
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6872 of March 19, 1996

The President

Women's History Month, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

It is impossible to fully appreciate America's proud history without recognizing the extraordinary contributions that women have made to our country since its founding. Women's History Month provides an opportunity to celebrate the countless women who have enriched our Nation and to ensure that their achievements—in homes and businesses, schools and hospitals, courtrooms and statehouses—will always be remembered.

We have come a long way since Abigail Adams asked her husband John to “remember the ladies” when drafting the Constitution, and we recognize that women not only have broadened and reshaped the path laid by our Founding Fathers, but also have made new avenues toward progress and justice. Female workers filled the textile mills that drove the Industrial Revolution. Women like Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought tirelessly for suffrage and women's rights. Jane Addams founded America's first settlement house for poor immigrants and established social work as a new and respected field. And farm and migrant laborers across the country gained the leadership of Dolores Huerta when she joined the newly created United Farm Workers Union.

Indeed, there is no aspect of our history left untouched by women—from the first published American poet, Anne Bradstreet; to Sacajawea, Lewis and Clark's interpreter and guide; to Harriet Tubman, heroine of the Underground Railroad; to Margaret Mead, who revolutionized the study of anthropology. Writers and artists such as Laura Ingalls Wilder, Mary Cassatt, Beverly Sills, Amy Tan, and Martha Graham have captured our imaginations. Champions like Wilma Rudolph and Bonnie Blair have taken America to great heights in the international sports world.

Today, women make up close to half of our Nation's labor force, and women-owned businesses are changing the face of the American and global economies. But barriers to equality remain. Despite the efforts of women like Esther Peterson, a leader in the effort to end gender-based salary differences, many women are still paid considerably less than their male counterparts. Often these women also struggle with the dual responsibilities of raising a family and meeting the demands of a full-time job.

Last September, thousands of women from around the globe met to discuss these issues at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, and to develop a Platform for Action. The resulting document represents a powerful consensus on the need to advance women's status by improving access to education, health care, jobs, and credit. It describes the fundamental desire of all women to enjoy basic legal and human rights and to take part in political life. Only through our commitment to these principles can we forever end discrimination and injustice based on gender, promote women's full participation in all aspects of American life, and join people everywhere who seek true equality.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1996, as Women's History Month. I call upon Government officials, educators, and all Ameri-

cans to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities; to remember year-round the many important contributions that women make to our country each day; and to learn and share information about women's history in homes, classrooms, and community centers across the Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".

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