



Weaving

Her Story

Into History



What is Love?

The first definition in the dictionary states that love is a strong affection or devotion for another person. The second definition relates to a strong liking or interest – a passion – in something. All of the women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* demonstrated passion for something, as well as the determination and persistence to see that this “something” got accomplished. Passion is also one of the key leadership traits emphasized by the Women’s Vision Foundation. Although expressed in that context as leading from the head, heart and gut, the meaning is the same. It takes passion for a leader to be successful. Two women who immediately come to mind as exemplifying passion, or love, for their cause, are Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts, and Mary Lyon, whose vision for an educational institution resulted in the establishment of Mount Holyoke College.

Juliette Gordon Low found her passion and purpose in life, in 1911 while she was in England, when she met Sir Robert Baden-Powell the founder of the Boy Scouts, and became acquainted with their female counterpart, the Girl Guides. Back in the U.S., in Savannah, Georgia, on March 12, 1912, she made her famous phone call to a friend who was her distant cousin saying “I’ve got something for the girls of Savannah, and all of America, and all the world, and we’re going to start it tonight!” Eighteen girls gathered to register for the first troop of American Girl Guides. Her niece and namesake Margaret “Daisy Doots” Gordon was the first registered member. By 1915, Girl Scouts of America had been established with Juliette Gordon Low (whose nickname was “Daisy”) as its president.

In developing the Girl Scout movement in the United States, Low brought girls of all backgrounds into the out-of-doors, giving them the opportunity to develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. She encouraged girls to prepare not only for traditional homemaking, but also for possible future roles as professional women—in the arts, sciences and business—and for active citizenship outside the home. Girl Scouting welcomed girls with disabilities at a time when they were excluded from many other activities. This idea seemed quite natural to Low, who never let her deafness, back problems or cancer keep her from full participation in life.

(From the original 18 girls, Girl Scouting has grown to 3.7 million members. Girl Scouts is the largest educational organization for girls in the world and has influenced the more than 50 million girls, women and men who have belonged to it. Both Jill and Charlotte were Girl Scouts in their youth. Today, Jill is a lifetime Girl Scout and chaired the Board of Directors of Girl Scouts – Mile Hi Council. Isn’t it amazing what the love (passion) of one woman – Juliette Gordon Low – can accomplish?



Mary Lyon firmly believed that women must be well educated to contribute significantly to the greater good of others. Her love for learning combined with this passion led her to found Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts in 1836. Her vision was clear:

- a residential seminary to be founded and sustained by the public
- board and tuition at cost or as low as possible
- domestic work to be performed by the students and staff
- surplus income going to the treasury
- teachers being paid moderate salaries.

The seminary would own its own property, unlike the others established at this time. Its financial affairs would be handled by a board of trustees, thus its success would not be dependent on one individual. Mary Lyon tirelessly raised funds, with contributions ranging from six cents to thousands of dollars. She traveled alone by stagecoach at a time when women did not speak in public and certainly did not travel about the countryside unaccompanied. She raised money for a school to educate women when the prevailing thought was that women were physically unsuited to withstand the mental and physical demands of higher education.

But, her passion called! (Cont. on pg.14)

Mount Holyoke's first 80 students arrived in 1837 to a single building that was both a residential and academic structure. At its opening, Mount Holyoke embodied two major innovations in women's education: there were rigorous academic entrance requirements and a demanding curriculum that did not include instruction in the so-called domestic pursuits. In addition, it was endowed, thereby ensuring its permanence as an institution of higher learning. Lyon served as principal for nearly 12 years, teaching when needed, and organizing the domestic work system. By 1861, the three-year course of education had evolved to a four-year course. In 1893, the seminary curriculum was phased out and the institution became Mount Holyoke College.

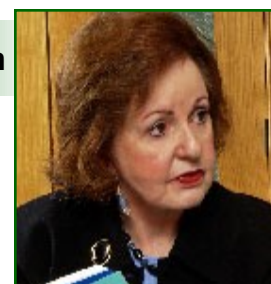


Today, Mount Holyoke prides itself as having led in women's education. It was the first of the Seven Sisters – the female equivalent of the once predominantly male Ivy League schools. Today's students continue to be inspired by Mary Lyon's famous words "Go where no one else will go, do what no one else will do." Alumnae of Mount Holyoke College who are profiled in *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* include Emily Dickinson, Frances Perkins, Virginia Apgar, Virginia Hamilton, Ella Grasso, and Wendy Wasserstein. Lyon's passion manifested itself in an enduring institution that continues today to prepare leaders working for the greater good of others.

Love and passion fueled both Juliette Gordon Low and Mary Lyon in their quest to ensure a better life for women. What better way to celebrate the month of February that includes a day to champion love, then to remember these two passionate women who helped to change America!

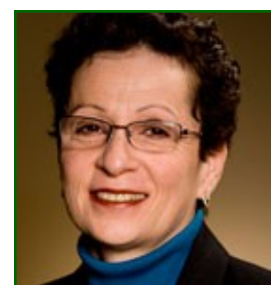
Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

Charlotte S. Waisman, PhD, is a national champion and advocate for women as a professor and keynote speaker. As an executive coach, Waisman coauthored 50 Activities for Developing Leaders and The Leadership Training Activity Book. She is a principal with a consulting company specializing in leadership and workforce excellence initiatives.



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