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# THE DAILY BEACON

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Happy Women's History Month!

For those who do not know, March has been celebrated as Women's History Month since 1995 in the United States. President Jimmy Carter, in 1980, originally declared a weeklong celebration of women's history to affiliate with International Women's Day, celebrated annually on March 8. The week evolved into a month after Congress passed Public Law 100-9, in 1987, commemorating the month of March for women's history. The United States continues to be the only country in the world that dedicates an entire month to women's history. But many countries in the world do celebrate International Women's Day, a worldwide holiday established in 1910.

Both events commemorate all women in the world from the big and recognizable names to the everyday woman. All have contributed to the strides made concerning women's rights and gender equality. To quote President Jimmy Carter, in his address to the nation after declaring March 2-8, 1980 as National Women's History Week, he proclaimed:

"Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength, and love of the women who built America were as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well".

Although a lot of progress has been made, there is still more work that needs to be done. For instance, there are over 5,000 statues spread throughout the United States that serve to honor and memorialize the efforts of the individual. But a disparity exists between the

number of statues honoring male figures versus female figures. The National Endowment of the Humanities, an independent federal agency, recently estimated that less than 400 statues are dedicated to women. This imbalance is especially prevalent in the urban areas of New York City and Washington D.C.

While more statues of female figures should not be erected on the sole basis of them being women, it is indicative of us as a society that what we decide to enoble is implicative of our values. It is important to remember that representation in the public sphere is crucial. An amplification of this topic in society has been spurred by the publication of scientific studies and news articles. In which, they state the associated benefits and need for diverse media portrayals because children and adults alike internalize the facets of their surroundings on a subconscious level. So not having adequate depictions of female leaders and pioneers could reinforce gender roles and stereotypes.

This one example is just beginning. Around the world, women have gained a bigger platform to voice their concerns and have a say in society's affairs. But despite having the most legal rights than ever before, women still have only three-fourths the amount of rights that men do, on average. This number is significantly lower in regions where women have had greater challenges in the fight for equal rights. Although a lot of progress has been made, a fact that should not be overlooked, there are often hidden elements in our society that sustain the system of inequality. This idea is denied by some, but the statistics do not lie.

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The desire for change is spearheaded by the feminist movement. Feminism is now a mainstream topic, with around 61% of American women claiming the title of feminist and stating that it "describes them well". While the word 'feminist' is not as taboo as it once was, it still does carry some negative connotations. This is a result of the term becoming politicized, carrying a radical, extremist undertone and encouraging the polarization of groups, rather than the reunification of them. The original goal of the feminist movement, when it was first founded in the 19th century, was to provide greater opportunities for women. Since the movement's establishment, it has come and gone in surges (referred to as waves). Today, feminism is often declared to be intersectional, meaning the movement takes into account the relationship that exists between social classifications (such as race and ethnicity, gender identity, socio-economic class, etc.). Feminism has become a catch-all term for the push toward equality amongst underrepresented groups.

As you may know, I am the editor-in-chief of Ablaze Magazine, a student-run feminist magazine on campus. This past year, we implemented a rebranding campaign to mark the metamorphosis from Honey to Ablaze Magazine. I am honored to be the leader of such an empowering organization that allows us to spotlight issues that predominantly affect women and accentuate the efforts of inspiring female figures in our community. In particular, I would like to highlight the work undertaken by members of the magazine. Without their commitment, Ablaze Magazine would not be possible.

It is promptly fitting that I publicize the efforts of my team given that the theme for National Women's History Month is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories". The National Women's History Alliance proclaims this theme to honor women "who have been active in all forms of media and storytelling

including print, radio, TV, stage, screen, blogs, podcasts, and more". I am proud to announce that Ablaze Magazine is expecting to release our first print publication this May. More details will be released soon, but in the meantime check out our work on our website and social media pages.



Sydney Burzynski  
Editor-in-Chief of Ablaze Magazine