



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN  
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



## December 2025 Her Story ENewsletter Statues Honoring Alabama Women

Statues of Helen Keller and Rosa Parks were unveiled in November on the grounds of the Alabama Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama. Keller and Parks were the first women to be honored in this way. They were amazing women who fought for disability rights and civil rights, and both have been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



**Helen Keller** became blind and deaf when she was 19 months old and thus unable to effectively communicate. Her life changed dramatically when she was seven years old. Her intelligence and capabilities grew when she learned to communicate with sign language, through the help of her teacher and later life-long companion, Anne Sullivan (Macy). With Sullivan's assistance, Keller was able to attend specialized as well as mainstream schools. A graduate of Radcliffe College (Phi Beta Kappa), Keller became the first blind and deaf person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Keller served as an inspiration to and advocate for disabled people the world over. She learned to speak and gave lectures worldwide to encourage support for those with disabilities. Her autobiography was titled *The Story of My Life*. It was popularized through the play and movie *The Miracle Worker*. One of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union, Keller was also an advocate for women's rights and birth control. She has been featured on a U.S. postage stamp, and her statue is one of the two representing the state of Alabama in National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol.



Called the "mother of the civil rights movement," **Rosa Parks** was on her way home from work on December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama. She was told to give up her seat to a white man. She refused. Parks said "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired but that isn't true. I was not tired physically. . . No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in." Parks was arrested.

Parks' action became the test case against the segregation laws in Montgomery. In addition, a boycott of the municipal bus system was organized. The boycott lasted much longer than the trial – in the end, over one year. It gained national and international attention and helped launch the career of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court found the segregation laws unconstitutional. Parks lost her job over these events and eventually she and her family moved to Detroit, Michigan. After many years in the office of Congressman Conyers, Parks established a foundation to serve Detroit's youth. Parks received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1999 and when she died, she became the first woman to lie in state in the nation's Capital.

Helen Keller and Rosa Parks 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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