

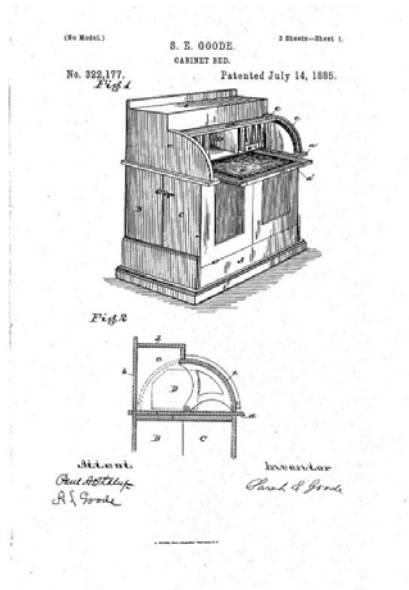


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Inventors

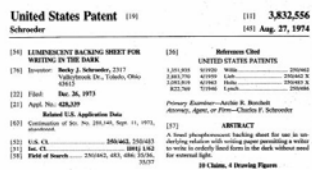
As we think about our own lives today, it is hard to believe that women couldn't get patents in their own name until 1809. Before that, every patent issued was issued in a man's name. Another recent first: in 2012, the U.S. Patent and Trademark office got its first female Commissioner of Patents in its history - Peggy La Tulip Focarino. Women have been described as the "Mothers of Invention" - let's learn about some of them.

In 1885, Sarah Goode got the first patent issued to an African-American woman for her folding cabinet bed. Today, what we would call a hideaway was used as a desk when it was not in service as a bed.



Sarah Goode Patent

Dubbed the "Lady Edison", Beulah Henry was remarkable for the number of patents for which she applied; by 1962, she had 45. Her first patent, when she was 15 (she was born in 1887) was a vacuum ice-cream freezer. During the 1930s, one of her patents was for an umbrella with interchangeable snap-on covers to allow the user to match the umbrella with what she was wearing. New York umbrella manufacturers told her they could not pierce the rib with the kind of snaps she wanted, so she went home and did the proof of concept herself. Armed with that, she was able to find a manufacturer who paid her about \$50,000 for the idea. Lord & Taylor displayed her umbrellas in their front window.



Becky Schroeder was twelve-years old when she got her first patent. At age ten, Schroeder had been trying to do her homework in the family car - but it was too dark at night for her to accomplish this task. She decided that she was going to invent an illuminated writing board that would enable her to get her homework done. She experimented with phosphorescent paint and acrylic board and succeeded in developing the Glo Sheet. Her efforts to get a patent were facilitated by the fact that her father was a patent attorney! After The New York Times wrote about her, she didn't even need to mount a marketing effort; she became president of the company that sold the Glo Sheet. Schroeder has received at least eight

Becky Schroeder Patent
additional patents since that first one in 1974.

Astronaut Ellen Ochoa has three patents for optical systems that were the result of the research she did as a graduate student. One, granted in 1985, related to holograms created from electromagnetic radiation. Another, granted in 1989, was to recognize a target in a field of vision. The first female Hispanic astronaut in space, today, Ochoa is the Director of the Johnson Space Center. She is the first Hispanic director and the second female director; she assumed the role of director after five years as deputy director.

All of these women - and many more inventors - are profiled in our book Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America. We benefit from their contributions; we are proud to continue telling their stories.

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Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America
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