



March 2017 Her Story ENewsletter National Women's Hall of Fame 2017 Inductees

In early February, the National Women's Hall of Fame announced the ten 2017 Inductees. In this month's ENewsletter, we profile two of the women who will be officially inducted in September 2017 in Seneca Falls, New York: Lorraine Hansberry and Temple Grandin.

The first black woman to write a play performed on Broadway, Lorraine Hansberry was raised in Chicago and studied at the University of Wisconsin before moving to New York in 1950 to begin her writing career. She began writing her best-known play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, in 1956. The play is named from a line in the Langston Hughes poem *Harlem: A Dream Deferred*; it is the story of working-class African Americans in Chicago living in a time of segregation. Hansberry drew upon her experiences growing up; many characters were inspired by members of her family. When the Broadway show was mounted, Sidney Poitier was cast as the main character. In addition-- the director was black, the audience was enthralled, and the play was nominated for four Tony awards. It also won Hansberry the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. In 1960 it was made into a movie with the original Broadway cast.

Hansberry's second play ran for 101 performances on Broadway before closing; tragically the closing performance was the same night that she died of cancer at age 34. After her death, her former husband edited and published her three unfinished plays and compiled her writings, speeches and some unpublished works into an autobiographical anthology titled *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*.



Lorraine Hansberry



Temple Grandin

A professor of animal science at Colorado State University, Temple Grandin is an expert on animal behavior and a spokesperson for autism. Today, half of the cattle in the U.S. are handled in facilities that she designed. Facilities using her design are also located in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, among others. She developed her 'hug box' or 'squeeze machine' on the advice of her high school science teacher. This helped provide her with stress relief, and was later adapted for use with animals.

Grandin did not speak until she was three and a half years old but was able to be mainstreamed by the time she was in kindergarten. Her first book, *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* was the first inside narrative written about autism. She was also one of the first adults to disclose that she was autistic which publicized the condition. She spoke in public in the mid-1980s about her experiences with autism; this providing tremendous insight for parents of autistic children and others in the field. In 2010, *Time* magazine named her one of the 100 most influential people in the "Heroes" category and her life story was told in an HBO movie.

Lorraine Hansberry and Temple Grandin are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Their accomplishments inspire us and remind us how important it is to continue to tell women's stories.

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