



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



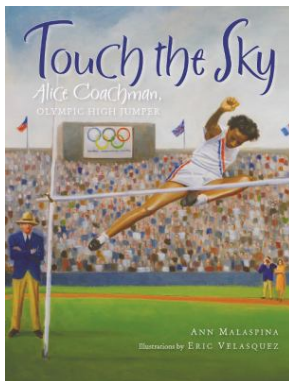
March 2020 Her Story ENewsletter Summer Olympics Athletes

Simone Biles, who will be competing in the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, is the most decorated athlete in the history of gymnastics' world championships. She ranks third internationally all-time with 30 medals (including five medals from the 2016 Rio Olympics) and is the American with the most medals in the history of the sport. Biles even has skills named after her – the Biles vault, two floor moves, and a dismount from the balance beam. She is a groundbreaker as are the two women we profile in this month's enewsletter: Olympians Helen Stephens and Alice Coachman.



Known as the Fulton Flash, at age eighteen, **Helen Stephens** (from Fulton, Missouri) won two gold medals at the 1936 Olympics: the 100-meter dash and as a member of the U.S. relay team. Stephens excelled at track and field, never lost a race, and held world and American indoor records in a variety of events, including shot put and discus. She said, "From the time I was a small child I was in training, only I didn't know it. . . I was walking, running, doing chores, building up my body, my lung capacity, my wind, my endurance, everything that people have to train for today." Accompanying her cousin who was riding horseback to school, Helen would grab the stirrup and run with the horse.

After the Olympics, Stephens played professional baseball and softball. From 1938 to 1952, she owned and managed her own semiprofessional basketball team; she was the first woman to do so. Later she was a coach, mentor, and senior competitor. By her death, she had set the record for the longest athletic career in the world. Stephens has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



The first African-American woman to win an Olympic gold medal, **Alice Coachman** grew up in the segregated South, with little in the way of equipment or athletic gear with which to train. She ran barefoot through fields and dirt roads. The high school boys' track coach recognized her talent and, in 1939 (when she was 16 years old), she was offered a scholarship to Tuskegee Institute. By the time she entered college, Coachman had already broken high school and college high jump records at the national track and field championship.

After the cancellation of the 1940 and 1944 Olympics (due to World War II), Coachman was able to compete in the 1948 Summer Olympics where she set a record in the high jump and won the gold medal. After the Olympics, she became the first African American to win an endorsement deal (with Coca-Cola). In 1996, at the Atlanta Olympics, in her home state of Georgia, she was honored as one of the 100 Greatest Olympians of all time.

Helen Stephens and Alice Coachman 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 all. Continue to help us tell women's stories! Tell young women especially that their dreams can become a reality.

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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