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Past and Present: Important Women in Leadership Roles

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Past and Present: Important Women in Leadership Roles

By

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Abstract Page

Women as leaders is not a new concept. History shows us how many women accomplished wonderful things; current day news shows us how many women are still accomplishing wonderful things. With the past and the present, we should expect our future to be even more dominated by women. This paper takes a look at the women that have showed up for the world in many different ways, and gives a brief look into their lives. Some of the women are very well known, some have stayed under the radar and not as recognized. But the one thing that they all have in common is they had one goal in common- to do great things and achieve great things.

***Women belong in the all the places where decisions are being made.” Ruth Bader
Ginsburg***

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Introduction

Gender roles are constantly changing with the times. There used to be a time when males were expected to play certain roles in businesses and women had other roles. When those roles were switched up, it was frowned upon or the employees were not treated equally. Today, we expect that all genders can become educated and perform any job they desire. A leadership role should be no different and all genders should be treated the same without discrimination on the gender. However, women are still not represented in the world as leaders as strongly as men are. Also, in our current times gender is no longer a simple thing. When considering how gender plays a role in leadership positions, you also have to take in the fact that some individuals identify as transgender, or non-binary. While all genders are can be great leaders, this paper is to teach about women leaders in the past and present and what they have done for not just our county but some for other countries and they will continue to do today and in the future.

This paper will go into detail and the many lives of these female leaders and the importance they have on history and the future.

What is a leader?

Before we get into women as leaders and what to expect, we need to discuss what a leader is, what makes a great leader, how great leaders become who they are. Some people are just born with the qualities of being a leader, while others learn later in life how to become a leader. The definition of a leader is someone who inspires passion, motivates followers, they are someone with a vision and the path to realize it,

and ensures their team has support and tools to achieve their goals (Watters, 2022). The most common definitions of leadership involved motivating others toward the achievement of a specific goal and leading organizational change (Mckinsey, 2022). A leader empowers their team members to embrace their own unique leadership qualities and act with independently accountable passion. And they inspire and motivate their teams to maintain long-term progress and excitement toward achieving their goals (Watters, 2022.). Leadership is perhaps the single most important issue in the human sciences (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Leadership is about the performance of teams, groups, and organizations. Good leadership promotes effective team and group performances (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Finally, personality predicts leadership, who we are is how we lead, and this information can be used to select future leaders (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

When talking about leadership roles, most people automatically assume leadership in places of employment such being CEO, manager, or other top titles in companies and businesses. But leadership roles can take place in so many different situations. There are leaders in sports, such as coaches and trainers. Boy Scouts and Girl scouts have leaders. In churches, you have different types of leaders including the preachers, the youth leaders, etc. We have the President, the Vice President, and other people in the government. The list can go on and on where leadership roles are needed. And when discussing those different places that need leadership, it is important to understand that all genders can fill those roles.

Leadership Styles

Another important part of leadership with any gender, is the leadership styles. Leadership styles can also be talked about when it comes to women leaders and which type if any they tend to use. The most common used styles of leadership are autocratic, bureaucratic, transformational leadership and laissez-faire

Autocratic leadership is the most common one used. With Autocratic leadership the manager retains as much power and decision-making authority as possible (Khan et al., 2015). The manager does not consult employees, or are they allowed to give any input. Employees are expected to obey orders without receiving any explanations. This leadership style has been greatly criticized during the past year for having higher turnover rates than other types of leaderships (Khan et al., 2015). Some advantages of autocratic leadership are good control, youth laws, rules give security, everybody knows what is expected of them, no discipline. However, the disadvantages of autocratic is defiance, listlessness, no trust, no self-confidence, talents are not recognized and fear turns into aggression (Khan et al., 2015).

Bureaucratic style is defined as a system of management that follows hierarchy and is considered the most effective style (Ullah, 2022). Some features of bureaucratic structure are obligation of rules and regulations and demonstration of impartiality (Ullah, 2022). This leadership style is the preferred style of leadership. Democratic leadership can produce high quality and high quantity work for long periods of time. Many employees like the trust they receive and respond with cooperation, team spirit, and high morale (Ullah, 2022). Some advantages of using democratic leadership are self-sufficient, easy to compromise, motivating, freedom of opinion and equal rights. Some

disadvantages include time consuming and difficult for the leader, and very dependent on age.

Transformational Leadership style is the approach that inspires and causes changes in individuals and social systems. Transformational leadership is characterized as developing, intellectually stimulating, and inspiring followers to transcend their self-interests for a collective purpose of vision (Duan et al., 2017). Transformational leaders are future-oriented, they tend to intellectually challenge followers' perspectives and assumptions about work and expect followers to provide alternative views to understand the work situation (Duan et al., 2017).

Laissez-Faire leadership style is the type of leadership that lets people do what they want and manage their own desk and they are very hands off. Laissez-Faire leadership is one in which the manager provides little or no direction and gives employees as much freedom as possible. All authority or power is given to the employees and they must determine goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own (Ullah,2022). Some advantages of Laissez-Faire leadership styles are freedom to choose, no burdens on team members, some independence and own social structure. Disadvantages would be misuse of rules, unsatisfied minorities, resignation, and no initiative (Ullah, 2022).

There are have many studies done and researched done, studying which type of leadership styles women uses versus which type men prefer. One article state that women prefer the bureaucratic style, while men preferred autocratic leadership. There are also studies done that show women do not lead differently than men. But according the majority of the studies, women are considered transformational leaders. The reason

women are considered mostly transformational leaders is because women tend to be inspiring and are able to be persuasive when change is needed. Women leaders are able to bring out the best in people in the situation that they are in which is an attribute that is needed.

Stereotypical Leadership Roles for Women

It is easy to stereotype genders and what roles they should play in the world. Men are well known as CEOs of companies, presidents of banks, president of the country, district managers. Outside of business and political roles, men are more known than women as being coaches of sport teams, scout leaders, youth leaders at churches and preachers. Some of the women leadership roles are thought of as principles in schools, owners of childcare centers, or charge nurses in hospitals. But these stereotypes are not necessarily true. Women can be CEOs, presidents, have important role in the government. They can coach sports teams, be scout leaders, youth leaders and if the religion allows it, they can be ministers at their church. The female leaders discussed in this paper, will cover many different positions but all considered leaders of their generation.

Why is it Important to Have Women Leaders

Women leaders is something that has been fought for, for so many years. When women become leaders, they provide a different set of skills and imaginative perspectives. More importantly, female leaders bring structural and cultural differences to the table, which drive effective solutions. This creative standpoint and unique sense of awareness will also allow them to study and uncover the finer details that may go unnoticed by

others (10 Reasons Why, 2023). The article 10 Reasons Why list 10 reasons why it is important to have women leaders. Those reasons are the following:

1. Woman leaders will paint the future (10 Reasons Why, 2023). Once woman take leaderships job and crush their goals, younger generation will see that and be inspired to be a leader which will grow the numbers of female leaders.
2. Unique transformational ideas will be brought to the front (10 Reasons Why, 2023). Women are known as transformational leaders, and transformational leaders have been shown to build skills amongst members which demonstrates positive influence.
3. The enhancement of teamwork (10 Reasons Why, 2023). Woman are able to make bold decisions as leaders and this helps teamwork boosts across the organizations.
4. Woman demonstrate superior leadership values (10 Reasons Why, 2023). This is based on a study that shows women are more honest than men, more creative and better communication.
5. Business wide communication can be enhanced (10 Reasons Why, 2023). Female leaders use communication skills to enhance conversations with employees.
6. Achieve a better financial outcome (10 Reason Why, 2023). Workplace gender diversity helps increase productivity, and creativity, improves performance and staff retention, and, as established, boosts collaboration throughout the business. In a workplace study, 21% of businesses are more likely to experience above-average profitability if the workforce is gender-diverse (10 Reason Why, 2023).

7. Fresh New Outlooks and Perspectives (10 Reasons Why, 2023). Women bring in new ideas, new skills, new perspectives.
8. Women leaders can provide better mentorships (10 Reasons Why, 2023).
Mentoring is something that is important for everybody no matter the age.
According to a study, 29% of women believe that their gender will be an obstacle to advancement. To overcome this obstacle, women in leadership positions can take this opportunity and begin empowering the bright young *minds* of the next generation.
9. The ability to wear many hats (10 Reasons Why, 2023). Women are capable of wearing many hats. They are great at switching roles when needed.
10. Women in leadership roles capable of closing any gender pay gap(10 Reasons Why, 2023). Something that can often be overlooked is that the gender pay gap can be transformed into a gender opportunity gap. It has been seen that when males and females start their progress from scratch, men are usually offered more opportunities leading to higher-paying positions.
However, employing more women in leadership roles can not only provide the benefits we've listed already but, instead, help achieve a wider goal and close the pay gap more effectively.

Strengths in Woman as Leaders

As a woman in a leadership position, there are many benefits. There are things that women can bring to any leadership role that other genders cannot. Most woman are just typically caring and motherly toward others naturally, which is a good

characteristic to have as a leader. According to Harvard review, women were rated as exceling in taking initiative, acting with resilience, practicing self-development, driving for results and displaying high integrity and honest.

Replicon.com listed 17 reasons why women make great leaderships. These 17 reasons are the following (Replicon.com 2021). Women value work life balance. Woman are great leaders because they are able to balance professional and personal leadership skills (Replicon.com 2021). It's easier to approach women leaders with a personal request or sensitive question. When a leader values the balance between work and life, they are more apt to allow for time off without repercussions when a child or another family member needs them at home to care for them. The leader that has those values are also going to be flexible, easier to compromise with. Those types of leaders make the employees, team or group feel less guilty about needing to prioritize family.

Women are more inclusive. They tend to be inclusive, reach out and care more (Replicon.com 2021). Leaders that are inclusive make sure that everybody feels welcome and included. When conducting a meeting, a leader that is inclusive will ask for everybody's thought or opinions. They will make sure every individual is being seen and heard. Being inclusive in a leadership role will also encourage others to be the best version of themselves because they know they are being valued.

Female leaders encourage free thinking. Our emerging workforce is not interested in command-and-control leadership. They don't want to do things because I said so; they want to do things because they want to do them (Replicon.com 2021). This upcoming generation is being taught in school by using creative teaching, teachers are allowing them to learn at their own pace, in a setting they choose that helps them

think such as sitting on a bouncy ball, laying on a rug, or using a standing desk. When they join the workforce, they will still be free thinkers and need to use their creative methods to be better employees. Allowing free thinkers, also has the benefits of getting ideas from individuals. Steve Jobs once said "It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do."

Women are empathetic (Replicon.com 2021). Being an empathetic leader is beneficial because it shows support from your leader. The leader will make you feel understood and will create trust between the leader and the individuals, group, or employees. An empathetic leader is an active listener, and has a genuine interest.

Women focus on teamwork (Replicon.com 2021). A strong leader that focuses on teamwork is a powerful leader. The reason this makes a powerful leader is because in most situations, events, jobs or other things, teamwork is needed to be successful. Team works also allows for everybody to share ideas and thoughts.

Women are good at multi-tasking (Replicon.com 2021). Multi-tasking as a leader is necessary because there will be people coming to you for many different things, needing answers, wanting help, and you will have to be able to multi-task all of that. Plus, leaders will have to multi-task working and family life.

Women are creative problem solvers motivated by challenges (Replicon.com 2021). A leader that has the skills that allow for creative problem solving, will be able to come up with so many different answers to problems. And a leader that is motivated by challenges will be able to keep calm and not let stress flow over to their team.

Female leaders are said to have the strongest communication skill (Replicon.com 2021). Communication is one of the best strengths someone can have in any situation

including relationships. Having leaders that are strong communicators will be able to keep a team together, because if you are communicating then there won't be any questions on what is needed or expected. A leader that is a strong communicator will be able to be open to communication from others.

Women leaders dream big (Replicon.com 2021). A big dreamer makes a strong leader, because they are not afraid to make changes that are needed or try new things to see if they will work. A leader with big dreams can take a company to big places.

They handle crisis well (Replicon.com 2021). When a leader can handle crisis well, they will be able keep stress levels down with their team. And they can also build up trust by showing how they handle crisis.

Women wear many hats. They have different roles to play at work and at home and they do them all well (Replicon.com 2021). A leader that can wear hats, is useful and good at multi-tasking. It's always a plus to have a leader who can fill in anywhere they are needed.

Female leaders are able to keep their ego in check. Women exhibit egos differently (Replicon.com 2021). Some leaders have egos and let that get to their head, those are the leaders than don't take what other's think into consideration. A leader that is able to keep their egos in check, will be able to get opinions from others.

They have high emotional intelligence. Woman have the ability to recognize emotions in themselves and others. As a leader, there will be many emotions coming for many different people. If a leader has the ability to recognize these emotions, they will be able to help them sort through those and keep them in check.

Women leaders are flexible. Women make great leaders because they can see the direction, they thought they needed to take isn't working and can come up with another plan (Replicon.com 2021). Being flexible as a leader is also needed because you never know what is going to be thrown at you and you have to be able to accept things.

Females lead by examples (Replicon.com 2021). A leader that leads by example is so important. They should be able to show what is needed or how something needs to be done. It also shows that the leader takes their role responsible.

Women make their jobs look effortless (Replicon.com 2021). A leader who can make their job look effortless, is a leader that cares about their job. They are not complainers, they do the jobs assigned to them, and they leave their worries at home.

They defy odds (Replicon.com 2021). A woman leader that defies all odds is a leader that has fought to get to where she is and essentially paved the way for other women to go far in the leadership world.

Some other characteristics that are not mentioned in the Replicon article are listed below. Strong women leaderships are open minded and tend to see other angles of a situation. Strong women are respectful of others, they also trust their instincts, and women make equality a reality (Karten, 2022). Also, women make great leaders because women tend to be more *transformational* leaders — meaning that they seek to develop others and listen more effectively, in addition to generally thinking more outside-the-box than their male counterparts (Agaragimova, 2022). Women also have what is considered “soft skills” and are better at using those skills than men. Those skills are emotional intelligence, empathy, listening skills, coaching and mentoring, and creativity

(Agaragimova, 2022). Women are also seen as more compassionate and enthusiastic in general and those women who are full of compassion and enthusiasm will pour that over into their work. When a team or group or just an individual is being led by somebody that is “filling their cup” with compassion and enthusiasm, they will work harder, perform better and just show up a more willing person. Women that fill each other cups up, support each other, hold each other up are encouraging to each other to be a stronger person and leader. These are some of the great things about women that foster their ability to be a good candidate for a leadership role.

Challenges Women Face

"No human being is immune to adversity or personal setbacks." — Hillary Clinton

All leaders will face challenges in the workplace. That is typical for no matter what gender you are because being a leader means you are responsible for the people that you are leading or guiding. However, women face certain challenges that others may not face. These are just some of the disadvantages that women may face in the workplace as leaders. The first one is unconscious biasness (Botwin, 2019). This can be anything from a belief in gender stereotypes to subconscious attitudes about female capabilities. Bias can also manifest as preferences for women that act, speak, and dress in certain ways (Botwin, 2019).

Another challenge or disadvantage is unequal pay. Although the gender pay gap of the 1990s is narrowing, women in executive positions still earn between 8% and 25% less than male executives in comparable positions (Botwin, 2019). Women also face lower (or different) expectations than their male counterparts (Botwin, 2019).

Women also face many barriers that they are expected to break through to be successful in a leadership position. In the last 50 years, professional women have jumped huge hurdles in the corporate world, advancing into top leadership positions even with the odds stacked against them. Nevertheless, persistent barriers regularly delay and obstruct their success (Stkate.edu,2021). A commonly used term is “Breaking the Glass Ceiling”. The glass ceiling effect is defined as an unofficial barrier to opportunities within an organization or company preventing a protected class of workers, particularly women, from advancing to higher positions (Elmuti et al., 2009.).

Some of those barriers are sexism, less assertive when seeking promotions and as mentioned above biases. With sexism the challenge is sexual harassment, inequitable work environments, and subtler forms of sexism place a huge burden on professional women working toward their goals. For example, when professional women constantly get interrupted or mistaken for administrative assistants at board meetings, it takes a mental toll that can stall their progress (Stkate.edu,2021). Women are less assertive because women tend to use less assertive tactics when trying for promotions. Biases are a barrier for women because employers tend to interpret men’s assertive behavior in the workplace as strong, commanding, and direct, but when women display the same assertiveness, their employers often see them as aggressive, pushy, and shrill (Stkate.edu, 2021). Another challenge females can face in a leadership role in a place of employment, is that if the team they are leading include men, there is a chance that those men will not take the woman as serious as leader or turn to another man of authority in the office for help.

Another barrier is the relationships many women have with their mentors, bosses, and female co-workers. Most employees tend to bond through similar interests. Since there tend to be few executive women; many women are unable to find a female mentor. Studies show women are inhibited in the workplace because of their limited access to capable mentors. Many people prefer to have mentors of the same gender because they tend to understand the challenges most commonly faced (Elmuti et al., 2009.). Women also have the challenge of having to still take on the role as the main caregiver in their family, coordinating family schedules, and taking care of any issues that may arise while being in a leadership role. Even though a strength that women have is being good at multi-tasking, having to do both can still be challenging. Women are also still seen as not being tough enough to take on a leadership role. That is a disadvantage because if they are wanting a leadership role in a place of employment, there may be hesitation to hire a woman candidate if they think she is not tough enough to handle the job.

Even with all these challenges, disadvantages and barriers, there are still women out there Breaking the Ceiling, crushing goals, running businesses and just showing how capable they are. There are women in history that have set the standards high for the women of today, and the present woman leaders are setting the standards even higher for women of the future. Those women are an important part of our history, our present times and of course our future. The leadership positions these women hold or have held widely vary anywhere from the first women in Congress all the way to present day women leading other women through sports.

Women Leaders in History

“Women belong in the all the places where decisions are being made.” Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Cleopatra VII

69 BC - August 30, 30 BC

One of the most famous female leaders and rulers is Cleopatra VII (Shims, 2022). She was the last active pharaoh of Ptolemaic Egypt, from 51 B.C to 30 B.C (Shims, 2022). Cleopatra was the last series of rulers called Ptolemies who had ruled for nearly 300 years. Her father died in 51 BC and Cleopatra became the co-regent with her brother Ptolemy XIII. While she was ruler, Egypt became the richest nation and the last to stay independent from the Roman Empire. Cleopatra was very intelligent and knew between five to nine languages. She was known to be a chemist, philosopher as well as a mathematician. She used charisma and communication skills to be a successful leader.

Wu Zetian

February 17th, 624, AD – December 16, 705 AD

Wu Zetian was one of the most famous female leaders in the history of China. She ruled the country as Empress from 690 to 705, during the brief Zhou Dynasty (Shims,2022). Wu Zetian had great leadership skills that earned her respect from her advisers and subjects. She was born on February 17th, 624 to a wealthy aristocrat family. Her father was a high-ranking minister. Most girls her age was not given a well-rounded education, but Wu Zetian was given an education. She was a very intelligent girl, and she knew about politics and government. To obtain the title of Empress, Wu

Zetian killed her own infant daughter. Empress Wang was fond of children, and Wu's newborn daughter provided Wu an opportunity to eliminate the empress. Shortly after Empress Wang had played with the baby, Wu killed her own infant daughter and blamed the murder on Empress Wang. Gaozong believed this and soon dismissed his empress and promoted Wu Zhao to the position; she immediately put Wang and Xiao to death and exiled their relatives and supporters (Lee, 2015). During her reign, Empress Wu accomplished things such as expanding the border of China by conquering new lands in Korea and Central Asia. She also helped peasants by lowering taxes and improving farming. She was a successful leader because she was an effective political and military leader.

Joan of Arc

c.1412 -May 31st 1431

Joan of Arc, nicknamed the Maid of Orleans, was a French heroine who claimed she had received visions from the Archangel Michael. This famous female leader helped the French army lift the siege of Orleans, and led them towards many more victories (Shims, 2022) When Joan of Arc was a child, she was not taught to read or write. When she was about 16, her voices she heard in head began urging her to aid France's dauphin (crown prince) and save France from the English attempt at conquest in the Hundred Years' War. Joan of Arc was a courageous servant leader.

Queen Victoria

May 1819 – January 1901

Queen Victoria was Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and England from June 20, 1837 until her death in 1901. Queen Victoria was born in 1819 and was

just 18 years old when she was crowned. Her reign is known as the Victorian era, which was a period of cultural, scientific, industrial, political, and military change. During Queen Victoria's reign, the British Empire doubled in size, and she was exercising some influence over foreign affairs, as well as striving to keep peace (Shims, 2022). Queen Victoria married her cousin in 1842 and after a couple years of marriage, she became a submissive wife and allowed him to be king in all ways, except for the title. When her husband died, she was so grief stricken that she stayed in a mourning period until her own death. She did not return to the public eye until 1872. She was known for keeping business and government separate during her rule. She was ambitious about increasing the quality of life for the citizens and to do so she headed voting, housing projects. Other ways to increase quality of life was educational development, working class welfare support and the abolition of slavery. Queen Victoria is reported to be a Laissez-Faire leader because she was able to place her trust in others and select good advisors compatible with her style.

Rosa Parks

February 4th 1913 – October 25th, 2005

Rosa Parks was an African-American civil rights activist. She became famous on December 1st, 1955 when she refused to give her bus seat to a white passenger. She was arrested for civil disobedience, but her action led to the Montgomery bus boycott. Rosa Parks has been nicknamed the first lady of civil rights; her act of defiance became an important symbol for the civil rights movements against the black racial segregation (Shims, 2022). After the arrest, Rosa was terminated from her job and her husband had to resign. They both relocated permanently to Detroit, Michigan. US house

representative John Coyer offered Rosa a job as secretary in his Detroit office following his election. Rosa stayed in that position until her retirement in 1988. In 1980, Rosa teamed up with The Detroit News and the Detroit Public School System and formed the Rosa L. Parks Scholarship Foundation. It remains active today. Parks also created the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development in 1987 alongside Elaine Steele. That also remains active and holds up her legacy as well. Rosa Parks was considered a transformational leadership. Parks' place in the history of the civil rights movement has been recognized and honored by the nation. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996, as well as the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999, for her role in the civil rights movement (Shims, 2022). Transformational leadership involves challenging the status quo, and encouraging others to think creatively. Rosa Parks' leadership was not verbal, but through her actions, she stimulated a string of creative and new ways to address the problem of segregation (Unknown, 2010).

Margaret Thatcher

October 13th, 1925 – April 8th, 2013

Margaret Thatcher was a British politician who was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990, as well as the leader of the Conservative Party from 1975 to 1990. She was the first woman to become Prime Minister of Britain. She was nicknamed the Iron Lady for her leadership style and her uncompromising politics. A controversial figure, this famous female leader was known for the destruction of Britain's traditional industries, and the privatization of public transport and social housing (Shims, 2022). Thatcher was born in politics with her father being the Mayor of Grantham.

Margaret Thatcher was intelligent and studied chemistry at the University of Oxford. She was active in politics while in college and president of the university Conservative Association. After college, she was a research chemist and then specialized in tax law. In 1959, Margaret Thatcher was elected Conservative MP of Finchley. In 1970, she was appointed Shadow Spokesperson for Education. Thatcher was known as an autocratic leader, taking on most of the decision-making skills herself.

Indira Gandhi

November 19th, 1917 – October 31st, 1984

Indira Gandhi was the third Prime Minister of India, from 1966 until her death in 1984. A powerful leader, she was one of the most famous Indian women known for her political intransigency and her centralization of power. In addition to going to war with Pakistan and leading India into the nuclear age, she helped her country overcome chronic food shortages and reliance on imported grains, to finally achieve its goal of food security (Shims,2022). Indira's father was Prime Minister of India and Indira spent a large part of her time acting as hostess and traveling companion for her father in the wake of her mother's death. This caused estrangement in her marriage to Feroze Gandhi. Indira Gandhi's leadership style is considered autocratic.

Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu

August 26th, 1910 – September 5th, 1997

Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu, MC, better known as Mother Teresa was as a Roman Catholic nun who devoted her life to serving the poor and destitute around the world. She spent many years in Calcutta, India where she founded the Missionaries of Charity,

a religious congregation devoted to helping those in great need. St. Mother Teresa taught order school for 17 years in Calcutta. Mother Teresa found her call within her call in 1946 which was to devote her time to the sick and poor. A hospice was formed by St Mother Teresa called Nrmal Hriday. This place was where sick could go to die with dignity. The Padma Shri is the highest civilian honors in India was awarded to Mother Teresa in 1962, for her work done with the people of India. Pope Paul awarded St. Mary Teresa first Pope [John XXIII](#) Peace Prize in 1971. In 1979, Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and became a symbol of charitable, selfless work. In 2016, Mother Teresa was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church as Saint Teresa (Tikkanen, 2023). Mother Teresa was considered a transformational leader because of her selflessness acts and her influence on others to be the change needed in the world. She was charismatic, and inspired people to help people less fortunate than themselves.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

March 15, 1933 – September 18, 2020

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, also known as RBG, is a Brooklyn Native that taught at Rutgers University from 1963 to 1972. She was the first woman to be tenured at Columbia University's Law School. President Bill Clinton appointed her to the court in 1993. Prior to becoming a federal judge, she was a lawyer for the ACLU and a member of its board of directors (Hudson, 2020). RBG graduated from Cornell in 1954 with a bachelor's degree and earned high honors in Government. After Cornell, she went on to Harvard Law School. While at Harvard, Ginsburg was one of only 9 women in a class of 500 students. She often faced gender discrimination and was asked to explain how she

felt about taking a spot in the program instead of a man. Ginsburg and her female colleagues were called on in class for “comic relief” and they were even excluded from using certain sections of the library. Ginsburg transferred to Columbia Law School in 1958 for her final year (Alexander, 2020) After graduation, it was hard for RBG to find work mostly because she was a female Jewish mom. From 1959 to 1961, she took a position as a law clerk for Honorable Edmund L Palmieri. Her next employment was a year as a research associate for the Columbia Law School Project on International Procedure. In 1963, Ginsburg began as a Professor of Law at Rutgers University School of Law and taught classes until 1972. She also became involved with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and she was central to the founding of their Women’s Rights Project in 1971(Alexander, 2020). Ruth Bader Ginsburg was the first women to receive tenure. RBG received tenure when she returned to Columbia Law School in 1972. During 1980, she was appointed as the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia by Jimmy Carter. She served for thirteen years until taking her seat as Supreme Court Justice in 1993. President Bill Clinton nominated her for the position and she accepted. Ruther Bader Ginsburg was passionate about fighting for woman’s rights and gender equality. She worked with Former President Barrack Obama in 2009 on gender equality pay. At the age of 87, she was still fighting for gender equality. As a leader, Ruth Bader Ginsburg possessed all the qualities of a transformational leader.

Katherine Graham

June 16th, 1917 – July 17th, 2001

Katherine Graham was the first women CEO in a Fortune 500 company. She was also one of the first female publisher a US Newspaper. Graham attended college at Vassar College from 1934 to 1936 and then went on to graduate from University of Chicago in 1938. Graham went to work as a reporter for the San Francisco News after college, but left there to take the position as the editorial staff of the Washington Post. Graham led *The Washington Post* from 1963 to 1991, seeing it through its groundbreaking publication of the Pentagon Papers and the Watergate scandal. This move helped establish the *Post* as one of the most esteemed journalistic institutions in the world (Hurwitz,2023). Katherine Graham won a Pulitzer Prize for her autobiography. She chose her family in 1945 and gave up her career. Her husband became the publisher of the Post in 1946. In 1963, her husband died by suicide and she took on the position of presidency of the Washington Post Company. That is when the Washington Post became known for its aggressive investigative reporting (Tikkanen, 2023). Katherine Graham's leadership style was very hands-on.

Wilma Mankiller

November 18th, 1945 – April 6th ,2010

Wilma Mankiller was the first woman to be Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. During her decade-long chieftom from 1985 to 1995, tribal enrollment grew, infant mortality dropped, and employment rates doubled (Hurwitz,2023). Wilma Mankiller was born in Oklahoma and grew up without electricity, indoor plumbing or telephones. She had to move during the relocation of the tribes to California. Mankiller became a social activist when she relocated to San Francisco. She was a social activist that confronted the injustices that Native Americans face. She joined the protest at

Alcatraz Island alongside other Native activists. They wanted the U.S. government to listen to their demands, such as reversing the termination bills and providing a cultural center and school on the island for Native Americans. She worked alongside Richard Oakes, a Mohawk Native American activist, to claim Alcatraz Island in the name of Native Americans of all tribes. The protest brought international attention to Native issues and lasted for 19 months (Ramirez, 2020). Mankiller spent her life leading, writing, and teaching people about Native American cultures, especially the Cherokee people. Wilma Mankiller was nationally recognized as the MS. Magazine Woman of the Year in 1987. In 1993, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. In 1998 she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton. She died in 2010, leaving a legacy of community-oriented policies that have served as a model for other tribal nations (Ramirez, 2020).

Constance Baker Motley

September 14, 1921 – September 28, 2005

Constance Baker Motley was the first African American woman to serve in the New York State Senate and was the first black female federal judge. Motley won significant civil rights victories in the U.S. Supreme Court (Hurwitz, 2023). Motley attended all-Black Fisk University in Nashville and then transferred to NYU. During the Second World War, she started at Columbia School of Law. The only way Constance Baker Motley was able to attend college was because a wealthy white philanthropist paid for education after becoming impressed by her intelligence and academic talent. Motley joined the NAACP after being denied entrance to the local skating ring and beach. After college, she got a job as a staff lawyer at NAACP. Motley's major

responsibility during the years when her colleagues were intensely focused on the steps leading to the 1954 and 1955 school desegregation decisions was a series of ambitious housing discrimination cases in Shreveport, Louisiana; Savannah, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; and Detroit, Michigan. Only the Detroit public housing case was in any way successful (Meltzer, 2022). Constance Motely won 9 civil right cases that she argued in front of the U.S Supreme Court during the 20-year period she served as staff member and associate counselor. Motley's leadership style would be deemed as informational.

Jeannette Rankin

June 11, 1880 – May 18, 1973

Jeannette Rankin was the first woman elected to Congress. Rankin graduated in 1902 from University of Montana. She also attended the New York School of Philanthropy and the Columbia School of Social Work. She started a career in social work in 1909. In the year 1916, Rankin was the first woman to take seat in Congress when she was elected to the U.S House of Representative. She introduced the first bill that allows women citizenship independent of their husbands. While in Congress, she made a decision to vote against U.S. participation in World War I and World War II. After her election in 1916, was quoted saying "I may be the first woman member of Congress, but I won't be the last (Hurwitz,2023). Rankin was recruited to head up the Women's Peace Union in 1929. She advocated for progressive issues like federal funding for prenatal care and anti-child labor laws (Blakemore,2017).

Marie Curie

November 7th, 1867 – July 4th, 1934

Marie Curie was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize and is the only woman that won that award twice (Hurwitz,2023). Curie was a highly intelligent child with an exceptional memory that won her a gold medal in secondary school. However, due to her father's bad investments causing a loss of money, Marie had to take a teaching job and not able to finish her education. After saving up her money from teaching, she paid for her sister to follow her medical studies to Paris in exchange that her sister would pay for her schooling after she started her career. Curie moved to Paris in 1891 to follow the studies of Paul Appell, Gabriel Lippmann, and Edmond Bouty at the Sorbonne. Marie Curie won her first Nobel Prize in 1903 for physics. She won her second Nobel Prize in 1911 for chemistry. Curie discovered the elements radium and polonium which became monumental in research for cancer treatment and cures. She also created portable X-ray machines (Hurwitz,2023). Both Curies were constantly ill from radiation sickness, and Marie Curie's death from aplastic anemia at the age 66 was likely caused by radiation exposure. A few of her books and papers are still so radioactive that they are stored in lead boxes (Unknown 2018).

Madeleine Albright

May 15, 1937 – March 23, 2022

Madeleine Korbil Albright was the 64th United States Secretary of state in 1997, but the first female U.S Secretary of State. She attended college at Wellesley and graduated in 1959. She then pursued her master's degree at Columbia University in 1968 and received her Ph.D. in 1976. After college, she worked for President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser named Zbigniew Brzezinski. After her nomination was unanimously confirmed by the Senate, she was sworn in on January 23, 1997.As

secretary of state, Albright pursued an active foreign policy, including the use of military force to pressure autocratic regimes in Yugoslavia and Iraq, among other troubled regions (Onion et al., 2018). When President Clinton's term was over, Albright left her seat in the government and created the Albright Group which was a consulting firm located in Washington, D.C.

Maya Angelou

April 4th, 1928 - May 28, 2014

Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Ann Johnson but is know to the world as Maya Angelou. She lived with her grandmother following her parents divorce, but briefly went back to live with her mom around the age seven. During this time, Maya Angelou was raped by her mother's boyfriend. The trauma of this caused her to be mute for six years. After the incident, Maya went back to live with her grandmother. Maya Angelou had great love for written word and the English language. She wrote many essays, journals and poetry. She really enjoyed Shakespeare and Poe. When war broke out Maya applied but was rejected for her connection to California Labor School. She then tried to get employment as a streetcar conductor, but she was turned down due to her race. However, that didn't stop Maya and she continued to apply until she got a job. She became the first African American female to be a street car conductor. In 1959, she became active in the civil rights movement.

These are just some of the women that are well known in history for making changes and being a leader in different ways. There are several more that have paved the way for females to become remarkable leaders. These women of history worked hard, just like the present women do and just like future women will do.

Famous Present Day Women Leaders

We still have a long way to go for men and women to be equals in leadership positions, but there are some exceptionally important women today that have taken on leadership roles in business, governments, and other organizations. Some of those women that are making changes and showing leadership to others are discussed below.

Kamala Harris

Vice President of the United States

Kamala Harris is the first female and the first female of color to become the Vice President, which should give all young girls the inspiration to know that they really can anything that want to be. Kamala Harris graduated from Howard University and the University of California, Hastings College of Law. Harris attended Howard University, the prestigious historically Black college in Washington, D.C. She majored in political science and economics (KIM & Stanton, 2020). Harris passed her bar in 1990 and joined Alameda County prosecutor's office as an assistant district attorney. As an assistant district attorney, she focused on sex crimes. In 1994, Vice President Harris joined the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board and the Medical Assistance Commission. After being recruited to the San Francisco District Attorney's office by a former colleague in Alameda, Harris cracked down on teenage prostitution in the city, reorienting law enforcement's approach to focus on the girls as victims rather than as criminals selling sex (Kim and Stanton, 2020). In 2003, she ran for District Attorney and was elected which gave her the privilege of becoming the first black woman District Attorney in California. Her refusal to defend Proposition 8 (2008), which

banned same-sex marriage in the state, helped lead to it being overturned in 2013. In the year 2015, Harris announced she was running for Senate seat. She won the 2016 race, and took seat in 2017. She was the first Indian American and the second black female in that position. Kamala Harris joined the 2020 presidential campaign, but had to drop out in 2019 due to her campaign being in serious trouble. In October of 2020, President Joe Biden chose Kamala Harris to be his Vice President running mate. In November of 2020, she became the first black woman to be elected vice president.

Condoleezza Rice

Former U.S. Secretary of State.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice is the first woman and first African American to serve as provost of Stanford University. In 2001, Rice was appointed national security adviser by President George W. Bush, becoming the first African American woman (and woman) to hold the post, and went on to become the first Black woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State (Editors, 2021). Condoleezza Rice was raised in the south in Birmingham, Alabama. There she was exposed to racism from an early age. Rice's early life led her to the political path she went down. She originally thought she wanted to be a classical pianist, but turned to political science once she started college. Condoleezza Rice earned a bachelor's degree in political science in 1974 from the University of Denver. She went on and got her master's degree from the University of Notre Dame in 1975, followed by her Ph.D. in 1981 from the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver. After earning her well-deserved degrees, she had a very active career life. Condoleezza Rice served as a special assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a member of the national Security Council and a special assistant to the president for

national security affairs. During her time in the George W. Bush administration, Secretary Rice oversaw foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly in regard to the war in Iraq. She also aimed to curtail the continued rise of nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran. After her time in the White House, she split her time primarily between academic work and continued public advocacy (Masterclass,2022). Condoleezza Rice's leadership style is said to be transformational as she is a leader that leads by nurturing, motivation and influencing her staff.

Sandra Day O'Connor

Former Supreme Court Justice

Sandra Day O'Connor was an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1981 to 2006, and was the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court (Onion et al., 2018). Sandra Day O'Connor was known for being a moderate conservative, dispassionate, and meticulous in researching her opinions. She was a very intelligent young child and graduated high school two years early. She then went on to further her education and attended Stanford University at the age of 16 followed by being admitted to Stanford Law. She was smart enough to complete law school in just two years instead of the typical three years. Sandra Day O'Connor had difficult time finding a job in the legal field being a woman attorney. She started working as a county attorney in San Mateo without getting paid and after she proved her worth, she was able to get a job as the deputy county attorney. From 1954 to 1957, she lived in Germany working as civilian attorney for a site abroad for the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps. In 1957, she worked at her own private practice as an attorney for eight years. In 1969, Sandra Day O'Connor was appointed to the Arizona State Senate to fill a vacated seat.

In 1970, she kept that seat when she was elected to the State Senate for a full term as a Republican. She was reelected to that position twice, even serving as the first female majority leader in any state senate. She moved to her first position in the judiciary in 1975 after winning the election for a seat in the Superior Court of Maricopa County, and was appointed to the Arizona Supreme Court of Appeals four years later. She worked in the state supreme court for only two years before President Ronald Reagan nominated her in 1981 to become the first female justice to serve on the United States Supreme Court. She was unanimously approved by the Senate (Sandra Day O'Connor. (n.d.)). Justice O'Conner retired in 2006, but continued advocating for youth on being involved in civics and government.

Elizabeth Warren

U.S. Senator

Elizabeth Warren is the senior United States Senator from Massachusetts, serving since 2013. She is a member of the Senate committees on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP); Energy and Natural Resources; and the Special Committee on Aging (Gottlieb, 2021). Elizabeth Warren was an extremely intelligent child and was state debate champion. She graduated school at the age of 16. Warren attend college at George Washington University, but dropped out after two years. She then went on to graduate from college and was a speech pathologist. Her next career move was being law lecturer at Rutgers School of Law. After that Elizabeth Warren was a law professor at a few different colleges. In 1976, Elizabeth Warren began her research into bankruptcy and what caused. Her findings showed that bankruptcy was mostly middle-class families, or families that had piles of

medical bills. In 1995, Warren was invited to be a part of the new National Bankruptcy Review Committee. In 2011, Warren ran for senate in Massachusetts and was elected. In 2019, Elizabeth Warren announced her candidacy for 2020 presidential election, but suspended her campaign in 2020.

Nancy Pelosi,

Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Nancy Pelosi began her political career as a volunteer and gradually moved up the ranks, making the leap to public office in a special election for California's Eighth District in 1987. Pelosi went to college in Washington at Trinity College and studied political science. She became the first female Democratic leader of the House of Representatives and the first female speaker of the House (unknown,2021). Pelosi is one of the most consequential political figures of her generation (Ball, 2018). Her political career began when she was asked to take the spot on the city library's commission. Pelosi became active in California politics, raising money for candidates. She went on to chair the California Democratic Party and took a lead role in organizing the 1984 Democratic National Convention. She discovered a talent for assuaging the egos of powerful men even as she stood her ground against them (Ball,2018). During the leadership of Pelosi, the House passed the landmark American Clean Energy and Security Act. This act is a comprehensive bill to create clean energy economy, combat climate crisis and transition to America to a clean energy economy. Pelosi also passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in January 2009. This act is created to restore the ability of women and all workers to access the judicial system to fight pay discrimination.

Michelle Obama

Former First Lady

Michelle Obama is the wife of Former President Barack Obama. She was First Lady during the years 2009-2017. Mrs. Obama attended Chicago public schools until enrolling in Princeton where she studied sociology and African American studies. She graduated cum laude from Princeton in 1985 and received a law degree from Harvard Law School in 1988. She then joined the Chicago law firm Sidley & Austin, where she met her future husband, Barack Obama. Michelle Obama launched and led 4 key initiatives. Those are called Reach Higher, Let's Move, Joining Forces, and Let Girl's Learn (Unknown,2021). Reach Higher was created to inspire young people to charge of their future by continuing their education past high school and going on the complete a higher education. Let's Move! is a nationwide effort that brought together many people such as educators, celebrities, medical, and other leaders from the community to take on the challenge of childhood obesity. Joining Forces was created with Dr. Jill Biden for Americans to rally around and support service members, veterans, and their families. Let Girls Learn was launched to focus on adolescent girls around the and help them go to school. After her career at Sidley & Austin, the former first lady was an assistant to Mayor Richard Daley and was Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development for the City of Chicago. After that, she was the founding Executive Director of the Chicago chapter of Public Allies. As part of her continued focus on community service and engagement, Mrs. Obama joined the University of Chicago in 1996 as its Associate Dean of Student Services focused on fostering connections between the campus and

community. She also served as Vice President of Community and External Affairs for the University of Chicago Medical Center (unknown, 2021).

Hillary Clinton

Former First Lady

Hillary Clinton has accomplished many goals for women in politics, from becoming the first woman to win a major party's nomination for president to being the First Lady to win elected office (a seat in the U.S. Senate). Clinton also was U.S. Secretary of State under President Obama. Throughout it all, Clinton has fought for women's rights. Hillary Clinton was an intelligent young child and was the school leader when she was in school. She attended Wellesley College as an undergraduate. After that, she enrolled at Yale Law School. While attending Yale, Hillary Rodham Clinton served on the board of editors for Yale Review of Law and Social Action and met her husband there. As the nation's first lady, Mrs. Clinton chaired the Task Force on National Health Care Reform. Never before had a first lady been so directly involved in public policy. She led the fight to pass the Children's Health Insurance Program; worked to increase funding for research and treatment of cancer, AIDS, osteoporosis, and juvenile diabetes; chaired Save America's Treasures; and supported gun control efforts (Hillary Clinton, 2022).

Tammy Duckworth

Illinois Senator

Tammy Duckworth is the Illinois senator and retired National Guard lieutenant colonel. Duckworth was born in Bangkok and lived with her family in Thailand and Singapore, before moving to Hawaii when she only 16 years old. In Hawaii, she

graduated from the University of Hawaii. She then transferred to George Washington University and graduated with master's degree in international affairs. While at George Washington University, Duckworth joined the ROTC. Tammy Duckworth went on and joined the national guard, training as a helicopter pilot. In 2004, Duckworth was working on her doctorate and called in to active duty. She was sent to Iraq, where her plane was shot down and caused the loss of both legs. Duckworth received a purple heart for this. Tammy Duckworth had a list of firsts. She's the first Congress member to be born in Thailand, the first to give birth while in office, the first Asian American woman to represent Illinois' Congress, and the first woman with a disability to be elected to Congress. (Hurwitz, 2023).

Arianna Huffington

Founder of The Huffington Post

Arianna Huffington is known for being the Founder of The Huffington Post. The Huffington Post is a liberal website that offer commentary and news to help people make sense in the world (Twelve of The Most Influential Women In The World, 2021). When Huffington was 16, she moved to England where she earned her economics degree in social economics. Arianna Huffington was the esteemed debate society Cambridge Union. Arianna Huffington became very active in several progressive causes, the most notable one was her efforts to combat global warming. She is the perfect example of "what a man can do, a woman can do better" (Twelve of The Most Influential Women in The World, 2021).

Angela Merkel

Chancellor of Germany

Angela Merkel became Chancellor of Germany in 2005. Since then, she has run for three consecutive terms. Merkel's family relocated to Germany when she was just a tiny newborn. The family moved again to Templin in 1957 and Merkel graduated high school while in Templin in 1973. Merkel later graduated from Karl Marx University, where she studied physics and earned her diploma in 1977. She met her husband Ulrich Merkel at the university and got married 1977. Angela Merkel took a job as a member of the academic faculty at the Central Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Academy of sciences. Angela Merkel's leadership has been defined by how she overcame key moments of crisis (Twelve of The Most Influential Women In The World, 2021). Merkel has shaped both Germany and Europe's politics. When the world took a hit by recessions and stimulus packages, Angela handle Germany in a way that helped them flourish economically. Her tremendous accomplishments had made Angela Merkel top *Forbes'* list of the most influential women in leadership several times in a row. (Twelve of The Most Influential Women In The World, 2021).

Sheryl Sandberg

COO of Facebook

Sheryl Sandberg is the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook and has been since 2008. When Sheryl Sandberg landed at Facebook and became the company's COO, she almost single-handedly turned it around. Before her, Facebook was suffering a tragic loss of \$56 million. But under Sandberg's leadership, the social media behemoth improved and made up to \$22.1 billion in profits in 2018 alone (Twelve Of The Most Influential Women In The World, 2021). Sandberg also held the position as Google's Vice President of Global Online Sales and Promotions. Sheryl Sandburg became an

advocate for women to be more aggressive when it comes to joining the business world early in their careers. Also, Sheryl Sandberg has written a best-selling book titled *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. In Sandberg's early years she studied at Harvard University. She studied economics and received her bachelor's degree in 1991 and was named top student in economics. Sheryl Sandberg received her master's in business administration from Harvard in 1995. After graduating, she worked at the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. She later became chief of staff in the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C.

Oprah Winfrey

Media Executive, Television Producer, Actress, and Philanthropist

Oprah Winfrey gained popularity as a talk show host in 1986. The talk show ended in 2011. It was a long running talk show that featured celebrities, politicians, advisers and even just regular citizens. Oprah was known for giving away luxurious items to her audience members. She is a hardworking and deserves the name she has made for herself. She is genuine and kind, giving and fun. Oprah became the world's first black female billionaire and is now a diehard philanthropist (*Twelve of The Most Influential Women in The World, 2021*). Winfrey is an advocate for girls' education and her famous Oprah's Angel Network has raised over \$50 million for charitable causes (*Twelve of The Most Influential Women in The World, 2021*). In the younger years of Oprah, she lived with her mom in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and then moved to Nashville in her teens to live with her dad. Living with her dad, proved to be positive influence on Oprah. Oprah Winfrey started in college at Tennessee State University with a full ride scholarship. But she ended up leaving the university to chase her dreams of having a

career in broadcasting and successfully earned her degree in 1986. Winfrey joined the local CBS television station as a news anchor at the age of 19. In 1976, she became a reporter and co-anchor for the ABC news affiliate in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1977, she became cohost of the Baltimore morning show People Are Talking. In 1984, Oprah moved to Chicago to host the talk show Chicago Am. She later changed the name to the Oprah Winfrey Show and that was hugely successful talk show.

Christine Lagarde

President of the European Central Bank

Christine Lagarde is the head of the European Central Bank and also a politician. Before becoming the head of the European Central Bank, she was a French Lawyer. From 2007 to 2011 she was the finance minister in France and she was the first woman to hold that position. She was also the first female president of the European Central Bank. Lagarde's job as the president of the European Central Bank has not been easy during the pandemic, but she has managed to balance the Euro. Nevertheless, she has remained steadfast as one of the most influential women in leadership without relenting in any way. Time and time again, she has broken all stereotypes revolving around women in the banking industry (Twelve Of The Most Influential Women In The World, 2021).

Anna Wintour

Editor in Chief of Vogue and Artistic Dir

Anna Wintour is editor in Chief of Vogue and Artistic Dir. Wintour is considered one of the most powerful and influential women in leadership due to her contribution to the fashion industry. In 1966, Anna Wintour dropped out of North London Collegiate, but

just four years later she became fashion assistant for Harper's & Queen Magazine. In 1986, she served as an editor for British Vogue and as an editor in 1987 for House & Garden. In 1976, she became to the fashion editor at Harper's Bazaar and then took another leadership position at the New York Magazine. She became Chief Editor of Cond Nast-owned British Vogue and soon took over the role of Editor of American Vogue. Anna Wintour single-handedly revitalized the magazine and completely shifted the industry's entire approach to publishing (Twelve Of The Most Influential Women In The World, 2021).

Women CEOs of Fortune 500 Companies

As we talk about the women in history that were phenomenal leaders, present day leaders that are just as significant, women that are CEOs of fortune 500 companies also need to be mentioned. Fortune 500 companies have finally hit the 10% mark of woman in CEO positions. While, there is still a long road ahead to catch up to men in the Fortune 500 companies, 10% is no small victory. In 2023, five women began new jobs as CEOs (Chapman, 2023). This is a great achievement for these women, and should be celebrated by everyone. Those five women and their respected companies are listed below.

1. Maria Black- CEO of ADP
2. Stephanie Ferris – CEO of Fidelity National Information Services
3. Karla Lewis –CEO of Reliance Steel and Aluminum
4. Jennifer Parmentier – CEO of Parker Hannifin
5. Julia Sloat – CEO of American Electric Power

The following women are being listed as the top 10 Female CEO (G, 2022):

Mary T Barra

General Motors CEO

Mary T. Barra is CEO of General Motors (GM). Mary Barra studied at General Motors Institute and graduated with an electrical engineering degree. She completed her MBA in 1990 from Stanford Graduate School of Business (G, 2022).

Gail K Boudreaux

Anthem CEO

Gail K. Boudreaux was named CEO of Anthem in 2017. She attended school for her BA at Dartmouth College. Gail, then went on to complete her MBA at Columbia Business School in 1989. She worked at various healthcare firms in the US including Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois and UnitedHealthcare. She was appointed CEO of anthem in 2017(G, 2022).

Virginia M. Rometty

IBM CEO

Virginia M. Rometty became CEO of IBM in 2012. She attended Northwestern University from 1975-1979 on a scholarship from General Motors. She completed her bachelor's in computer science and electrical engineering. When she started at IBM, she was a systems engineer in 1981 and rose through the ranks until landing CEO job in January 2012. Virginia M. Rometty is proof that hard work, consistency, patience and perseverance will eventually pay off.

Marillyn A. Hewson

Lockheed Martin CEO

Marilyn A. Hewson became CEO of Lockheed Martin in 2013. She attended the University of Alabama not only her bachelor's in business administration but also her master's in economics. Marilyn Hewson also finished executive development programs at Columbia Business School and Harvard Business School. She held many positions over the years at Lockheed Martin such as industrial engineer, Senior Vice president of the Corporate Shared Services and became CEO in 2013. Lockheed Martin is the world's leading arms manufacturer, and American corporation in the aerospace, defense, security and technologies industry (G, 2022).

Corie Barry

Best Buy CEO

Corie Barry became the CEO of Best Buy in 2019. She earned her bachelor's degrees from the College of St. Benedict in accounting and management. In 1999, she began her career at Best Buy. Barry has held several different jobs at Best Buy in the operational and financial roles across the organization, in 2016, she became the CFO and in 2019 she became CEO (G,2022).

Safra A. Catz

Oracle CEO

Safra A. Catz became the CEO of Oracle in 2014. She is originally from Israel, and moved to the U.S in 1961 at six years old. In 1983, she earned her J.D from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1986. Safra Catz joined Oracle in 1999, becoming a board member in 2001, and replacing founder Larry Ellison as CEO in 2014 (G, 2022).

Phebe N. Novakovic

General Dynamics CEO

Phebe N. Novakovic became the CEO of General Dynamics in 2013. She was born in Pennsylvania but is of Serbian descent. Novakovic attended Smith College in 1979 and received her bachelor's. After that she received her MBA from the Wharton School in 1988. Phebe Novakovic worked at General Dynamics for 12 years before becoming CEO in 2013. Prior to this she had a rich and diverse career history, including a stint as a CIA operative (G, 2022).

Susan Patricia Griffith

Progressive CEO

Susan Patricia Griffith became the CEO of Progressive in 2016. Susan "Tricia" Griffith studied at Illinois State University for her undergraduate degree and then completed an advanced management program at The Wharton School. Griffith joined Progressive in 1988 as a claims representative, rising through the ranks before being appointed CEO in July 2016(G, 2022).

Heyward Donigan

Rite Aid CEO

Heyward Donigan became the CEO of Rite Aid in 2019. Donigan attended the University of Virginia and received her bachelors of Arts in English. She also holds a Master of Public Administration from the New York University. She worked in the healthcare industry for 30years. Before becoming CEO of Rite Aid in 2019 she was president and CEO of Sapphire Digital (G, 2022).

Kathy J. Warden

Northrop CEO

Kathy J. Warden became the CEO Northrop Grumman in 2019. She earned two degrees. One was a bachelor's degree from James Madison University in 1992. The second degree she earned an MBA from George Washington University in 1999. Warden is an expert in information technology and cybersecurity. Her jobs prior to Northrop included General Electric, Veridian Corporation and General Dynamics. Kathy J. Warden joined the Northrop Grumman in 2008, serving as vice president of the company's cybersecurity business before being appointed as CEO in 2019(G, 2022).

Women Leaders in Sports

Another group of women that are worth mentioning as great leaders, is women leaders in the sports world. Sports are still thought of as being dominated by men, so these women deserve the acknowledgment to show everybody how they shine. They have put in the hard work to achieve their goals in a mostly male dominated world of sports. The following includes women that are considered great leaders in their time and in their sport(s) and a brief description of each of those important women.

Ronda Rousey

MMA Fighter

Ronda Rousey is a well-known name in the MMA world. Her nickname is "Rowdy" and she has come out as one of the biggest stars in MMA. She is known for her penchant for trash-talking her opponents before brutally submitting them with her trademark armbar (Lee, 2014).

Kelli Master

Sports Agent

Kelli Masters is a sports agent and as a female sports agent, she is in the minority. Masters is a graduate of University of Oklahoma College of Law. In 2000, she began a career as a business litigation attorney. After five years, she became a partner and shareholder at her firm. Eventually Kelli Masters, started working sports law and began representing Olympians via Kelli Masters Management in 2004. Her first big NFL client didn't happen until 2010 when she signed Oklahoma defensive tackle Gerald Mccoy (Lee, 2014). Kelly Masters Management now represents 24 athletes.

Tyler Tumminia

SR VP of sports firm

Tyler Tumminia is involved in the sports world by having a career as a senior vice president of a sports and entertainment consulting and management firm called Goldklang Group. That firm owns four minor league baseball teams and a collegiate league team. She transitioned from a career in financial services and high-tech public relations at the age of 26, accepting an internship with the Hudson Valley Renegades. Six weeks after Tumminia begged for a shot as an intern, the team named her director of community relations, and less than a year later she joined the Goldklang Group (Lee, 2014). Tyler Tumminia is also one of the most sought-after public speakers in the country.

Maria Sharapova

Russian tennis Pro

Maria Sharapova is one of the top women in sport as a Russian tennis Pro. Sharapova has built a brand and marketing empire on the strength of winning a career Grand Slam (the Australian, French, and U.S. Opens and Wimbledon). Currently, Sharapova is ranked as the ninth-best female tennis player in the world by the WTA (Lee, 2014).

Rita Benson Leblanc

Manager of New Orleans Voodoo

Rita Benson Leblanc has a Bachelor's of Science in agribusiness from Texas A&M. Her grandfather is the majority owner of the New Orleans Saints and New Orleans Pelicans. Rita Benson Leblanc has been involved in the family business since she was just in high school. In 2003, she took over management of the Arena Football League's New Orleans Voodoo, which were also owned by her grandfather, and eventually became the AFL's top executive. Today, LeBlanc is the vice chairman of the board for both the Saints and Pelicans (Lee, 2014).

Stephanie McMahon

WWE

Stephanie McMahon is the daughter of WWE Chairman and CEO Vince McMahon. Stephanie graduated college in 1998 from Boston University with a degree in communications. She started out at WWE sales as an account executive in 1998 and got promoted from executive vice president to chief brand officer in 2013. In keeping with tradition, McMahon's corporate role has also been written into various WWE storylines, dating back to 1999. During the early years, Stephanie McMahon tried various jobs within WWE. She did reception work, creative designing and took parts in

the matches. She then became director of creative writing in 2002 and senior vice president in 2006. In recent years, she's been a fixture on Raw, making frequent appearances on the program and using the media to push storylines forward the rest of the week (Lee, 2014).

Danica Patrick

NASCAR Driver

Danica Patrick is a well-known role model in the sports world. Patrick is a NASCAR driver who won the 2008 IndyCar Series. Although, that is the only race she has won in her nine-year career, she is the most successful, influential woman in the sport's history (Lee, 2014).

The list of women that have made a difference in the world of sports by being splendid leaders, could go on for so long. Therefore, the women discussed here was just a small part of the sports world. In the world now, women are becoming more than just "soccer moms, they are coaching the players or participating in other ways as well while wearing the soccer mom title.

Conclusion

After many hours spent digging, reading and writing, it is time to wrap up this paper. All of these women discussed are remarkable women. They have done their best to set up a successful path for future women. I hope the young generation of women, take the time to research these people, to uplift them as well as encourage them to set high goals and never be afraid breaking the class ceiling and being the first or even second in anything they want to be. These examples of women who have cleared a path for future women are just some of the women all around the world that have

accomplished many important things. There are so many more women that have led others and taught others. Without these women shining bright, the future would be dull for so many. Young girls have remarkable women to look up to. Those same young girls, who think to themselves that they can't achieve something because it is a "man's job", can take comfort in knowing that they are capable of reaching any goal they set their mind too. These leading women are an extraordinary role models for not only females around the world but also males. They have taken risks, some have put themselves at risk, just to achieve goals that they set. The goals they achieved are ones that are expected to be easy for men and impossible for women, yet women have stepped up and crushed those goals. One day we can change the statistics and have more women CEOs, more women in the government and more women in other heavily men populated leadership roles.

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