

# Rock County Equity Brief

March 2023

## OBSERVE

### *National Women's History Month*

Women's History Month began as a local Santa Rosa, California celebration. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978. The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement spread nationwide as other communities initiated their Women's History Week celebrations the following year. In 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians—led by the National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance)—successfully lobbied for national recognition. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1980, as National Women's History Week. Subsequent Presidents continued to proclaim a National Women's History Week in March until 1987, when Congress passed Public Law 100-9, designating March as "Women's History Month."

#### March Day(s) Group, Culture or Cause Recognized

All Month	Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
All Month	<a href="#">Greek-American Heritage Month</a>
All Month	<a href="#">Gender Equality Month</a>
All Month	<a href="#">Irish-American Heritage Month</a>
All Month	<a href="#">Ethnic Equality Month</a>
All Month	<a href="#">National Women's History Month</a>
8	International Women's Day
8	United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace
14	<a href="#">Pi Day</a>
15	Equal Pay Day
25	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade



**For more information on Women's History Month:**

<https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/womens-history-month>



## RECOGNIZE

### *Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson*

Amelia Boynton Robinson was a civil rights pioneer who championed voting rights for African Americans. Amelia Boynton's earliest activism included holding Black voter registration drives in Selma, Alabama, from the 1930s through the '50s. In 1964, she became both the first African American woman and the first female Democratic candidate to run for a seat in Congress from Alabama. Amelia was honored as a special guest at President Barack Obama's State of the Union address in January 2015. In March of that year, at the age of 103, Boynton Robinson held hands with President Obama as they marched alongside fellow civil rights activist Congressman John Lewis across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to mark the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery march.

Source: <https://www.biography.com/activists/amelia-boynton>

# LEARN

## Local YWCA History

In 1905, a group of prominent Janesville women met at the home of Miss Sue Jeffris to form a YWCA. At the time, however, the national YWCA would not establish a local group in a community of less than 25,000 people. Eventually, in 1921, local organizations, including women's organizations in Janesville, succeeded in forming the YWCA and received nonprofit status in September of 1922 – therefore, 100 years ago. As reported in the Janesville Gazette dated June 7, 1921, "The establishment of the YWCA here in 1921 was made possible through the effort of the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and the Janesville Gazette, combined with the efforts of all the women's organizations of Janesville. The support given the organization is evidenced in the report of the treasurer in which it was shown that 1,000 people donated \$19,010 for establishing and conducting the organization during the coming year."

The YWCA was first located in a rented space in the Janesville Gazette building on the third floor. Then in 1928, Mrs. Marian Leavitt donated her home at 420 Jackson Street near the Tallman House to the YWCA for its new headquarters.



Today, the YWCA continues its tradition of social service to women of the community. The YWCA acts as an advocacy group for women's issues in Rock County and is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Source: <https://www.ywcarockcounty.org/history-of-ywca-rock-county/>

# ACTION

**Take Action & Brush Up on Current Issues.** Where voices are absent, so is advocacy.

Current issue example: should female-only products be taxed? The argument is, of course more nuanced than just "Women are being taxed unfairly!" But, important to the conversation is that most states offer tax exemptions for essential products. Still, menstrual products don't make the cut. Menstrual products are tax-exempt in Minnesota, Illinois, and five other states on the east coast, and some states don't have sales taxes at all, so of course they aren't taxed there either. However, the question begged in this debate is who decided whether menstrual products were "essential products"? While they may not be for a man, women representatives may have a different perspective. Join the Tax-Free Period movement to learn if your state has a tax on menstrual care products and how you can join the conversation around this and other gender-based legislation. Not only do women pay more for everyday care products, but they also have the gender wage gap to fight. White women in the United States are paid 82 cents on the dollar compared to white men. Black women are paid only 62 cents on the dollar compared to white men, and Latinas only 55 cents. Where race and ethnicity intersect with gender, women's earnings fall in along that spectrum. Because of this pay gap, women have a harder time repaying loans, and they receive less in social services like Social Security benefits. To fight these modern-day discriminatory acts against women, visit the American Association of University Women's site for information.

## Support

### Women's Nonprofit Organizations

Whether you're passionate about saving the planet, closing the wage gap, or increasing access to women's health services, we guarantee there's a nonprofit organization working to keep women in the conversation. There are so many ways to get involved in nonprofits that are supporting women. While volunteering your time or making monetary donations are the two most obvious ways to get involved, simply participating in the conversation, sharing the organization's mission, offering your connections, or signing petitions are wonderful ways to make an immediate impact today.

## Support Woman Entrepreneurs

Women make up close to half of the U.S. labor market and, in 2019, over 35% of all women in the U.S. had completed a four-year degree or more. Yet, this achievement and representation do not translate proportionately to entrepreneurship. A study from 2016 concluded that women are about half as likely as their male counterparts to start a new business. In female-typed industries, such as retail and interpersonal care Only 7% of CEOs on the fortune 500 list today are female. Yet studies have shown that female leadership can create resilience in crisis. Despite extreme underrepresentation in the financial sector, for example, women-led banks received substantial praise in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and many even suggested that if women existed more in the industry, the crisis may have looked very different. In the last two decades, the number of female-owned companies increased 114%. Women-owned businesses generate \$1.9 trillion in revenue and employ 9.4 million people, which makes them an essential part of our economy. Increased opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the last two decades have yielded incredible results, promising that the evolution of capitalism could be rooted in women-owned and run businesses. Supporting women-owned businesses means lending your support to address some of the challenges. By supporting the women who contribute to our economic health, we chip away at walls that block more women from joining them.

## Listen to Podcasts

Podcasts are a great way to hear conversations about an array of topics you might not ordinarily encounter. They provide an informal commentary of the world around us.

While women make up about half of podcast listeners, headlines at the end of 2020 reported that only 21% of Top-Charting Shows Have a Female Host. So why does this matter, and what does it mean?

Of course, women-hosted podcasts can cover much-needed female-specific topics, but it's also important to have female voices on non-gendered topics.

Podcasts provide commentary and start conversations on the world as it exists today. It impacts how we think about the world, what issues we consider, and how much weight we give those issues when we are given a single lens to view them through.

Supporting women offering their voice to the public empowers more women to see their voices as a potential contribution to daily conversations. We want women to feel like important candidates for leading conversations, so celebrate the ones out there doing just that.

## Get to Know Women in Politics

Having representation in public service is important because women make up about half of the world's population. It's difficult, if not impossible, for public servants to understand fully and legislate on how to best provide for the needs of a population with a different lived experience. According to the United Nations, however, 119 countries have never had a woman leader. It's imperative that women have the resources and ability to run for any office. Like in business, leadership behaviors most often adopted by women have been shown to support the highest levels of resilience in crisis and post-crisis situations. Look no further than Jacinda Ardern's masterful handling of the Covid crisis in New Zealand or the leadership for the modernization of the U.S. climate response provided by women in the U.S. Congress.

The 117th Congress (the one we're living in as of 2021) has the most women between the House of Representatives and the Senate than ever before, but it's still nowhere near equal. Just 144 out of 539 seats are taken by women in Congress, and even less by women of color. This isn't reflective of the general population, and you'd think we would have made more progress in the hundred-plus years since 1916 when Jeannette Rankin became the first woman elected to Congress.

In 2020, the U.S. elected Kamala Harris as the first female Vice President. Get to know Kamala's journey to the White House and learn about your local women in politics.

Source: <https://growensemble.com/how-to-celebrate-womens-history-month/>

## Read Books by Woman Authors

Books are an important influencer for how we think about our society and culture now, and how we will reflect on it in the future. So, it's important that authors represent diverse perspectives, offering a full-picture commentary on how the world works. Over 80% of the most popular novels were written by men. Of course, the exclusion of women historically in the industry certainly influences this dominance. In this realm, women have made a lot of progress in recent decades. The NY Times bestseller list is one way of tracking disparities in literature. In 30 years, female authors went from accounting for 25% of books on the Best Seller List to about 48%. Still, a stark gender gap still exists depending on the genre of book we consider. For example, 94% of the best-selling business books were written by men. The power of storytelling transcends language and borders. This month, celebrate literary works by women who encourage you to step out of your comfort zone or guide you as you dive deeper into your interests.

# BRIEF RECAP: February 2023

## OBSERVE

### Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.



**Marcia Anderson**

## RECOGNIZE

### Marcia Anderson

Marcia Anderson Growing up in Beloit, Anderson says that her grandmother and mother were the greatest influences in her life. On October 1, 2011, Marcia Anderson made history when the United States Army Reserve promoted her to major general during a ceremony at Fort Knox. She was to be stationed in Washington D.C. as the third highest ranking officer in the Army Reserve. She was the first African American to achieve this rank.

## LEARN

### Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Craig

An article dated February 11, 1941, was published in the Beloit Daily News, entitled, “First Negro Family Came to Beloit in the Late Thirties.” Reverend Hermes Zimmerman, an African American pastor of one of the local churches in Beloit, compiled and submitted historical information on early “colored” families in Beloit. “Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Craig were the earliest colored people to settle in Beloit in the late 1830s..

# TRAINING

## *Rock County DEI Training*

All employees must complete two DEI training per year. There are a variety of diverse topics and training formats provided to all employees. Please note that one of the trainings must be from the County DEI list to fulfill your County DEI requirement, and one training **can** be from a community partner or outside DEI training (if it meets the DEI training requirements). New employees are only required to participate in one equity training within the year of their hire.

## *FAQ's*

*How can I check my training completion status or submit outside training certificates?*

Email all questions and submissions to - [equity@co.rock.wi.us](mailto:equity@co.rock.wi.us)

*When is the last date to submit 2023 training information?*

December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023