



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



September 2021 Her Story ENewsletter Women on U.S. Quarters

With the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020, the U.S. Congress directed the Treasury to design and issue coins in each of the years 2022 through 2025 that feature accomplished U.S. women. The women must no longer be living, and their contributions can be in fields including but not limited to suffrage, civil rights, abolition, government, humanities, science, space and the arts. Five women will be featured in each of the four years of the program. The 2022 selections include Maya Angelou and Wilma Mankiller.



Maya Angelou inspired generations of women as a role model. She defied social norms and overcame prejudice, discrimination and abuse. After being raped by her mother's boyfriend, she withdrew and was mute for five years. With her grandmother's encouragement, she gradually emerged as a talented artist; she worked as an actor before turning to writing. In 1970, her first autobiographical work, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* became a best seller and was nominated for a National Book Award. She is also well known for her many thought-provoking sayings. One example is: "If you are always trying to be normal you will never know how amazing you can be."

In 1972, Angelou became the first African-American woman to have a feature film developed from her work; it was the screenplay and musical score *Georgia Georgia*. Her writings brought her numerous awards, and she has been nominated for a Tony, an Emmy, and a Pulitzer Prize. Angelou received more than 50 honorary doctorates and was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She said: "How important it is for us to recognize our heroes and she-roes!"



In 1985, **Wilma Mankiller** became the first woman to serve as the head of a major Native American tribe in North America, when she was elected Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Although she was born in Oklahoma, her family relocated to San Francisco when she was young. Mankiller's activism was inspired in 1969 when a group of Native Americans took over Alcatraz Island, outside of San Francisco, to protest the suffering of their people. She said, "When Alcatraz occurred, I became aware of what needed to be done to let the rest of the world know that Indians had rights, too."

Mankiller worked first to empower the Native Americans in California. After her divorce she moved back to Oklahoma with her two daughters; she was determined to help her tribe. During her ten years as Principal Chief, the population grew from 68,000 members to 170,000. Infant mortality was reduced, and educational, healthcare, and housing opportunities were enhanced. Mankiller was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She said, "A lot of young girls have looked to their career paths and have said they'd like to be chief. There's been a change in the limits people see."

Maya Angelou and Wilma Mankiller 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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