women to take jobs during the war. Almost 7 million women respond, 2 million as industrial "Rosie the Riveters" and 400,000 joining the military.
- 1948** Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME) becomes the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in her own right. In 1964, she becomes the first woman to run for the U.S. Presidency in the primaries of a major political party (Republican). She serves in the Senate until 1973.
- 1957** The number of women and men voting is approximately equal for the first time.
- 1961** President Kennedy creates the President's Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. Fifty parallel state commissions are eventually established.

- 1964** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act is enacted, barring employment discrimination by private employers, employment agencies, and unions based on race, sex, and other grounds. To investigate complaints and enforce penalties, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is established, which receives 50,000 complaints of gender discrimination in its first five years.
- 1964-** Patsy Mink (D-HI) is the first Asian-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress.
- 1965** Lyndon Johnson's Executive Order 11246 requires federal agencies and federal contractors to take “affirmative action” in overcoming employment discrimination.
- 1966** Fifty state Commissions on the Status of Women convene in Washington, D.C., to report on their findings.
- 1968** Federally Employed Women is founded to end gender-based discrimination in civil service jobs. Within two decades, FEW has 200 chapters nationwide.
- 1968-** Shirley Chisholm (D-NY) becomes the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress.
- 1969** California adopts the nation’s first “no fault” divorce law, allowing couples to divorce by mutual consent.
- 1970** The North American Indian Women's Association is founded.
- 1970-** The Comision Feminil Mexicana Nacion is organized to promote Latina rights. Founders include Graciella Olivares, Gracia Molina Pick, Francisco Flores, and Yolanda Nava.
- 1970-** The Equal Rights Amendment is reintroduced into Congress.
- 1971** For the first time in its 130 years, the Fourteenth Amendment is used to overturn a sex-biased law in the Supreme Court case *Reed v. Reed*, 404 U.S. 71 (1971).

- 1971-** The non-partisan National Women's Political Caucus is founded to encourage women to run for public office.
- 1972** Title IX of the Education Amendments requires that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."
- 1972-** Congress extends the Equal Pay Act to include executives and administrative and professional personnel.
- 1972-** Congress passes the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, giving the EEOC power to take legal action to enforce its rulings.
- 1972-** The ERA is passed by Congress on March 22 and sent to the states for ratification.
- 1972-** Barbara Jordan (D-TX) becomes the first Black woman elected to Congress from a Southern state.
- 1973** The Office of Federal Contract Compliance issues guidelines prohibiting sex discrimination in employment by any federal contractor and requiring affirmative action to correct existing imbalances.
- 1973-** The U.S. military is integrated when the women-only branches are eliminated.
- 1973-** In *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), the Supreme Court allows the termination of an early pregnancy.
- 1974** The Little League agrees to include girls "in deference to a change in social climate," but creates a softball branch specifically for girls to draw them from baseball.
- 1974** The Equal Credit Opportunity Act forbids sex discrimination in all consumer credit practices; it is extended to commercial credit in 1988.



- 1974-** The number of women in public office begins to rise. Women now hold 8% of state legislative seats and 16 seats in Congress. By 1986: 14.8% of legislative seats, and 24 seats in Congress. In 1997: 21% of legislative seats, 62 seats in Congress.
- 1974** Ella Grasso becomes the first woman to win election as governor in her own right, in Connecticut.
- 1976** The United Nations “Decade for Women” begins.
- 1976-** Title IX goes into effect (see 1972 entry), opening the way for women’s increased participation in athletics programs and professional schools. Enrollments leap in both categories. Title IX withstands repeated court challenges over time (see 1997 entry).
- 1976-** The U.S. military academies open admissions to women.
- 1978** 100,000 march in support of the Equal Rights Amendment in Washington, D.C.
- 1978-** The Older Women’s League is founded to address age-and-gender discrimination issues including health insurance and retirement benefits.
- 1978-** For the first time in history, more women than men enter college.
- 1979** Owanah Anderson founds and directs the Ohoyo Resource Center to advance the status of American Indian/Alaska Native women.
- 1979-** The National Association for Black Women Entrepreneurs is formed by Marilyn French-Hubbard to offer advice, training, and networking for Black businesswomen.
- 1980** Jewell Jackson-McCabe founds the National Coalition of 100 Black Women.
- 1980-** New EEOC guidelines list sexual harassment as a form of sexual discrimination.

- 1980-** President Carter proclaims the first “National Women’s History Week,” incorporating March 8, International Women’s Day.
- 1981** Sandra Day O'Connor is the first woman nominated for appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1993, she is joined by Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
- 1981-** The National Black Women’s Health Project is founded to establish community-based self-help groups.
- 1982** Ratification efforts for an Equal Rights Amendment fails. Over 900 women hold positions as state legislators, compared with 344 a decade earlier.
- 1984** Geraldine Ferraro is the first woman vice-presidential candidate of a major political party.
- 1987** The U.S. Congress declares March to be National Women’s History Month.
- 1992** Women win all five of the gold medals won by Americans during the Winter Olympics.
- 1992-** In what the media calls “The Year of the Woman,” a record number of women run for public office, and win. They include: the first Mexican-American woman and first Puerto Rican woman in the House, Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Nydia Velazquez (D-NY); the first Black woman Senator, Carole Moseley Braun (D-IL); and both Senators for California, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein.
- 1993** Ruth Bader Ginsburg is nominated for appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1993-** Take Our Daughters to Work Day debuts, designed to build girls’ self-esteem and open their eyes to a variety of career possibilities for women.
- 1993** Women hold a record number of positions in state as well as federal government. They are 20.4% of state legislators; 3 governors, 11 lieutenant governors, 8 attorneys general, 13 secretaries of state, 19

- state treasurers. 6 women in the Senate, 48 in the House of Representatives.
- 1993-** With the increased number of women members, the 103rd Congress passes into law 30 bills on women's issues during its first year, 33 during its second. The previous record for any year: 5.
- 2000** Women's Museum, An Institute for the Future, opens in Dallas, Texas.
- 2001** The Equal Rights Amendment is reintroduced in Congress.
- 2002** For the first time in the history of the United States, 57 women serve in the U.S. Congress: 13 women in the U.S. Senate, and 44 women serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- 2002-** There are 1,668 women state legislators serving nationwide. The five states with the highest percentage of women state legislators are: Washington (38.8%), Arizona (35.6%), Nevada (34.9%), Colorado (34%) and Oregon (33%).
- 2002-** Shirley Caldwell Tilghman, president of Princeton University and a noted molecular biologist, is named the Northern American Laureate for the Women in Science Award. Tilghman was a leader in the national effort to map the human genome. This award honors the top five women scientists in the world.