



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



February 2024 Her Story ENewsletter Women on Quarters - 2025 #2

The United States mint announced the women who will be featured in 2025 on the American Women Quarters (the last year of the program). In January of 2024 we profiled Althea Gibson and Juliette Gordon Low. In this month's newsletter, we feature Stacey Park Milbern, Vera Rubin, and Ida B. Wells.



Stacey Park Milbern was a Korean American disability advocate in North Carolina and California; she helped create the disability justice movement. Born into a military family, Milbern began taking on disability rights leadership roles at age 16. As a gubernatorial appointee, she served on the North Carolina Commission for the Blind from 2006 to 2008 and the Statewide Independent Living Council from 2004 to 2010. She was instrumental in the passage of legislation in North Carolina that required disability history curriculum be taught in the schools. When she was 24, Milbern moved to California due to its reputation for being very accessible to people with disabilities. During the Obama administration, she served for two years on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Milbern was active during the early months of the pandemic advocating for people with disabilities and distributing homemade

disease-prevention kits. She died on her 33rd birthday in 2020.



Astronomer **Vera Rubin's** work on galaxy rotation rates provided evidence of dark matter in the universe. Rubin developed an interest in astronomy by observing the stars when she was ten years old. She says, "Even then I was more interested in the questions than in the answer. I decided at a very early age that we inhabit a very curious world." Her father encouraged her interest in astronomy by helping her build a telescope. Rubin attended Vassar College where in 1948, she was the only one to graduate with a major in astronomy.

She was turned down for graduate study at Princeton, due to her gender. She pursued her graduate studies in astronomy at Cornell, beginning her study of galaxy rotation. Her work provided early evidence of the supergalactic plane. When she endeavored to present her results to the American Astronomical Society, she, visibly pregnant, and her paper, were both rejected. She pursued her Ph.D. at Georgetown University. Throughout her career, Rubin was subjected to subtle and not-so-subtle sexism. She applied to observe at the Palomar Observatory, which had no facilities for women. Upon her acceptance she made her own facilities and became the first woman to observe there. A well-known advocate for women in science careers, Rubin was elected to the National Academy of Science. An area of Mars is named for her, as is an asteroid.



A fearless campaigner for rights for all people, **Ida B. Wells** (also known as Ida B. Wells-Barnett) was a slave, who was freed by the Emancipation Proclamation. She moved from Mississippi to Memphis, Tennessee in search of higher-paying employment. There she served as a teacher, and she co-owned a newspaper. She was a tireless crusader against lynching, including writing about the topic in her newspaper. Sadly, this led to the destruction of the newspaper's presses by a white mob; she was forced to relocate. *The Red Record*, a pamphlet that she authored in 1895, significantly influenced the national debate on lynching. Wells remained active in the civil rights movement after moving to Chicago and after her marriage. She was one of the founders of the National American Association of Colored People, today called the NAACP. In 1893, she founded The Women's Era Club, a civic organization for African American women. Wells was also active in the

women's suffrage movement. She has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame and was featured on a U.S. postage stamp in 1990.

We stand on the shoulders of these great women who came before us and who 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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