



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



October 2023 Her Story ENewsletter 2024 Quarters

The women to be featured on the 2024 Quarters have been announced. They include Patsy Mink, Pauli Murray, Mary Edwards Walker, Celia Cruz, and Zitkála-Šá. We will profile several this month and the others in our November 2023 ENewsletter.



Credited as the “Mother of Title IX” **Patsy Mink**, the first woman of color to serve in the U.S. Congress (starting in 1965, from Hawaii), played high school basketball on a half court, as at the time full-court basketball was deemed too physically demanding for girls. Mink wanted to pursue a career in medicine but was rejected by all medical schools to which she applied. Instead, she went to law school. After fighting for the right to take the bar exam, she became the first Japanese American woman to pass the bar in Hawaii. That was not the end of the barriers Mink faced. She was denied a job at a law firm because she was a married woman. She couldn’t start a law practice because she had married a man who was not from Hawaii; the law was such that she was considered a non-

resident. After Mink’s death, the U.S. House of Representatives renamed Title IX the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act. She has been inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame.



Pauli Murray’s civil rights activism was triggered in 1940, when she and a friend were arrested for sitting in the whites-only section of a segregated bus in Virginia. She had already graduated from Hunter College in New York City, with a degree in English. She then enrolled at Howard University to study law. The sexism she encountered there, which she called “Jane Crow,” added to her intention to advocate for the rights of blacks and women. Graduating first in her class, she was denied the opportunity to do post-graduate work at Harvard University, due to her gender. Instead, she earned her master’s degree from

the University of California at Berkeley and her doctorate in law from Yale Law School – the first African American woman awarded that degree.

The book Murray authored, *States’ Laws on Race and Color*, was called by Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall the “Bible” of the civil rights movement. She was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. She co-founded the National Organization for Women. Then, in 1977, Murray became an ordained priest of the Episcopal Church. She was in the first group of women ordained, as well as the first African American woman so appointed.



Dr. **Mary Edwards Walker** was an advocate for women’s rights and the first woman awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Born in Oswego, New York, she earned her medical degree at Syracuse Medical College in New York in 1855. During the Civil War, she served first as a nurse (when the Army would not allow women to serve as doctors) and then later as a surgeon, the first female surgeon of the Union Army. She was a prisoner of war for four months and suffered the associated hardships. Dr. Walker was also known for her attire – she wore the “Bloomer” dress and pants. She was criticized for her choice of attire; she said “I don’t wear men’s clothes. I wear my own clothes.” A liberty ship was named for her during World War II; she has been featured on a U.S. postage stamp, and she has been inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame.

There are 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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