



August 2018 Her Story ENewsletter Playwrights

Young Jean Lee is the first Asian-American woman to have her play performed on Broadway. This occurred in July when *Straight White Men* opened. Lorraine Hansberry was the first African-American woman author with a play on Broadway when *A Raisin in the Sun* opened in 1959. We featured Lorraine Hansberry and another playwright, Clare Boothe Luce, in enewsletters during 2017, after the announcement that they would both be inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. In honor of Young Jean Lee, this month we feature playwrights Anita Loos and Wendy Wasserstein. Let's learn more about these remarkable women.

Author, playwright and screenwriter Anita Loos is probably best known for her novel, then Broadway play, then movie *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. She started as a scriptwriter in the silent film industry in the early 1910s. Her script for *The New York Hat* earned her \$25; it was a short film starring Mary Pickford and featuring Lionel Barrymore in his film debut. Called by film director D.W. Griffith "the most brilliant woman in the world," Loos's intertitles grace his 1916 epic movie *Intolerance*.



Anita Loos

Playwright Wendy Wasserstein is best known for her play *The Heidi Chronicles* which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play, both in 1989. Her plays often profiled smart and ambitious women whose lives and careers were constrained by the male-dominated society in which they lived. Her first work was the 1977 play *Uncommon Women and Others*. Written as her graduate thesis at Yale, it was produced Off-Broadway starring Glenn Close, Jill Eikenberry and Swoosie Kurtz in the three main roles. When it was produced for PBS, Meryl Streep replaced Glenn Close.



Wendy Wasserstein

Upon her untimely death at age 55, the artistic director for the Lincoln Center Theatre said, "She was known for being a popular, funny playwright, but she was also a woman and a writer of deep conviction and political activism. In Wendy's plays women saw themselves portrayed in a way they hadn't been onstage before - wittily, intelligently and seriously at the same time. We take that for granted now, but it was not the case 25 years ago. She was a real pioneer."

Anita Loos and Wendy Wasserstein are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us. Continue to help us to tell women's stories!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen
Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America
www.herstoryatimeline.com
8547 E. Arapahoe Road, PMB J189
Greenwood Village, CO 80112-1430

STAY CONNECTED:

