

Women's History Month: Honoring Delaware's Remarkable Women -- March 2006

Women's History Month is a time to reflect on the struggles and triumphs of women in America. The recent passing of Coretta Scott King reminds me that it takes only the strongest person to overcome diversity, prejudice, and inequality. Coretta Scott King was a courageous woman who kept the voice of the civil rights movement alive after the death of her famous husband, Martin Luther King, Jr. Throughout history, women like Mrs. King have conquered the barriers of inequality and pushed forth to succeed in some of the most challenging circumstances. In honor of Women's History Month, I would like to recognize several female Delawareans who stand out as leaders of their time, encouraging others to follow in their cause in order to create a stronger community.

In honor of Women's History Month, I decided to focus on women who have impacted the nation right here from the First State. Based on the National Historical Society's "Delaware Women's History" website, I learned about so many inspiring women in Delaware who have proven their ability to overcome any hurdle that would keep them from attaining their goals. In the 1800's, a time when equality movements for women were in their early stages, an African American female struggled to achieve success. Mary Anne Shadd Cary, who was born in Wilmington Delaware in 1823, fought discrimination to become the First African American newspaper editor in North America. She fought for the rights of all human beings, especially women and worked proactively in the Suffrage Movement.

Many Delaware women continued the fight for equality years after the inception of the Suffrage movement. Inspired by the call for women's equality, Helen Thomas was instrumental in founding the Delaware Chapter of the National Organization for Women, (N.O.W.). By organizing women in Delaware to become active in the pursuit for equal rights, Helen Thomas and others are responsible for bringing about change and making a positive difference in our community.

The women who fought for equality throughout history would be pleased to know that Delaware is currently home to many influential females. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the women who are currently implementing change in our community. Lolita Lopez and Loretta F. Walsh stand out in my mind as two women who are fighting to help others. As president and CEO of Westside Health, Inc., Lolita Lopez has expanded her organization to provide medical care for all those who are in need, even the uninsured and underprivileged. Loretta F. Walsh is the first woman to hold the position of Chief Deputy in the New Castle County Sheriff's Office. She is driven and determined to keep our community safe. Both these women demonstrate the type of success in leadership positions that women throughout Delaware's history have struggled to achieve.

I am happy to serve a state whose history is enriched by such dynamic women. Although the obstacles facing women of the past have been overcome as illustrated by the leadership of Lolita Lopez and Loretta F. Walsh, I know that Delawareans will continue to face any struggle they encounter with the same perseverance. In Honor of Women's History Month, I would like to thank the women of Delaware for their past struggles as well as their future achievements.