



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



January 2023 Her Story ENewsletter American Women Featured on 2023 Quarters #2

The five American women who will be featured in 2023 as part of the American Women Quarters Program are Bessie Coleman, Edith Kanaka'ole, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jovita Idár and Maria Tallchief. This month we feature Jovita Idár and Maria Tallchief.



One of eight children growing up in a journalism family, **Jovita Idár** followed in the footsteps of her father, the publisher of *La Crónica* (The Chronicles) in Laredo, Texas. After earning her teaching certificate in 1903 from the Holding Institute, Idár taught school but resigned due to segregation and poor conditions for Mexican American students. She then joined two of her brothers at the newspaper writing to advocate for civil rights and social justice for Mexican Americans. This was courageous for it was a time when lynching and other violence against Mexican Americans was common.

In 1911, she and her family organized the First Mexican Congress to unify Mexicans in fighting for justice. Idár wrote articles promoting women's suffrage and encouraging women to vote. Also in 1911, she founded and became the first president of the League of Mexican Women, through which she worked to provide free education to Mexican children. After serving as a nurse in Mexico, she joined a newspaper in Texas that the Rangers tried to shut down. After marrying, Idár moved to San Antonio where she worked as a newspaper editor and publisher and founded her own newspaper, *Evolución*, in 1916. She became active in the Democratic Party in Texas and advocated for rights for women. She was known for saying "when you educate a woman, you educate a family."



Born in Fairfax, Oklahoma of Osage heritage, **Maria Tallchief** broke significant barriers in 1947 when she was named the first Native American prima ballerina of the New York City Ballet. During the 13 years that she was in that role, she became the first American to dance with the Paris Opera Ballet. The *New York Herald Tribune* said of her performance, "As brilliant in speed and with steely exactness. . . Maria Tallchief is doing the most sparkling performances, outdoing herself."

Her first marriage to choreographer George Balanchine resulted in many works designed for her strengths of technical precision, strength, and musicality. After her retirement in 1965, Tallchief served as the artistic director of the Lyric Opera Ballet. She then founded and served as artistic director of the Chicago City Ballet. Tallchief received the National Medal of the Arts from President Clinton for "helping bring ballet to America." Her many other honors include the Kennedy Center Honors and induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and the National Women's Hall of Fame. She is one of five Oklahoma Native American ballerinas featured on a mural in the Oklahoma State Capitol.

Jovita Idár and Maria Tallchief 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 tell women's stories!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America | 8547 E Arapahoe Road, PMB
J189, Greenwood Village, CO 80112

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