

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



E-Newsletter | January 2012

Women in the Cabinet

Although we haven't had a woman president in the U.S. yet, women have served as members of the Cabinet since Frances Perkins was appointed Secretary of Labor in 1933. As we head into the presidential election year of 2012, we are pleased to profile four of these pioneering women.

Frances Perkins served as Secretary of Labor from 1933 to 1945 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She was in office during many of the years of the Great Depression and helped draft legislation including the Federal Emergency Relief Act, the public works section of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Civilian Conservation Corps Act, the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Her experience prior to her cabinet position included lobbying for industrial reform, particularly regarding the sweatshops that existed at that time. She personally witnessed the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire of March 25, 1911 in which 146 workers, mainly women and children, died. On becoming Secretary of Labor, she said "I came to Washington to work for God, FDR, and the millions of forgotten, plain common workingmen."

Attorney **Patricia Roberts Harris** served first as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in President Jimmy Carter's cabinet and then as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (later called Health and Human Services). One of the women who paved the way for African-American women in politics, Harris was active in the early civil rights movement. Prior to her appointment to the cabinet, she had a career of public service including being the first African-American female Ambassador, when she was named the Ambassador to Luxembourg. When asked during her confirmation hearing if she could relate to her constituents, Harris said "You do not understand who I am . . . I am a black woman, the daughter of a Pullman car waiter. I am a black woman who even eight years ago could not buy a house in parts of the District of Columbia. I didn't start out as a member of a prestigious law firm, but as a woman who needed a scholarship to go to school. If you think that I have forgotten that, you are wrong."



Patricia Roberts Harris



Elizabeth Hanford Dole

Elizabeth Hanford Dole graduated from Harvard Law School in 1965 as one of twenty-five female graduates in a class of five hundred. She worked for various government agencies in Washington, DC before being appointed as a commissioner on the Federal Trade Commission. In 1983, President Reagan appointed her Secretary of Transportation; this position includes becoming Director of the U.S. Coast Guard. As such, she became the first woman to command an armed service in the U.S. Later, President George H.W. Bush appointed her Secretary of Labor. She said: "Women share with men the need for personal success, even the taste of power, and no longer are we willing to satisfy those needs through the achievements of surrogates, whether husbands, children, or merely role models."

The first member of her family to go to college and the first female recipient of the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award, **Hilda Solis** also has a long career of public service. She served in the California State Assembly and in 1994 made history by becoming the first Latina elected to the California State Senate. Prior to confirmation as Secretary of Labor, Secretary Solis represented the 32nd Congressional District in California. In the Congress, Solis' priorities included expanding access to affordable health care, protecting the environment, and improving the lives of working families. A recognized leader on clean energy jobs, she authored the Green Jobs Act which provided funding for "green" collar job training for veterans, displaced workers, at risk youth, and individuals in families under 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

We salute these amazing women on whose shoulders we stand.

Check out our web site for past editions of our enewsletter, articles and columns written about Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America and historical women, book club discussion guidelines, educational resources, and more!

Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America
www.herstoryatimeline.com

8547 E. Arapahoe Rd, PMB J189
Greenwood Villiage, Colorado 80112

