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Women of the Month

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I would like to introduce you to our May Kalon Women of the Month, Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen. Together, these remarkable women have put together a book that all of you will not only want to purchase but will treasure for years!

Read on to learn more about these beautiful Kalon Women!

A former university professor, Charlotte S. Waisman, PhD, currently serves as a leadership coach and a principal with the AthenA Group, LLC, a nationally known consulting company specializing in leadership development, culture changes, and workforce excellence initiatives. Charlotte, her husband of 30 years, and their black lab Buddy live in Evergreen, Colorado, a small mountain community about 35 miles west of Denver.

Jill S. Tietjen, P.E. is an electrical engineer who provides consulting services in the electric utility industry and serves as an expert witness. One of her pastimes is nominating women for national awards such as the National Women's Hall of Fame (www.greatwomen.org). Jill, her husband David, and their vegetarian cat Robbie live in Centennial, Colorado, a southeastern Denver suburb.

Both of us are very pleased to be cited as "Women of the Month" for Kalon Women. We know that the book we have written is a fabulous match to the interests and the passions of many of your readers! We are looking forward to answering questions from your readers as they learn more about our book and want to delve further into other aspects of it.

Sandra: What was the inspiration behind writing your book and how did you come up with the concept?

Charlotte/Jill: First, to set the scene, let us tell you a little about our beautiful book. Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America by Charlotte S. Waisman and Jill S. Tietjen profiles over 850 women in U.S. history from 1587 to 2007 in a vivid visual timeline format. The book begins in 1587, the year that Virginia Dare was born on Roanoke Island in what became North Carolina and continues through 2007 when Drew Gilpin Faust was named the first

woman president in Harvard University's history (Harvard was founded in 1636, so it took them almost 400 years to achieve this milestone!). With a foreword by former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, and an endorsement from former Congresswoman, Pat Schroeder, this incredibly inclusive book features artists and adventurers, businesswomen and scientists, politicians and athletes, among others. Every field of endeavor is represented by women of achievement and distinction.

Now, let us talk about the genesis of our book. Although we both lived in the same metropolitan area, we did not know each other. Separately, each of us, for both personal and professional reasons, started to capture the stories of many historical women of significance to U.S. history.

Charlotte attended a tea party at one of her friend's homes. At the tea party, the 15 women played a parlor game – matching 10 women through U.S. history with her accomplishment. Charlotte was surprised that out of this group of highly educated women, she was the only one who could match each woman with her accomplishment. But she was flabbergasted that she was the only one who knew Margaret Sanger. At the same time as the party, Charlotte was teaching leadership classes for the Women's Vision Leadership Institute. When she mentioned some of the women who came before us to the class, she was greeted with glazed looks and blank stares. To combat this lack of knowledge, she, as a former university professor, went looking for a book to provide this information. There was no book that showed the women and their accomplishments with the events of their time period. Charlotte then developed a timeline on paper that profiled the historical women. The timeline was the foundational concept for what ultimately became our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*.

Jill's odyssey began with an essay contest on "Great Women in Engineering and Science." When the idea was broached with her in 1987 as an outreach activity for sixth graders in Colorado and Wyoming, Jill – like most of the U.S public – knew one historical woman in engineering and science anywhere in the world – and that was Madame Marie Curie. After much research and her first successful nomination (Admiral Grace Murray Hopper for the National Medal of Technology [the U.S. equivalent of the Nobel Prize]), Jill was hooked on uncovering and honoring historical women, primarily scientific and technical women. Later, when Jill wrote three books in the *Setting the Record Straight* series, she learned about historical women such as educators, abolitionists, suffragists, and many more.

When we were introduced in 2003, we each had about 300 women in our "collection" of women. While many "overlapped" on our separate lists, we did lots of additional research and sleuthing. We included hundreds more women in our book and we learned about thousands of other very accomplished American women during the investigative phase for our book.

Sandra: What is the book's objective?

Charlotte/Jill: Our objective for the book is for it to be in every girl's and woman's hands that live in the U.S. We all need to understand and appreciate the many women on whose shoulders we stand. Women today could not have done all that we do without the earlier women who paved the way for us. Girls need positive role models to emulate and they need to see many rich choices so that they can fulfill their wishes and dreams. And we all need to honor the many

women throughout U.S. history whose accomplishments have been invisible, minimized, or unacknowledged. Women have contributed greatly to the economy and culture of the U.S. and this book strives to ensure that they get the recognition they deserve.

Sandra: What obstacles have you faced?

Charlotte: I have been fortunate in my life to have had a wonderfully supportive family as I grew up, an excellent education and outstanding mentors, all of whom prepared me to dream big and achieve my goals. My strong marriage has also been a significant contributing factor in my success. It is also critical to point out that both luck and hard work have helped me overcome any barriers to my accomplishments. Both personally and professionally, I have always had goals that I've dreamt, planned, and then achieved.

Jill: My biggest issues have been finding out who I am and discovering my personal mission. I didn't realize for many years that I had choices – I had the choice to stay married or divorce my first husband. And I now work very consciously to stay true to my personal goals and mission. In my chosen line of work, electrical engineering, the workforce is completely male dominated. I have learned how to work successfully in that environment. My dear friends in the Society of Women Engineers help keep me balanced and sane.

Sandra: What did you have to sacrifice along the way to get to this point in your life?

Charlotte: I consider my sacrifices to be few and insignificant in relation to my success. I work very hard and I keep long work hours. Nights and weekends are often used for writing and speaking and additional work responsibilities. In earlier years, when I had children living at home, I became an astute juggler. I worked full time and I managed to go to many of our children's events. As I sat at a soccer game or drove our children to their various activities, my mind was racing with ideas and plans. I relied on my husband, my friends, acquaintances, as well as on paid help to assure that balanced meals were on the table, clean clothes were in our closets and our home was both tidy and welcoming. There has been a quote attributed to Oprah Winfrey. She said, "You can have it all, just not all at the same time." I think I've been fortunate to have it all.

Jill: I work very hard; there are seven days in a week and I work on all of them. Since Charlotte and I began writing this book in 2003, I am always behind on my reading; the magazines and The Wall Street Journal just pile up. I haven't watched television or read a novel in years. I have a cleaning lady and help doing the yard work. I don't view these as sacrifices, however. I am passionate about our book and the work that Charlotte and I have done and realize that now is the time to share it with the world. There will be time later for some of the other things in life. I still play tennis. I still have lunch and dinner with friends. I still take vacations (even if my computer does go with me).

Sandra: How have you changed and/or how have you grown since you started this process?

Charlotte: In writing a book about the historical women who have contributed so much to change our country, I grew enormously. I learned so much about the women who came before

us; the barriers and obstacles for women a few hundred years ago were extreme. For example, did you know that in 1848 – the year of the Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, that women were not allowed to speak in public? When Jill and I learned this, we were so surprised! Imagine what life was like for women back then. My appreciation for women, in general, and my significant appreciation for my writing partner, Jill, cannot be overstated. I began this process by reaching out to a woman I did not know, and taking a chance on her – that she would be a contributing partner to the venture I dreamed. Jill became much more; she is a driving, vital force and I gained respect for a partner who is now a true friend as well. The friendship and the deep commitment to a fruitful partnership have changed me and have helped me to grow. For when one person, in this case, Jill, gives so much, it enables another person to also strive, push and creatively challenge oneself.

Jill: I have learned so much. I didn’t know so many of the women that Charlotte and I have uncovered. The partnership that Charlotte and I have developed is truly amazing; we have expanded each other’s horizons. We’ve worked with a major publishing company (HarperCollins). We have a book agent. We’ve worked with publicists, graphic designers, web site personnel, printers, so many different kinds of people. I know the personnel at the area independent bookstores and have done book events with all of them. I know how to research images and how to find patents. I’ve worked with historical societies and libraries across the country in order to procure images. I love to learn – and learn I have through the process of writing and marketing this wonderful book of ours.

Sandra: What are the lessons you have learned along the way?

Charlotte/Jill: Over and over, throughout this process of creating a book, seeking an agent and securing a publisher, we have learned that what we needed would come to us when we needed it, if we continued to work, ask questions of others, and be open to the many suggestions we received. There are many specific instances we can relate to help you understand the concept.

One of the earliest examples is also a significant one. We had been writing for about a year and one-half when we thought it was time to find an agent to represent us. Charlotte did some research and identified three women who from their work profiles, appeared to work with book concepts like ours. We did a Women’s Vision Foundation Success Forum event and showed our pictorial display to about 1200 women. We gave away promotional rulers that noted we were seeking a publisher. A woman at the event was so “blown-away” by our concept that she insisted we contact her agent. We did reach out to her agent who was excited about our book and most willing to act on our behalf. The mantra of “when it is needed, it will come” was also solidified through extensive networking and the significant power of women helping women.

Sandra: What worked for you that would be good advice for someone else writing a book or pursuing their passion for the first time?

Charlotte: Jill found a fantastic cartoon that shows a person being x-rayed and where the organs should be, there is a book! We all have at least one book inside of us; we need to keep working hard to make it come out! Someone said that writing a book is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. It may appear to be too daunting, so many people give up. But we believe

it is critical to persevere and follow your passion. Passion and persistence, as well as hard work, will aid enormously in achieving your goals. What worked for us was keeping at it . . . big steps, small steps – that didn't matter so much as keeping going! We both had lots of ideas; we were respectful of each other's ideas and we built from each other's ideas to make it happen.

Jill: Work hard. Remember the words of Thomas Edison: “Most people miss opportunities because they come dressed in overalls and look like work.” Make sure you are passionate about what you are doing. Pursue every lead. When something doesn't work, try something else. Turn over every rock along the way. Determination. Passion. Persistence.

Sandra: What's next – any new goals or exciting things happening with the book or in your life?

Charlotte/Jill: In order to achieve our goals, we need your help dear readers in telling your friends and acquaintances about our book.

Our goals are the same as when the book was published. Because we believe it should be in the hands of every girl and woman in the U.S., we believe that it should be and will be a nationwide bestseller. The reaction of people when they see the book is incredibly positive; so many of them buy multiple copies as gifts for all of the women in their family and all of their women friends and mentors. It is a great Mother's Day gift, graduation gift, and shower gift.

You can also help us by alerting those who are looking for speakers that we have a great message and that we are strong presenters. We are actively seeking speaking venues all over the country so people can see our beautiful pictorial display and hear us discuss intriguing ideas from the book. We show PowerPoint visuals and engage in lively dialogue with our audiences. We also come (via telephone) to your book club and help you discuss the many influential and important women who are in our book. Book club discussion guidelines can be found on our web site at www.herstoryatimeline.com.

Sandra: Where can we buy your book?

Our book is available at independent and chain bookstores and can also be purchased on line. Our web site, www.herstoryatimeline.com, has a link to amazon.com. From our web site, you can view us at our book launch event at The Tattered Cover in Denver which was filmed by C-SPAN2/Book TV, hear us on NPR “Tell Me More” with Michel Martin, see us on other television interviews, and hear us on other radio interviews. In addition, you can see many of the book reviews and print articles about Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America and read rave reviews from our readers.

Finally, we want to hear from you – as we believe the story is not complete without you! You may reach us at charlotte@herstoryatimeline.com or jill@herstoryatimeline.com. We want to hear about more women who should be included in the next edition and we want your reactions to our book, as well as your stories about your success!

Charlotte and Jill, thank you for allowing us to take a peek inside your lives and for sharing your story with us.

[View the bio of Charlotte Waisman](#)

[View the bio of Jill Teitjen](#)