



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN  
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



## April 2023 Her Story ENewsletter Celebrating Native American Women's Accomplishments

In 2021, Deb Haaland, of the Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico, became the first Native American Secretary of the Interior. A single mother who grew up in a military family, Haaland, put herself through college, earning her bachelor's and her law degree from the University of New Mexico. She ran a small business, served as a tribal administrator and was the first woman chairperson of the Laguna Development Corporation Board of Directors. She made an unsuccessful run for Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico in 2014. In 2018, she ran for the U.S. House of Representatives and was elected as one of the first two Native American women in the U.S. Congress. She was re-elected in 2020.

Nicole Mann became the first Native American woman in space in October 2022. Mann, of Wailaki heritage, is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy where she majored in mechanical engineering. She was commissioned in the United States Marine Corps and earned her masters in mechanical engineering at Stanford University. Mann received her Naval Aviator wings in 2002. In 2013, she was selected as an astronaut. She served as the Spacecraft Commander for the SpaceX Crew-5 mission which launched October 5, 2022 and returned from the International Space Station on March 11, 2023.

Both Deb Haaland and Nicole Mann follow in the footsteps of Annie Dodge Wauneka and Patricia Locke.



**Annie Dodge Wauneka** ran for election to the Navajo Tribal Council to improve public health on the reservation. Born in 1910, Wauneka survived the influenza epidemic that killed thousands of people on the reservation. Because of this experience, she became interested in ways to improve health and alleviate poverty. Wauneka spoke both Navajo and English and was able to reach members of the reservation through a biweekly radio program. During her almost three decades of dedication to public health on the reservation, Wauneka brought modern western medical practices, particularly cleanliness, to her people. Wauneka helped eradicate tuberculosis on the Navajo Reservation and reduced infant mortality.

The first Native American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1963 from President Lyndon B. Johnson), Wauneka was proclaimed "The Legendary Mother of the Navajo Nation" in 1984. Her biography is titled *I'll Go and Do More*. She has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



During her more than 40 years as an educator, **Patricia Locke** observed that Native American languages and culture were suppressed by official schools that served indigenous peoples. She worked tirelessly to change that situation, becoming a preserver of the languages, cultures and spiritual traditions of Native Americans and other indigenous peoples. Serving as an instructor, curriculum designer and executive of the International Native Languages Institute, Locke influenced changes in Federal law, helped organize 17 tribally run colleges and was recognized for her efforts by being awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1991.

Born of the Lakota Sioux and Chippewa heritages, Locke lived on the Standing Rock Lakota Reservation in South Dakota. She co-chaired the United States Department of Interior Task force on Indian Education Policy and advocated for what became the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. After becoming a member of the Baha'i faith, she was the first Native American elected to its National Spiritual Assembly. Locke has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Annie Dodge Wauneka and Patricia Locke 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

[Unsubscribe jill.s.tietjen@gmail.com](mailto:jill.s.tietjen@gmail.com)

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