



Fearless Women

Throughout history, women have been precluded from certain behaviors because of real and/or perceived physical or emotional dangers. But a number of women persevered, showing that they fearlessly faced challenges and overcame barriers. Two athletes who demonstrated that boldness and paved the way for generations to come are profiled in this month's enewsletter - Wilma Rudolph and Kathrine Switzer.

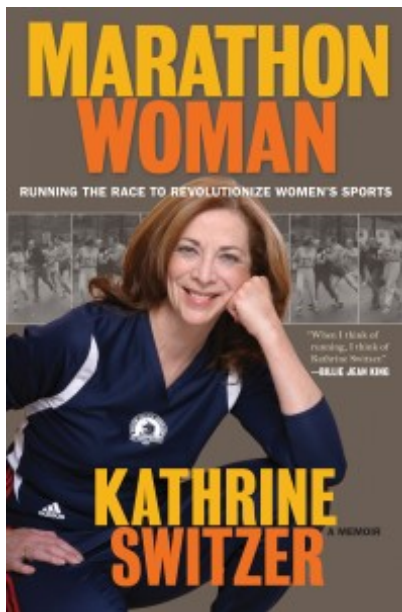


Wilma Rudolph

Wilma Rudolph had to overcome physical challenges as well as racial barriers on her way to becoming the fastest woman in the world. The twentieth child in a family of twenty-two, Rudolph was a sickly child. When her legs didn't develop properly, she was diagnosed with polio and her family was told that she would not walk. Through the determination and support of her mother and family, by the age of twelve she could walk without braces, a crutch or corrective shoes.

Home schooled for much of her childhood, Rudolph discovered her athleticism when she entered public high school. She played basketball; her talent for running was discovered during her sophomore year by the coach of the Tennessee State University track team. At age sixteen, she won a bronze medal at the 1956 Olympics as a member of the 4 x 100 relay team. That set the stage for her triumph at the 1960 Olympics where she became the first American woman to win three gold medals - in the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash and as the anchor member of the 4 x 100 relay team. Rudolph's inspirational story made her a star during those first televised Olympics. Rudolph also inspired generations of women athletes who came after her. Rudolph has been

inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



Kathrine Switzer

When K.V. Switzer filled out her application to run the Boston Marathon, she wasn't being secretive, that was how Kathrine Switzer signed her name. The first woman to run the Boston Marathon, she had help in fending off the race official who tried to remove her from the race when she ran in front of the press stands. The photos from that episode were famously captured and became one of Time-Life's "100 Photos That Changed the World." Switzer was able to successfully complete the event.

As a result of her experience at the Boston Marathon, Switzer became determined to change conditions for women. She is a huge advocate for women, particularly in athletics and fitness. She encourages women everywhere in the world to take up running;

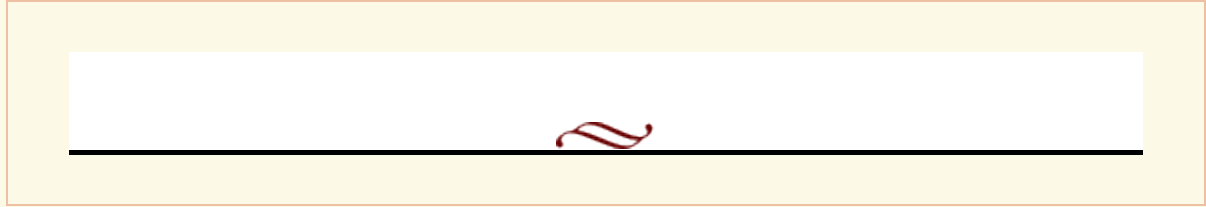
she has run many additional marathons. Credited with being instrumental in ensuring that the women's marathon become an Olympic event, today she is associated with a clothing line, 261 Fearless, carrying the number of the bib she wore in that history-making 1967 Boston Marathon. Switzer has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Women's contributions to all areas of our lives and culture have often been accomplished in spite of and by overcoming obstacles; women were fearless in their pursuits. We are proud to stand on their shoulders.

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Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America
Charlotte S. Waisman and Jill S. Tietjen
www.herstoryatimeline.com

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



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