

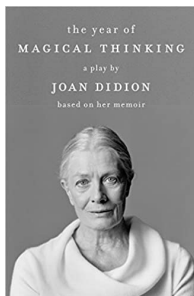


A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



January 2022 Her Story ENewsletter In Memoriam 2021

During December 2021, we lost three of the women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. In memoriam, we feature Joan Didion and Sarah Weddington in this month's ENewsletter. We will pay tribute to amazing actress and entertainer Betty White in a future ENewsletter.



Journalist and author **Joan Didion** was born in California, descended from pioneers headed for California who left what we remember as the Donner Party before they met their fate. She majored in English in college at the University of California, Berkeley. Her essay submitted to *Mademoiselle* magazine won her a guest editor position when she was a junior. As a senior, she won an essay contest for *Vogue* magazine, skipped the prize of a trip to Paris and went to work for *Vogue* upon her graduation. Her first nonfiction book, a collection of her magazine articles about her experiences in California, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, was published in 1968.

Didion is remembered for her articles and books describing the 1960s counterculture and the Hollywood lifestyle. In 2005, she won the National Book Award for Nonfiction for *The Year of Magical Thinking*. That biography/autobiography, which chronicled her response to the death of her husband and the serious illness of their daughter, also made her a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. She adapted the book into a Broadway play that premiered in 2007. Didion also spent many years as a political reporter. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1981.



After graduating from the University of Texas Law School in 1967, **Sarah Weddington** could not find a job with a law firm. Instead, she joined a group of graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin who were researching ways to challenge anti-abortion statutes. Weddington took on the case of Norma McCorvey who became the "Jane Roe" in *Roe v. Wade* (Henry Wade was the Dallas district attorney, responsible for enforcing the anti-abortion statutes). Weddington first presented the case before a three-judge district court in Dallas in 1970. Although the court ruled in her favor, the state appealed and Weddington found herself in front of the U.S. Supreme Court twice – in 1971 and in 1972. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision was handed down in 1973 and overturned the Texas abortion law.

Weddington subsequently served three terms in the Texas House of Representatives. She served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and as President Jimmy Carter's assistant from 1978 to 1981. She was a lecturer at Texas Woman's University, as well as an adjunct professor and speaker at the University of Texas at Austin. Weddington was awarded a number of honorary degrees. She also authored a book detailing her experiences titled *A Question of Choice*. She was portrayed by Amy Madigan in the television movie *Roe vs. Wade*.

Joan Didion and Sarah Weddington 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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