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# NWHA

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY ALLIANCE



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### LEADING THE CHANGE:

*Women Shaping a Sustainable Future*

## The History and Purpose of National Women's History Month

In 1980, the National Women's History Project was founded by a group of teachers in Santa Rosa, California, as a non-profit educational organization. Its mission was to spearhead the movement in order to persuade the President and Congress to issue a Proclamation declaring a week in March as National Women's History Week.

Before 1980, there was little recognition of and very few resources on women's history in elementary and secondary classrooms. Establishing a "Women's History Week" around March 8 (International Women's Day) was an effective way to encourage teachers to discuss women and to specifically include multicultural women, which was always a deliberate priority.

At the time, few teachers and even fewer students could name 3 women, other than celebrities or entertainers, who had made major contributions to American history and culture. Women's history seemed to be written in invisible ink. Establishing a Women's History Month encouraged teachers to recognize and celebrate the lives and accomplishments of American women.

The purpose of National Women's History Month is to make women's lives visible and to write women back into history where they belong. Invisibility is the number one form of bias because it assumes that women - or other groups - have no history or identity. To seek a more expansive view of our history and our culture, new questions need to be asked. Knowing history

encourages girls and women to have stronger (better) sense of self, and encourages boys and men to better understand and respect women.

In 1987, the NWHP led a campaign involving thousands of schools, organizations, libraries and civic institutions to have Congress declare March as National Women's History Month. This achievement has resulted in tens of thousands of events across the country every year, unified under the annual theme chosen by the NWA. Using the hashtag, #Womenshistorymonth, one can see that small businesses, companies, towns, schools, etc celebrate their outstanding and often "ordinary" women!

In 2018, the National Women's History Project became the National Women's History **Alliance** to establish a national collaboration with other organizations to ensure that women's contributions are recognized in our schools, communities and national consciousness.

In 2025, the NWA established a Youth Advisory Board to inspire and empower high school students to engage with women's history through education, advocacy and community building. This creates pathways for young people to learn about the role of women throughout history and to build connections with peers and mentors who share similar goals.



*Pictured from left to right: Sophia Chen, Brooke Soderbery, Kristen Kelly, Molly Murphy MacGregor, Serene Williams, Lucy Irvine, Alondra Flores. Brooke and Alondra are currently serving as co-chairs of the NWA Youth Advisory Board*

In 2026, the Youth Advisory Board is working on creating a database of women's history and women's gender studies programs in high schools. If you know of any, please email [serene@teachwapush.org](mailto:serene@teachwapush.org) so she can add them to the list. Learn more about the NWA Youth Advisory Board at [nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/nwha-yab/](http://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/nwha-yab/)

For over four decades, the **National Women's History Alliance** has been a driving force in promoting and preserving women's history. Each year, the NWA develops the official Women's History Month theme used by schools, libraries, and institutions nationwide.

The theme for 2026 is "**Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future.**"

[Learn More](#)

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**INTERGENERATIONAL COALITION**

# of Writing Women Back into History



*Pictured from left to right: Theresa Lovero, Fiona Lakeram, and Cara Dunleavy*

Led by graduate student Fiona Lakeram, the concept of a “March of Icons” was suggested to the NWA by the “Catalyst Committee” of St. John’s University. With sustainability the theme for 2026, Business students at St. John’s University recruited Environmental Science peers to help research icons and Art Design peers to illustrate these inspirational women for the **NWA’s 2026 Women’s History magazine**.

“**March of Icons**” is a campaign to elevate 30 iconic women into the national spotlight around the annual theme chosen by the NWA. A fold-out centerfold calendar features short biographies and lovely portraits of a month’s worth of women who are working, or who devoted their lives, to ensuring a sustainable future. St. John’s students were insistent that these printed pages were only the first step, as an online collaboration was essential to engage new audiences.

Colleges and K-12 schools are invited to create online tributes to specific women on the designated dates, posting on social media while tagging with #NWA2026 and #MARCHofICONS. The 30 icons chosen are not a comprehensive list or intended to rank contributions to the environment. The students sought to identify “past, present, and future” contributors and wherever applicable, approached these icons’ alma mater schools to consider participating.

### **Catalyst Committee members**

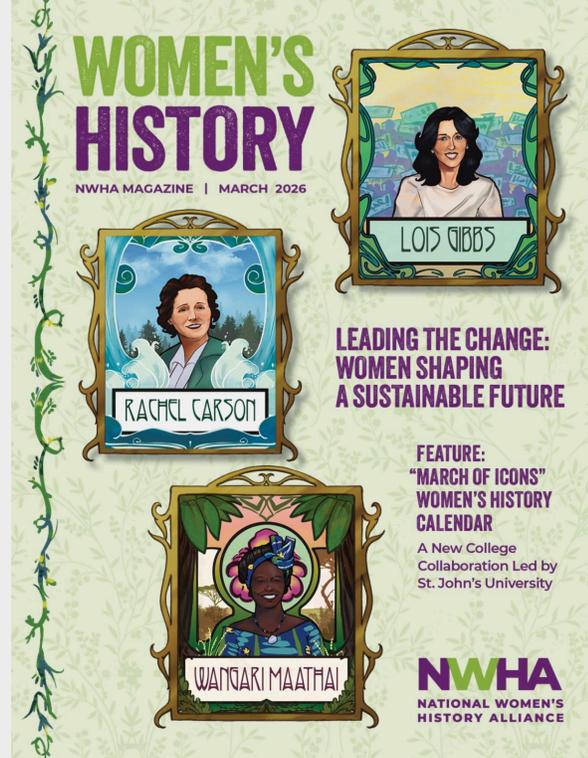
The Catalyst Project will be hosting a magazine release party and gallery exhibition featuring the striking portraits by St John’s University student Theresa Lovero. The event will be held on Wednesday, March 25 from 6pm--8pm at St. John’s East Village Due to capacity, invitations are extremely limited. Advanced copies of the magazine are available to media by request: **EMAIL HERE**.

### **Choose Theme for 2027**

The team also encourages supporters to vote for the 2027 National Women’s History Month theme throughout March 2026, so they can get started on next year’s project immediately. Voting details may be found on the **NWA homepage**.

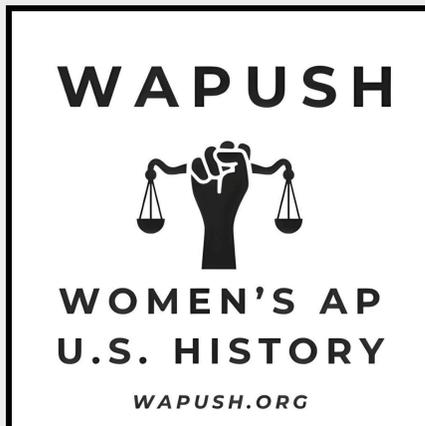
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## HELP PROMOTE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### Meet WAPUSH!



Women's History in High School, co-founded by high school teachers Kristen Kelly and Serene Williams, has a campaign for the first nationwide course on women's history. This course proposal is known as AP Women's U.S. History, also known as WAPUSH.

The campaign began after Kristen and Serene received a prestigious teaching grant from the Schlesinger Library at Harvard several years ago. After conducting research at the Schlesinger, they began a public facing campaign to create an AP Women's U.S. History course. This initiative has received significant support and even attracted the attention of the

College Board which runs the Advanced Placement program.

After meeting with executives from the College Board, they were told they need to collect 100 letters from universities willing to offer credit for the course; in addition, gather sample syllabi from comparable college courses, and collect 250 letters from high schools willing to pilot the course and finally, write a comprehensive course proposal. All of this work has been completed except for gathering the 250 letters. Serene and Kristen have collected 70 letters of support, **but still need 180 more in order to offer a course pilot.**

Visit the WAPUSH Website to Get Involved

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HISTORY MERCH**

**50% OFF ALL ITEMS IN  
NWHA ONLINE STORE.**

*(while supplies last)*

**50% OFF**

[Visit our Store](#)

From banners to PowerPoint to 2026 Women's History Magazines, find everything you need to showcase your celebration in style.

Included in the women's history kit:

- (24) March is Women's History Month balloons
- (25) Celebrate Women bookmarks
- (10) 2026 Women's History Magazine
- March is Women's History Month banner
- Women's History Tool Kit (free download)
- "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future" PowerPoint (download)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Women's History Month



### THE UNLADYLIKE PROJECT

A dynamic digital history initiative created with PBS's American Masters to highlight remarkable American women whose achievements were often overlooked by traditional history books. At the turn of the 20th century, many women who pursued careers, activism, science, or politics were criticized as being "unladylike" but they were pioneers in their fields, crossing barriers of race, class and profession. The project reminds us that progress depended on courageous women willing to expand horizons for future generations. Through engaging short documentaries and free educational resources, these are accessible histories of interesting and brave women.

[Visit The Unladylike Project](#)



## Alice Paul Center for Gender Justice

This year, the Alice Paul Center for Gender Justice is unveiling bold new initiatives to celebrate women's history month. As one of less than 3.5% of federally protected landmarks connected to women's history, we are committed to championing the stories of women

change makers like suffragist and Equal Rights Amendment author, Alice Paul. APC is based in Alice's childhood home and offers a wide array of historical programming, youth empowerment initiatives, and exciting events like our Women's Equality Day Festival on August 22nd. Our mission is to build contemporary action and intergenerational movement making for gender justice through the lens of history and place.

This March, we are excited to launch a new Patron platform, offering subscribers behind-the-scenes content from our archives and exclusive access to our Champions of Equality virtual webinar series. Champions of Equality bring historians, educators, and activists, from the past and present who have made an impactful contribution in the fight for gender equality to your screen for a virtual presentation and conversation. If you want to learn more about the Alice Paul Center and ways to support our work, check out our website! [www.alicepaul.org](http://www.alicepaul.org)

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### Other Women's History Month websites

The Zinn Education Project promotes and supports the teaching of people's history in classrooms across the country [www.zinnedproject.org/news/womens-history-month](http://www.zinnedproject.org/news/womens-history-month)

### Resources for Women's History Month: Teaching with the Library Blog Roundup



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National Women's History Alliance is a non-partisan, non-profit registered 501(c)(3) whose mission is dedicated to advancing women's history in education, fostering empowerment, championing equality, and promoting inclusion.

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\*Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok land

We acknowledge that the land in Santa Rosa, CA, is the traditional, ancestral territory of the Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok peoples, who have stewarded it for thousands of years.

[www.nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org](http://www.nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org)

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