



# Women in Leadership

# Women Shaping Culture

Increasingly, women are taking the helm in the art and culture world to shape the narrative, preserve heritage and drive cultural innovation.

These include the often-overlooked administrators of the arts world, leaders who create space for artists and others to thrive. They range from museum directors and curators to cultural influencers.

Museum leadership has historically been dominated by men, but women are breaking through the glass ceiling and steering institutions toward new horizons. Kaywin Feldman, the first female director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., has been instrumental in expanding the institution's outreach and accessibility.

Under her guidance, the museum has embraced digital initiatives, making art accessible to a wider and more diverse audience.

Similarly, Thelma Golden, director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem, has been a trailblazer in promoting contemporary African American art. Known for her curatorial vision, Golden has played a pivotal role in showcasing the work of emerging and established Black artists, contributing to a more inclusive and representative art world.



CHUCK KENNEDY/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

First Lady Michelle Obama talks with Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden during a tour of the Studio Museum in Harlem, in New York, Sept. 21, 2011.

Curators play a crucial role in shaping museum collections and exhibitions, and women are making significant strides in this arena. Paola Antonelli, senior curator at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, has been a driving force behind exhibitions that explore the intersection of design, technology and culture. Her innovative approach has positioned MoMA at the forefront of contemporary art discourse.

Beyond traditional museum

spaces, women cultural influencers are leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscape. Amanda Gorman, the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history, captured the world's attention with her powerful words during the inauguration of President Joe Biden. Her poetry, which often addresses issues of identity, race and social justice, exemplifies the transformative power of art to inspire change.

In the realm of literature, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,

an acclaimed Nigerian author, has enriched the literary world with her novels and become a prominent cultural influencer. Her TED Talk, "We Should All Be Feminists," has sparked global conversations about gender equality, cementing her status as a leader shaping cultural narratives.

Women in the arts and culture sector are leading institutions and fostering a more inclusive and diverse representation of voices. Their

influence extends beyond traditional boundaries, reaching into the realms of technology, literature and social activism.

These leaders are catalysts for change, advocates for inclusivity and architects of a cultural landscape that reflects our global society. Through their leadership, they inspire the next generation of women to take their place at the forefront of the arts and cultural sectors, ensuring that the narrative continues to evolve and resonate with diverse voices.



# Women Help Shape Tech

The technology field has traditionally been male-dominated, but an increasing number of women are breaking barriers, making significant contributions to technological advancements, software development and the broader industry.

Women are helping shape the future of tech through their ingenuity, leadership and groundbreaking innovations.

One such trailblazer is Dr. Fei-Fei Li, a renowned computer scientist and professor at Stanford University. She helped establish ImageNet, a dataset that helped computer vision advance in the 2010s. As the co-director of the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Lab, she has played a crucial role in advancing machine learning techniques and computer vision applications, contributing to the development of intelligent systems that can perceive and understand the world.

In software development, Grace Hopper's legacy looms large. An iconic figure in computer science, Hopper was a pioneer in the development of programming languages and played a pivotal role in the cre-



Saujani

GOVERNOR TOM WOLF FROM HARRISBURG, PA/ WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Hopper

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ation of COBOL (Common Business-Oriented Language). Her groundbreaking work laid the foundation for modern software development, and she is often credited with popularizing the term debugging.

The world of cybersecurity has witnessed the rise of women leaders like Parisa Tabriz. Known as Google's "Security Princess," Tabriz is a vice president of engineering at Google and leads the company's Project Zero, a team focused on finding and fixing security vulnerabilities. Her work has been instrumental in enhancing the security of Google's products and services.

In the field of robotics, Dr. Cynthia Breazeal is making remarkable strides. As the co-founder and chief scientist of Jibo Inc., she is a pioneer in social robotics, developing robots that can interact with humans in a natural and intuitive manner. Jibo closed in

2017, but Dr. Breazeal continues to work with robotics and artificial intelligence. Dr. Breazeal's work exemplifies how robotics can enhance various aspects of our daily lives, from education to healthcare.

The tech industry has also seen the rise of women entrepreneurs like Reshma Saujani, the founder and CEO of Girls Who Code. Dedicated to closing the gender gap in technology, Saujani's organization provides educational opportunities for young girls to learn coding and computer science. Her advocacy has inspired thousands of young women to pursue careers in technology, fostering a more inclusive future for the industry.

The gaming industry, often criticized for its lack of diversity, is experiencing positive shifts with leaders like Jade Raymond. As a veteran in the gaming world, Raymond has been instrumental in the creation of popular game franchises. Her leadership at Electronic Arts (EA) and Google Stadia has contributed to the development of immersive and diverse gaming experiences. She left EA and Google Stadia in 2021 and founded her own company, Haven Studios, which was bought by Sony in 2022 and is a first-party developer for PlayStation Studios where she continues to contribute to the gaming industry.



# Breaking Boundaries

In the traditionally male-dominated arena of sports, a cohort of women has emerged, shattering stereotypes and pushing boundaries as coaches, administrators and executives.

One of the prominent figures in sports leadership is Russian-American basketball coach Becky Hammon. Hammon made history as the first full-time female assistant coach in the NBA, becoming an assistant coach for the San Antonio Spurs, a role she held from 2014 to 2021. Her expertise and contributions to the team challenged preconceptions about gender in the basketball world. In 2021, she was hired as the head coach of the Las Vegas Aces for the WNBA. In 2023, she was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

In the realm of soccer, Sarai Bareman, chief women's football officer at FIFA, has been a driving force for the global development of women's football. Bareman has played a pivotal role in advocating for gender equality in the sport, implementing initiatives to increase female participation, and elevating the profile of women's football on the international stage.

Nadia Nadim, a professional



soccer player and sports surgeon, is another inspirational figure. Born in Afghanistan, Nadim sought asylum in Denmark after her father was executed by the Taliban and went on to become a professional soccer player for the

Danish national team. She pursued a medical career, exemplifying the multidimensional capabilities of women in sports.

On the administrative front, Cathy Engelbert, commissioner of the Women's National

Basketball Association (WNBA), has been a catalyst for change. Under her leadership, the WNBA has undergone significant transformations, including the negotiation of a groundbreaking collective bargaining agreement that priori-

tizes the well-being and compensation of female athletes.

In the world of sports refereeing, Sarah Thomas made history as the first female official to officiate in a Super Bowl. Her journey as a football official in the National Football League (NFL) reflects the growing acceptance of women in traditionally male-dominated roles within the sports industry.

Beyond the field, Kim Ng, general manager of the Miami Marlins, is a groundbreaking figure in baseball. Ng shattered barriers as the first female general manager in Major League Baseball (MLB), challenging stereotypes and inspiring a new generation of women to pursue leadership roles in professional sports.

Amy Trask was the former CEO of the Oakland Raiders, becoming the first female CEO in the National Football League (NFL). Her tenure with the Raiders spanned over two decades, during which she played a pivotal role in the team's business operations and garnered a reputation for her astute negotiation skills. Trask's resilience and strategic acumen made her a respected figure in a traditionally male-dominated field. Trask is an accomplished author, television analyst and a fervent advocate for diversity and inclusion in sports.

The legacy of these trailblazing women will continue to shape the future of sports, ensuring that the playing field remains open to everyone, regardless of gender.

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# Emily's List Lifts Women

Emily's List, founded in 1985, is dedicated to advancing the representation of women in elected offices.

Founded by Ellen Malcolm, the organization has played a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape by supporting pro-choice Democratic female candidates across the United States.

The mission of Emily's List is succinct: to break down barriers and provide a platform for women to achieve success in politics. The acronym "Emily" stands for "Early Money Is Like Yeast," emphasizing the organization's strategy of providing early financial support to female candidates to help their campaigns rise. This commitment extends to candidates who champion issues related to reproductive rights, health care, education and social justice.

One of Emily's List's primary functions is to fundraise for female candidates. By mobilizing a substantial donor network, the organization channels financial support to campaigns at critical stages, allowing candidates to build a robust foundation for success. This early financial backing often proves instrumental in helping women overcome the hurdles of fundraising challenges that historically hindered female candidates.

The effect of Emily's List is



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US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Malcolm

evident in the multitude of women it has helped elect to various levels of government.

Over the years, the organization has been instrumental in electing hundreds of Democratic women to positions ranging from local offices to the U.S. Congress. This success has significantly contributed to the diversification of voices and perspectives in American politics.

In addition to financial support, Emily's List provides resources and services to equip female candidates for success. This includes strategic guidance, training programs and access to a network of experienced political oper-

atives. The organization aims to address the systemic barriers that women often face in political campaigns, fostering an environment where female candidates can thrive and compete on an equal footing.

Emily's List also plays a crucial role in endorsing candidates. This endorsement serves as a badge of approval, signaling to voters and other stakeholders that the candidate aligns with the organization's values and mission. The endorsement process involves a rigorous evaluation of a candidate's stance on key issues,

viability and commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of women.

As the landscape of American politics evolves, Emily's List remains at the forefront of efforts to break gender barriers and promote diversity in representation. Through its multifaceted approach of fundraising, training and endorsing, the organization continues to contribute significantly to the increasing number of women leaders who are shaping policy decisions and legislation across the nation.

# Margaret Chase Smith

Margaret Chase Smith, born on Dec. 14, 1897, in Skowhegan, Maine, is celebrated for her groundbreaking achievements and unwavering commitment to public service.

As the first woman to serve in both houses of the U.S. Congress, her legacy extends far beyond her historic milestones, encompassing a career marked by integrity, bipartisan cooperation and a steadfast dedication to the principles of democracy.

Smith's journey into politics began with her election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1940, succeeding her late husband, Clyde H. Smith. In this role, she quickly distinguished herself as a principled and effective legislator. Her early political career foreshadowed the leadership qualities that would later define her tenure in the Senate.

However, it was in the U.S. Senate that Margaret Chase Smith would etch her name into the annals of American history. Elected to the Senate in 1948, she became the first woman to serve in both chambers of Congress.

Throughout her 24 years in the Senate, Smith was a consistent advocate for civil



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK - STILL PICTURES/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

rights, championing legislation aimed at combating racial and gender discrimination. Her commitment to equality was not confined to legislative efforts; she also broke gender barriers within the Senate, proving that women could be effective and influential leaders on the

national stage.

One of Smith's most notable moments came in 1950 when she delivered her "Declaration of Conscience" speech on the Senate floor. In this courageous address, she voiced her concerns about the rising tide of McCarthyism, condemning the tactics of Senator Joseph

McCarthy in pursuing alleged communists. Smith's speech emphasized the importance of political integrity, individual responsibility and the preservation of democratic values — an act that garnered both admiration and criticism but solidified her reputation as a principled stateswoman.

Smith's legacy extends beyond legislative accomplishments to her pivotal role in foreign affairs. She served on the Senate Armed Services Committee, where she focused on national security issues during a critical period in U.S. history, including the Cuban Missile Crisis and the early years of the Vietnam War. Her expertise and measured approach contributed to a bipartisan understanding of complex global challenges.

Smith's political career culminated in her historic bid for the presidency in 1964, making her the first woman to seek the nomination of a major party. While she did not secure the nomination, her candidacy further shattered gender barriers and paved the way for future generations of women in presidential politics.

Smith retired from the Senate in 1973, leaving behind a legacy of principled leadership and advocacy for equality. From then until 2021, she was the longest-serving Republican woman in the Senate.

In recognition of her contributions, Smith was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1989, underscoring her enduring significance in the nation's history.

She died in 1995 at the age of 97, the last living U.S. senator who had been born in the 19th century.

In a career marked by firsts, Smith's contributions to civil rights, national security and political integrity remain a testament to the transformative power of principled leadership.



# LaDonna Harris

LaDonna Harris, born on Feb. 15, 1931, is celebrated for her unwavering advocacy for Native American rights and her historic run as the vice-presidential candidate on the Citizens Party ticket in the 1980 United States presidential election.

Harris, a proud member of the Comanche Nation, has dedicated her life to advancing the rights and opportunities of Native Americans. Despite being married to U.S. Senator Fred Harris, she was denied entry into the Junior League of Oklahoma because of her Comanche heritage. This inspired her, in 1970, to co-found Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO), an organization committed to fostering positive change for Indigenous communities. Through AIO, Harris has championed various causes, addressing issues such as education, healthcare and tribal sovereignty.

While in Washington, D.C. with her husband, she created a course called “Indian 101” and, at the request of President Lyndon B. Johnson, taught it to Congress members, something she continued doing for 30 years.

The year 1980 marked a significant moment in American



MARION COUNTY, OREGON, PUBLIC DOMAIN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

political history as LaDonna Harris joined the Citizens Party as its vice-presidential candidate, running alongside presidential nominee Barry Commoner. Her candidacy was groundbreaking, bringing

attention to the concerns of Native American communities and providing a platform for environmental and social justice issues.

Throughout the campaign, Harris emphasized the impor-

tance of grassroots activism, inclusivity and the need for diverse voices in shaping the nation’s policies. While the Citizens Party did not achieve electoral success, Harris’s candidacy left an enduring effect

on the political landscape, paving the way for increased awareness of Indigenous rights and representation.

Beyond her political pursuits, Harris’s influence extends to her role as an educator, author and speaker. Her commitment to preserving Native American cultures and traditions is evident in her efforts to bridge understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Harris’s advocacy has helped challenge stereotypes and raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by Native Americans.

In recognition of her contributions, Harris received numerous accolades and honors. Her legacy in Indigenous rights advocacy and as a political pioneer continues to inspire activists, scholars and leaders across the country.

As a Comanche woman who has navigated the intersection of her cultural identity and the American political landscape, Harris exemplifies resilience and determination. Her life’s work underscores the importance of recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples, and her advocacy has contributed to a broader dialogue on inclusivity and justice in American society.

Harris remains a vital force for positive change, breaking barriers and advocating for the rights of Indigenous peoples. Her legacy is one of courage, leadership and a commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive nation for all.



# Mary Louise Smith

Mary Louise Smith made history as the first female chair of the Republican National Committee.

Born on Sept. 7, 1914, in Eddyville, Iowa, Smith's journey into politics began in the grassroots, reflecting her commitment to public service and the Republican Party.

Smith's political involvement intensified during the 1950s when she became actively engaged in Republican women's organizations in Iowa. Her dedication to the party's principles and her effective organizational skills quickly garnered attention. In 1974, she was elected as the national committee-woman for Iowa, setting the stage for her historic ascent within the GOP.

In 1974, amidst a climate of political change and a growing emphasis on inclusivity, Smith made history by becoming the first woman to chair the Republican National Committee. Her leadership role was not only groundbreaking but also came at a crucial juncture for the Republican Party. As chair, she played a pivotal role in steering the party through a challenging period, marked by the aftermath of the Watergate scandal and the resignation of President Richard Nixon.

Smith's tenure as the RNC chair, from 1974 to 1977, was characterized by her unwavering commitment to party unity and rebuilding trust with the American electorate. Her leadership style emphasized transparency, ethical governance and inclusivity. During her chairmanship, she worked diligently to increase the representation of women and minorities within the party, fos-



JACK KIGHTLINGER/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

President Nixon in the Oval Office greeting Republican National Committee officials Mary Louise Smith, co-chairman, and George H. W. Bush, chairman, on March 25, 1974.

tering an environment that welcomed diverse voices.

Smith demonstrated a commitment to social progress through her activism, particularly in the realm of LGBTQ+ rights. While the Republican Party traditionally leaned conservative on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, Smith advocated for a more inclusive stance. She actively supported efforts to broaden the party's perspective on LGBTQ+ issues, encouraging a more tolerant and accepting approach. Although her advocacy was met with resistance within some conservative circles, Smith's dedication to expanding the party's inclusivity laid groundwork for future dis-

cussions around LGBTQ+ rights within the GOP.

Smith championed women's rights. Her commitment to gender equality was not confined to party lines, and she worked to create opportunities for women across the political spectrum. Smith's influence extended beyond her chairmanship, inspiring subsequent generations of women to pursue leadership roles in politics.

In recognition of her pioneering efforts, Smith received numerous awards and accolades, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1987. Her legacy endures as a testament to the transformative power of leadership that transcends gender boundaries.