



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN  
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



## July 2021 Her Story ENewsletter Summer Olympics Athletes

It looks like the 2020 Olympics will take place in July 2021 in Tokyo, Japan after a delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Olympic athletes hone their skills for years in order to compete in many different types of events. This month we profile track and field medalist Florence Griffith Joyner and tennis superstar Serena Williams, both of whom won gold medals at the Summer Olympic Games of years past.



**Florence Griffith Joyner**, also known affectionately as Flo-Jo, set records in 1988 for the 100 meters and 200 meters that still stand. Joyner began running in track events while in elementary school and won the Jesse Owens National Youth Games twice – at ages 14 and 15. She qualified for the 1980 Olympics but did not compete, due to the U.S. boycott. In 1984, she qualified for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in the 200 meters and won the silver medal.

During the trials for the 1988 Olympic Games, she set records for both the 100 meters and 200 meters. At the 1988 Olympics, Flo-Jo won three gold medals and one silver medal. She set an Olympic record in the 100 meters and the world record in the 200 meters, winning gold in both events. Flo-Jo was part of the 4 x 100 meters relay team that won a gold medal as well as part of the 4 x 400 meters relay team that won a silver medal. In 1995, she was inducted into the USA Track & Field Hall of Fame. .



In 1995, **Serena Williams** became a professional tennis player at age 14, following in the footsteps of her sister Venus Williams. Serena began playing tennis at the age of three and won her first professional tournament in 1999. She has been ranked number 1 in the world and has won 23 Grand Slam tournaments in singles (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and U.S. Open). She has won an additional 16 Grand Slam titles in doubles and mixed doubles.

Serena has won four Olympic gold medals – one in singles (2012) and three in doubles (2000, 2008, 2012), where she partnered with her sister Venus. In 2016 and 2017, she was the highest paid female athlete in the world. Serena is still on the tennis circuit, coming back after her maternity leave. In 2015, she was the first Black female athlete to be featured by herself on the cover of *Vogue* magazine. Serena has many interests outside of tennis including supporting schools in Kenya and appearing in movies and on television. She has multiple clothing lines and also designs jewelry and accessories. Serena and Venus Williams are minority owners of the Miami Dolphins football team – the first Black women to own any part of an NFL franchise.

Florence Griffith Joyner and Serena Williams 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!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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