

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Weekly Newsletter

In this issue:

- Women's History Month: Women & Activism



March is Women's History Month!

This week's Topic: Women and Activism

A brief history of the Suffrage movement:

The woman's suffrage movement fought for a constitutional amendment that would give free women the right to vote; famously led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, it lasted until women got the vote 100 years ago.



The woman's suffrage movement formally started in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. The Seneca Falls Convention occurred after Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were not allowed to attend London's World Anti-Slavery Convention because male abolitionists discriminated against them due to their sex. Throughout the movement, impactful messages were spread by these courageous women, who fought for women's rights and other social causes. One notable speech was "Ain't I a woman" by Sojourner Truth, an activist for African American and women's rights. Truth was born into slavery; she discussed her hardships during that time, as well as her difficulties being a woman, in this speech. A link to her speech can be found here: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/sojourner-truth.htm>

Backlash against this progress was prevalent for many years, but the persistent assembly of women were able to obtain certain rights that they advocated for. According to WomensHistory.org, "in 1849, the first state constitution in California extends property rights to women." Essentially, this meant that women in that state were now allowed to own property in their own right—a large step for woman-kind. While this progress slowed considerably during the Civil War, many other advances occurred after this, including the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which granted women the right to vote ([Watch a brief video about the Women's Suffrage Movement](#)). While there are still difficulties with sexism to this day, without the strong women of the past, we would not have the rights we do today.

Interested in learning more about the Suffrage Movement? Check out the MassBay Library's Alexander Street Video Collection <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/>

Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, RBG, Sonya Sotomayor, Elena Kagan

Women did not gain the right to sit on court juries until the 1920's, yet the first woman was not to be appointed to the Supreme Court until Sandra Day O'Connor was named in 1981.

Now Justices O'Connor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonya Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan have all been Associate Justices of the United States Supreme Court.



Justice O'Connor, appointed by President Ronald Reagan, was the first woman named to the Supreme Court. She served on the court from 1981-2006 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2009. Justice O'Connor was on such notable cases as Bush vs. Gore and United States vs. Lopez.

Listen to this brief NPR article about the autobiography Truth about Justice O'Connor <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/15/693542112/from-triumph-to-tragedy-first-tells-story-of-justice-sandra-day-oconnor>

Looking for something new to watch? Check out this documentary about Justice O'Connor as well: <https://www.biography.com/video/sandra-day-oconnor-full-episode-2074895434>

The second woman to be appointed to the position of Associate Justice was Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg is not only a pop-culture icon with a documentary dedicated to her greatness, but an inspirational woman in law. Justice Ginsburg joined the Supreme Court in 1993 when she was appointed by President Bill Clinton. Her progressive opinions on abortion, women's rights, and LGBTQ+ issues make her a remarkable role model and resulted in her becoming Woman of the Year in 2012 for *Glamour Magazine*, one of *Time's* 100 Most Influential People in 2015, and she has been granted honorary Doctor of Law degrees at Harvard University, Princeton University, and Willamette University.

Watch RBG (Documentary) at home: <http://www.magpictures.com/rbg/watch-at-home/>

Watch *On The Basis of Sex* (feature film, available on Hulu, and other streaming services) for an upcoming movie night!

Justice Elena Kagan was the third woman to be inducted into the Supreme Court. Justice Kagan was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2010 and is now a part of the court's liberal wing. Before this, she was the first female Solicitor General for the Supreme Court, arguing six cases and helping to win four of them. Justice Kagan served as a professor of law at the University of Chicago and Harvard Law School; she was Dean of Harvard Law from 2003 to 2009. Justice Kagan also served in the Clinton administration from 1995-'96 in domestic policy.

Have kids at home? Click here for a Read-Aloud of Justice Kagan's 2013 Children's book: *Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4sGcaA6bFk>

Last but certainly not least is Sonya Sotomayor, the most recent female Associate Justice, and the first Hispanic and Latina justice to be appointed to the Supreme Court. Justice Sotomayor was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2010 and has participated in many influential cases. Justice Sotomayor has received eleven honorary law degrees and was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society in 2002, as well as being labeled one of the 75 Most Influential People of the 21st Century by *Esquire Magazine*.

Justices Ginsburg, Sotomayor, and Kagan continue to serve on the Supreme Court to this day.



Rita Hester

Rita Hester was an influential black trans woman who was brutally murdered in a hate crime in 1998 in Allston. Her death was a tragedy in her community, as she was a pinnacle figure in the LGBTQ+ scene who cared immensely for the group; protecting queer youth and acting as a positive role model for many people in the scene. More than two hundred individuals attended a vigil in her honor. Hester sparked the web project -movement of "Remembering Our Dead" as well as "Transgender Day of Remembrance"

Hope Solo, and Women's Soccer

Hope Solo is a former member of the *Women's National Soccer Team of the United States*.

During her time as a goalkeeper on the team from 2000 – 2016, Solo won two gold medals and became a World Cup champion. After her team's World Cup win in 2011 (where she helped the United States beat Japan 2-1) Solo went on to create a best-selling autobiography, titled "*Solo: A Memoir of Hope*". In her autobiography, she addresses a variety of topics ranging from her career to her difficult childhood. Solo was one of the first women to begin fighting for equal pay for the U.S. women's soccer team, a fight that continues today. For more background information about the current fight, check out a 60 Minutes article published after the team won the World Cup in July <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-minutes-women-soccer-team-usa-gender-discrimination-equal-pay-2019-07-10/>



To learn more about Hope Solo, you can purchase her book at <https://www.amazon.com/Solo-Memoir-Hope/dp/0062136755>



Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is an activist for women's rights. The Taliban took over her town (in Pakistan) when she was only 11. The extremism of this group impacted many rights, and citizens were denied things such as technology and music. One of the main rights, education for girls, was abolished by the Taliban. Malala was angered by this and spoke out against the extremism, advocating for girls' rights. Unfortunately, her bravery resulted in her own shooting in 2012 by a Taliban member, which she barely survived. Later in 2014, Yousafzai and her family moved to the U.K and where they

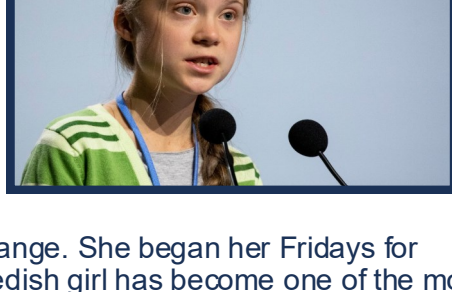
continued to fight for a girl's right to education. That same year, at the age of 17, she became the youngest person to receive a Nobel Peace Prize.

[Watch her impactful speech at the United Nations about the importance of education.](#) Malala is a remarkable young woman who continues to fight for women's rights to this day. To learn more about Malala Yousafzai and her mission, please go to <https://malala.org/>

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Greta Thunberg

Greta Thunberg first learned about climate change at the age of 8, and shortly after was diagnosed with major depression. Her anger and sadness about the climate soon turned into a passion for change, and for the next two years she convinced her family to lower their carbon footprint. Her parents obliged and inspired her to continue her path of change. She began her Fridays for Future movement, and this young Swedish girl has become one of the most influential speakers about climate change in our century, speaking at *Democracy Now!* at Parkland, Florida's *March for Our Lives*. She was named *Time Magazine's* Person of the Year in 2019. Greta Thunberg is also a popular social media activist, and has sparked a variety of public opinions, from intolerance to inspiration. Whatever your opinion on Thunberg may be, there is no denying her strong impact on the movement against climate change, and the bravery she shows to speak her mind to the world.



In the past months, documentaries have been put out by Vice ([Watch Here](#)) and German DW Documentary ([Watch Here](#)) and documentaries about Greta are scheduled to be released this year on Hulu and by BBC.

