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## THE WOMEN OF IOWA'S HISTORY

**At Chrysalis Foundation, we believe women and girls do remarkable things.** Women's achievements came to the forefront this year as we celebrated the inauguration of our country's first female vice president.

We're proud to recognize March as **Women's History Month**, raising awareness of pioneering women in history while encouraging girls to strive for their greatest potential. In 1987, Women's History Month was formalized by Congress following the lead of Sonoma County, California, where Women's History Week was celebrated in 1978. The observance coincides with **International Women's Day** on March 8.

For many reasons, the recognition of women's history is critical. Women's roles have appeared in only about 0.5 percent of historical records, even though statistically women have continuously comprised around 50 percent of the population. This imbalance, however, has not always been present.

Over 90 percent of archeological discoveries before 5,000 B.C. were women, pointing to the central role women played in society thousands of years ago. For centuries, women were high priestesses, owned land, held wealth, and created beautiful art and poetry. But as society became more complex, progressed, physical strength became essential in order to expand, build, and conquer.

This is when the balance of power shifted. Formidable male warriors appeared in both physical evidence and ancient records. History began being told and recorded from the standpoint of physical strength and power, and success was defined as military conquer and expansion. Women's roles as historical figures were then diminished.

This year during Women's History Month, Chrysalis is focused on bringing recognition back to the accomplishments of **Iowa** women – women of all races, cultures, backgrounds, and ages. We will share Iowa women's historic successes, tell women's stories, and acknowledge women's contributions.

Many of these women are well known to us. For example, contemporary history-makers include **Governor Kim Reynolds**, Iowa's first female Governor; **Connie Wimer**, first female chair of the Des Moines Chamber Federation, **Dr. Mary Chapman**, first female executive dean at Des Moines Area Community College, and **Roxanne Conlin**, first female president of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

But there are so many more amazing women worth knowing about:

- **Gertrude Rush** was the first Black female attorney in Iowa.
- Botanist **Dr. Ada Hayden** was first woman to obtain her Ph.D. at Iowa State University.
- **JoAnn Zimmerman** was Iowa's first female lieutenant governor.
- **Jean Adeline Wanatee** was the Meskwaki Tribal Council's first female member.
- **Ann Pellegrino** was the first female appointed to the Iowa Aeronautics Commission and Iowa Department of Transportation.
- **Dr. Deborah Turner**, physician and attorney, was the first Black woman to join a sorority at Iowa State University.
- **Mary Louise Smith** was the first woman to chair the national Republican Party.

Of course, Chrysalis has benefited from the passion and commitment of women like our founder Louise Noun, without whom the foundation would not have been established in 1989. We're grateful to Louise and the many women who have committed their time and talent as board and committee members, volunteers, and donors, and whose continued and generous support changes the future for girls and women throughout Greater Des Moines. Thank you.

**In recognition of Women's History Month, we invite you to tell us about the women you know whose history deserves our recognition. You can post their stories on our social (links below) or send us an email.**

Women's History Month is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate every girl and woman who is important to us. We look forward to learning about so many more.

