



State Rep. Carol Ammons, D-Urbana, and her 6-year-old granddaughter, Ashura Ammons

Champaign Mayor Deb Feinen is flanked by sister Reagen Bradbury, left, and mom Linda Frank



Retired Illinois Supreme Court Justice Rita Farman, right, with daughter Sara (Farman) Doyle

MAKING HERSTORY

They're superintendents of the area's three largest school districts, mayors of the two biggest cities and state's attorneys of the three most populous counties. ¶ They're the presidents of Carle Foundation Hospital and Parkland College, chief medical officer at Christie Clinic and chief of police at the University of Illinois, and represent Champaign-Urbana in the House of Representatives — both the one in Springfield and the one in D.C. ¶ Today, we continue our salute to Women's History Month with this eight-page special section, featuring an extended conversation with 14 history makers, a word from 52 community members about the state of gender equality and more.

— JEFF D'ALESSIO / jdalessio@news-gazette.com

Champaign Superintendent Shelia Boozer, middle, with daughters Karissa Allen, left, and Keneisha Boozer



Urbana Superintendent Jennifer Ivory-Tatum with her mom, Janet Wallace



Christie Clinic Chief Medical Officer Dr. Candace McEgregor with her mother, Teresa Temples



Carle Foundation Hospital President Elizabeth Angelo with daughter Violet

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

POP QUIZ: Part 3 of our March miniseries

Devices off. Eyes forward. No cheating. Continuing our monthlong miniseries, here’s a third round of Women’s History Month-inspired questions, as written by 14 community members. Be sure to brush up for next Friday’s final.



HELEN SATTERTHWAITE



1. Courage Connection CEO ELIZABETH COOK asks: Urbana politician Helen F. Satterthwaite helped write the Illinois Domestic Violence Act — a landmark piece of legislation and one of the first in the country. In which year did it become law?

- a) 1984
- b) 1978
- c) 1982
- d) 1980



2. Champaign’s DENISE POINDEXTER, director of executive search at AMN Healthcare Leadership and a 2016 Central Illinois Business Forty Under 40 honoree, asks: Who was America’s first self-made woman billionaire?

- a) Martha Stewart
- b) Oprah Winfrey
- c) Madam C.J. Walker
- d) Rihanna



3. Urbana Park District Environmental Program Manager SAVANNAH DONOVAN asks: Who was Anita Parker Purves (1939-75), for whom the Anita Purves Nature Center was named in memorial?

- a) A local ornithologist (bird scientist)
- b) A local homemaker and amateur naturalist
- c) A local entomologist (insect scientist)
- d) A local school teacher



4. OLIVIA COIADO, a UI professor of medicine and bioengineering and director of student research at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine, asks: Who was the first woman in the United States to earn a Ph.D.?

- a) Helen Magill White
- b) Apurva Prakashan
- c) Mary Keller
- d) Elena Cornara Piscopia



5. Nationally recognized artist LISA KESLER of Champaign asks: Who was the only civilian woman awarded a Distinguished Service Cross in World War II?

- a) Eleanor Roosevelt
- b) Amelia Earhart
- c) Virginia Hall
- d) Oveta Culp Hobby



6. SURABHI KIRAN, a teaching assistant for the First-Year Experience Program at the UI’s College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, asks: Who was the first woman ever to enter space?

- a) Valentina Tereshkova
- b) Kalpana Chawla
- c) Svetlana Savitskaya
- d) Sally Kristen Ride



7. Retired 27-year Uni High Librarian FRANCES JACOBSON HARRIS asks: Who was the first woman (and Black person) to become Librarian of Congress?

- a) Clara Stanton Jones
- b) Augusta Baker
- c) Carla Hayden
- d) Charlemae Hill Rollins



8. MARA THACKER, the UI’s South Asian Studies and Global Popular Culture Librarian, asks: According to The Guinness Book of World Records, which artist has the most singles studio recordings?

- a) Asha Bhosle
- b) Madonna
- c) Dalida
- d) Dolly Parton



9. Siebel Center for Design senior scholar GAIL ROST asks: What implemented innovative ideas were conceived and developed by women?

- a) The solar stove
- b) The consumer call-center system
- c) Windshield wipers
- d) The circular saw
- e) All of the above



10. Fisher school district Librarian KELLY FRIEDLEIN asks: In 2016, Carla Hayden became the first woman to get what job?

- a) A state governor
- b) Librarian of Congress
- c) Senator from Indiana
- d) Secretary of Commerce



11. iSchool Associate Professor BONNIE MAK, a historian of ancient, medieval and modern information practices, asks: Women were known to have been students, teachers and graduates of medicine at which of these universities in the Middle Ages?

- a) University of al-Qarawiyyin
- b) University of Salerno
- c) University of Oxford
- d) Northwestern University



12. Champaign dentist GHADA ADHAMI of All Smiles Family Dentistry asks: What year did the first female dentist graduate from dental school in the United States?

- a) 1801
- b) 1835
- c) 1866
- d) 1902



13. Kenwood Elementary computer-science instructor TABITHA DUNN, recently named the Illinois Digital Educators Alliance Educator of the Year, asks: Who was the actress/model who loved math and science and during World War II invented “frequency hopping,” the technology still used in Bluetooth and Wi-Fi?

- a) Lana Turner
- b) Ava Gardner
- c) Audrey Hepburn
- d) Hedy Lamarr



14. Local photographer, artist, citizen naturalist and Midwestcapades owner TERESA ELLIS asks: Anna Atkins was one of the first female photographers and she released the first-ever book of photography in 1843. What was the focus of her photography?

- a) Portraits
- b) Wildlife
- c) Plants
- d) Landscapes



ANNA ATKINS

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

ONE-WORD ANSWERS

One hundred years after it was first proposed in Congress, we're still waiting for the Equal Rights Amendment — barring discrimination on the basis of sex — to become No. 28 in the U.S. Constitution. In the meantime, Editor **JEFF D'ALESSIO** asked 52 community members: **What's the one word you'd use to describe the state of women's equality today?**

REGRESSING



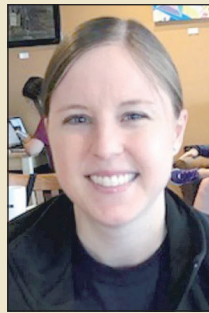
KAREN SIMMS
Director, Trauma & Resilience Initiative

BURGEONING



KARINA WARFEL
Arcola High School senior

FORWARD



BETSY ALFONSO
Urbana police sergeant

EVER-GROWING



THE REV. EVELYN UNDERWOOD
Urbana's first Black school board member

EVER-EVOLVING



MICHELLE GONZALES
UI special assistant for strategic initiatives

INSUFFICIENT



JENNIFER ROSCOE
WCIA-TV anchor

NUANCED



VERA MIKYOUNG HUR
Professor/chair, UI Mathematics Department

ADVANCING



JULIE DUVALL
President, Champaign Urbana Autism Network

DISAPPOINTING



JOYCE RAGLE
Pesotum village president

UNEVEN



AMY PENNE
Parkland College English professor

PRECARIOUS



MARYALICE WU
Urbana alderwoman, Ward 1

ERRATIC



SARAH ZEHR GANTZ
Senior assistant VP, UI system

JEOPARDIZED



ELLEN HARMS
Board member, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen

IMPERILED



MARY CATHERINE ROBERSON
2022 CIB Forty under 40 Woman of the Year

EMPOWERED



KATE WILSON
Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School senior

SHAKY



WYNNE KORR
Dean emerita, UI School of Social Work

REGRESSING



LACEY RAINS LOWE
Senior planner, City of Champaign

DENIED



CAROL SPINDEL
Comm. director, Champaign Co. ACLU

SUCCEEDING



SAM OESTERREICH
Champaign freelance graphic designer

REPROACHABLE



VANNA PIANFETTI
Champaign City Council, District 5

MOMENTUM



DEB REARDANZ
ClarkLindsey President/CEO

INTERESTING



ALISON DUNN
Interim director, UI Women in Engineering

IMPORTANT



THE REV. JULIE YODER
Senior co-pastor, The Vineyard Church

IMPROVING



LILY WALTON
Executive director, Housing Authority of Champ. Co.

INCOMMENSURATE



ANNE HALL
Urbana school board member

OVERDUE



TYRA PERRY
Illini softball coach

DISMAL



SHAWNA SCHERER
Adult education director, Urbana schools

EVOLVING



DR. JOELLA KOSS
Veterinarian/owner, All About Animals

DEGRADED



ELLY HANAUER-FRIEDMAN
Champaign County Board, District 4

RESILIENCE



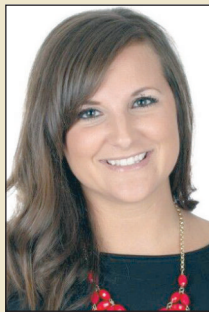
KATELYN LEARNED
Heritage High School senior

DOABLE



JANE HAYS
Senior adviser, The Downey Group Inc.

ONWARD



LISA RECTOR
Keller Williams Realty

PIECEMEAL



KELLY HILL
Executive director, CU Schools Foundation

UNDERDEVELOPED



SUSAN ELMORE
Co-owner, Jane Addams Book Shop

MISUNDERSTOOD



MARY MANZELLA RACZ
Manager, Manzella's Italian Patio

PROGRESS



BECCA POWERS
Owner, Industrial Donut

EMBATTLED



TERRI BARNES
Director, UI's Center for African Studies

EVOLVING



ROAA AL-HEETI
Attorney, Maatuka Al-Heeti Emkes LLC

STALLED



TONYA HILL
DACC Foundation executive director

REGRESSION



JANANI PATTABI
Champaign Central High School senior

NON-EXISTENT



BARBARA WYSOCKI
Past Champaign County Board chair

OPTIMISTIC



STEPHANIE FARACI
Associate director, UI Tech. Entrepreneur Center

GROWING



CINDY SOMERS
Franchise owner, Spherion Staffing

COMPELLING



BETHANY JACKSON
Judah Christian School senior

PRECARIOUS



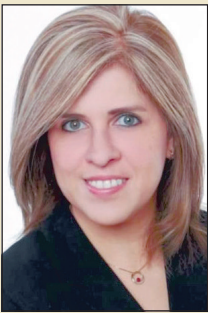
DEBORAH FELL
Artist/CEO, Deborah Fell Art Quilts

UNDERDEVELOPED



ALISSIA YOUNG
Master social worker, Fresenius Medical Care

REGRESSING



ALEJANDRA GRIFFET CORONEL
CEO, Bilingual Consultant Services

RESILIENT



CALLIE JO MCFARLAND
Monticello director of community development

EMPOWERED



BARB GALLIVAN
Real-estate agent, The Gallivan Group

PROGRESS



MACIE RUSSELL
Salt Fork High School senior

INSUFFICIENT



NATALIE KENNY MARQUEZ
Owner, Grow Marketing + Communications

EVOLVING



DEB BUSEY
Retired Champaign County administrator

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

‘THERE WILL GLASS CEILING OR

When Danville’s Rita Garman was sworn in as an Illinois Supreme Court justice in 2001, she became just the second woman ever to be seated in the 183 years of the state’s highest court. ¶ “I could never have predicted that 22 years later, a majority of the Illinois Supreme Court would be women,” she said. (And by a 5-2 margin, no less.) ¶ Slowly but surely, glass ceilings are being shattered, particularly around here —

OUR PANEL



CAROL AMMONS



ELIZABETH ANGELO



SHELIA BOOZER



NIKKI BUDZINSKI



ALICE CARY



DEB FEINEN



RITA GARMAN



SUE GREY



JENNIFER IVORY-TATUM



JACQUELINE LACY



DIANE MARLIN



DR. CANDACE MCGREGOR



DANA RHOADES



SARAH SANDQUIST

Tell us about your mom. Did she work outside the home, and were there career opportunities not available to her, because of the times, that would be today?

Retired Illinois Supreme Court Justice RITA GARMAN, who got her big break on the bench in 1974, when she became Vermilion County’s first female circuit court judge: “My mother worked as the office manager in my father’s dental office in my hometown of Oswego, Illinois. Mom always wanted to be a doctor, but had to leave Joliet Junior College to get a job to help her family finance her brother’s medical school education. “My mother would have been a wonderful doctor. She was smart, compassionate and always calm in a crisis. She was born in 1906 and grew up in a time when those kind of dreams were unthinkable.”

DIANE WOLFE MARLIN, who served two terms as an Urbana alderwoman and is in Term 2 as the city’s mayor: “My mom will turn 100 years old next month. Very few career opportunities were available to her. She grew up in during the Depression, came of age during World War II and got married at the age of 27. Her first child was born when she was 28 and the last when she was 44. “She was a farm wife, raised five kids and took care of her parents, her siblings, our church and my dad. She had more energy and worked harder than anyone I know, and that’s the example she set for us. “I’ve often wondered what she could have accomplished if she’d been able to devote some of her grit and determination to a profession. Given the way she always ended up with the most properties and money in Monopoly and suffered no fools in euchre, I think she would have been great in real estate or banking, or any other business, for that matter. I know she would have been happier.”

Urbana’s JENNIFER IVORY-TATUM, the first African American woman to lead the area’s third-largest school district: “My mom worked her way up the ranks as an employee for the city of Chicago. She started her career as an entry-level secretary, a widow with a few college classes and a small child. At that time, being a secretary was good, honest work for someone without a college degree. “I am proud to say that over the course of 36 years, she worked her way up in the ranks from secretary to becoming human resources grievance officer for the Department of Human Services when she retired. It



Champaign schools Superintendent Shelia Boozer, left, and mom Marie Gillespie.

took her over 30 years, but had her path and opportunities been different, she would have been a great lawyer or legal professional. “Her work ethic, attention to detail, perfectionism and legal mind would have taken her a long way had she been given the opportunity.”

SHELIA BOOZER, who in 2021 became Champaign schools’ first African American female superintendent: “My mom stayed home while I was in elementary school as my dad worked multiple jobs. They were — and still are — a dynamic duo. They made sure my siblings and I were well-cared for physically, spiritually and emotionally. “My mom went back into the workforce after my youngest brother was born. She worked in day care settings and in early childhood. She poured life into other people’s children to help ensure those babies and children had the opportunity to become whatever their hearts and passion desired. “My mom chose her career path and for that, I am grateful. Because of her strong faith and sense of self and love for her family, I am who I am today. My mom received her associate of arts degree in early-childhood education *after* her children were grown up. Her five children, along with our own children, watched my mom cross the stage to receive her degree. She showed all

of us you are never too old to learn and to follow your dreams.” **Three-term Piatt County state’s attorney-turned-third-year Piatt County Judge DANA RHOADES:** “My mom was a teacher working outside the home. My parents were divorced when my sister and I were teenagers so my mom became very good at balancing our schedules with work. She would have been a great CEO, doctor or lawyer. She was good at everything.”

Urbana Democrat and five-term state Rep. CAROL AMMONS, the first African American woman to represent the 103rd Illinois House District: “My mother worked outside of the home as a certified nursing assistant to provide for her family. However, if times were different, I believe she would have been an emergency room nurse or a forensic scientist. “Growing up, she had a way of getting to the truth of a matter and she loved TV shows like ‘Forensic Files’ and ‘CSI.’ When she was young, she saw first-hand the impact of deliberately defunding Black communities like East St. Louis, where many of her siblings and peers lacked adequate resource investment to pursue college or other workforce opportunities that would provide her family.”

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Lisa Henthorn
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Sherrie Davis
- FRONT ROW (L to R)
Pam Taylor
Elise Cook
Rita Thomas
Barb Prough

SULLIVAN·PARKHILL

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

ALWAYS BE A TWO YET TO BREAK'

from school superintendent jobs (African American women now run the show in Champaign, Danville and Urbana) to state's attorneys offices (women are the top prosecutors in Champaign, Douglas, Piatt and Vermilion counties). ¶ This being Women's History Month, Editor **JEFF D'ALESSIO** convened a panel of 14 local history-makers for a conversation about the past, present and future.



LEFT: University of Illinois police Chief Alice Cary, left, and mom Lyda Miller. **RIGHT:** Urbana Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin, right, with daughter Kate Marlin and mother Doris Wolfe, holding the mayor's grandson.

UI Police Chief ALICE CARY, whose life-time in law enforcement includes stints as a police officer, sheriff's deputy, state trooper and investigator: "My mom was an administrative assistant for a superintendent in a Flint, Michigan, area school district. There were many career opportunities that were not available for her at the time, but given the

chance today, I could see my mother running a human-resource department as director or executive director. Or even running the school district she worked at.

"Her hard, dedicated work was always perfect, efficient, creative and professional. Her sense of humor then and now is second to none."



Photos provided

were limited, she is the kind of person who never stops learning or growing or contributing.

"Her commitment to family and community is something I hope to emulate. I think she could have been or done anything, but she often chose to put family first in a way that benefited the rest of us."

Two-time Christie Clinic Physician of the Year DR. CANDACE MCGREGOR, who was elevated to chief medical officer in 2021: "My mom had me right after she graduated from high school. We lived in a little mobile home in the Mattoon area. During my early childhood, she started a home daycare business so that she could take care of my younger brother and I, while earning some money to make ends meet for the family. Then she became a working mother and full-time college student, where she earned a degree in business.

"Her goal was to get her college degree before I did, and she succeeded. She then had a very successful second career in business thereafter. She demonstrated commitment, intention, dedication and diligence. Because of her example, I truly believed it when she said I could be anything I wanted to be in life."

SARAH SANDQUIST, the Champaign Park District's executive director since Jan. 1: "As a kid, I really looked up to my mom. I remember a time — which in kid years felt like forever — where she was working a full-time job and then driving 40 minutes away several times a week to go to grad school. It felt like she was so smart and capable to juggle all the things that were going on with working, school and running a household."

2005 Athena Award winner SUE GREY, president and CEO of the United Way of Champaign County: "My mom was one of those 'working moms.' My brothers and I were latch-key kids. My mom was really smart — she didn't let adversity stop her from trying. My mom didn't see herself as a leader, but she really was. She had a way of mobilizing people to get things done.

"I do think she could have easily been an accountant, rather than the account clerk. But back in the day, that was a man's job."

JACQUELINE LACY, Vermilion County's first female state's attorney: "My mom worked outside the home and spent nearly 30 years in the banking industry before she retired. When my mom first started working, it was at a local grocery store. My mom always told me she dreamed of becoming a nurse, but she chose to leave college, get married and start a family."

Champaign Central alumna ELIZABETH ANGELO, who was promoted from senior VP/chief nursing officer to Carle Foundation Hospital president last year: "My mom is a nurse; at the time she was making career decisions, there were only a couple of paths open to her. Although her options

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Growing up, was there a woman other than a relative whose professional success was particularly inspiring to you?

2018 Athena Award winner DEB FEINEN, Champaign's two-term (and counting) mayor: "I remember being really inspired by the appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor to the U.S. Supreme Court. Even at a young age, I wanted to be a lawyer and her appointment opened the door for women at all levels of the legal profession."

Springfield Democrat NIKKI BUDZ-INSKI, who in January became the first woman to represent the 13th Congressional District in the U.S. House: "When I was little, I was fascinated by Amelia Earhart, an American aviation pioneer. She was a female trailblazer in a predominantly male profession, and still found her own way to succeed, excel and break barriers — redefining what women could accomplish. Her passion for flying and willingness to take great risks inspired me to be bold and take risks in my own life."



Carol Moseley Braun made history in 1992.

CAROL AMMONS: "Carol Moseley Braun. She was the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Senate, the first African American U.S. senator from the Democratic Party, the first woman to defeat an incumbent U.S. senator in an election and the first female U.S. senator from Illinois."

"I will never forget the influence Senator Moseley Braun had on me when I worked on her campaign. She was a grassroots politician with an impressive voting record. Her leadership and commitment to people have influenced my service as a legislator."

ELIZABETH ANGELO: "I read and re-read biographies of Clara Barton, Elizabeth Blackwell, Mother Teresa and Gladys Aylward. They were each inspiring to me in different ways, and shared a commitment to use their skills in a practical way that improved life for those around them."

SUE GREY: "Wow, there are so many women. I think about one of my grade school teachers at Kenwood Elementary, Mrs. Ziff. She was awesome, so on fire and passionate about her work. She made learning fun and challenging."

"She also challenged the status quo — she worked hard for her students. In turn, I worked hard for her."



WILMA RUDOLPH

SHELIA BOOZER: "Wilma Rudolph. I remember reading her biography as a young girl in sixth grade and being blown away by her tenacity and grit. The doctor told her she would not walk again, but her mother told her she would. Wilma believed her mother. The power of faith. With a mother's faith, family love and support, and self-determination, Wilma learned to



Photos provided

United Way of Champaign County President/CEO Sue Grey (front, in orange shirt) with her extended family.



Champaign Mayor Deb Feinen (front, row second from left) with daughters Cate and Karlee and her former law partners — from left, Traci Nally, Barb Mann and the late Wendy Bauer — on the day they all saw the 2018 film 'RGB.'

walk without the brace. Not only did she learn to walk, she excelled in athletics and graduated from Tennessee State University with a degree in education.

"I just found it fascinating that she was born prematurely and experienced several childhood illnesses — polio and scarlet fever — that left her partially paralyzed in one leg and she became an Olympic gold medalist."

"I might add that she is the first Black woman to win three gold medals in one Olympics. I really connected to her drive, no-excuses and no-self-pity attitude."

At any point of your career, have you found the old adage — that women have to work twice as hard as men to be afforded the same opportunities — to be true?

ALICE CARY: "I think this is particularly true for women in law enforcement. As a state trooper in Wyoming, I was often alone with my nearest backup maybe an hour away. And I would be faced with arresting a man who would do anything to avoid going to jail."

"A male officer might lean on his physical strength to accomplish this task. For me, it was imperative that I used my intuition, my natural maternal instincts and de-escalation skills to successfully arrest an unwilling individual."

"It's not to say I did not come across individuals who physically resisted, and I had incidents where I had to fight for my life. Thank God for good training."

"The workplace was a challenge, too. Throughout my career, especially early on, I found myself repeatedly having to prove myself to my male counterparts. Being stubborn and determined, I finally accepted these challenges as lessons of strength."

"Bullet-proof vests, uniforms and holsters are now made to specifically fit women. Back in the day, it was very uncomfortable to wear a bullet-proof vest eight to 12 hours a day that was not made for the female anatomy."

"Today, women are much more accepted in the law enforcement profession, even as administrators. Still, only three percent of leadership positions in law enforcement are held by women, and there are still challenges. At UIPD, we are making deliberate efforts to remove those obstacles."

CAROL AMMONS: "Historically, women have had to work twice as hard to be afforded the same opportunities as men. When you add being African American on top of that, the barriers are increased."

"For many folks, the problem is the lack of imagination. Frankly speaking, the imagination gap is so wide because historically, not many Black woman have held these offices. Sadly, the hurdles to higher office begin even before she decides to run."

SUE GREY: "I think in some professions that may have been the case, but thankfully in my career path, I have made my way. Don't get me wrong: I had a lot of help and support along the way. With that being said, there was a *lot* of hard work that went in to getting where I am today."

"I do think that the wage gap is real, and have experienced that in my professional career. I will always advocate for equal pay for equal work."

SARAH SANDQUIST: "Luckily, no — and I hope that less and less women feel this way as we continue to make the workplace more equitable for all."

RITA GARMAN: "When I began my career, it was very difficult to get a job. It was only when I was given an opportunity was I able to demonstrate that I could be a capable lawyer. Even as a judge, initially, I had to show I could meet the demands of the profession. I had to prove I could be fair, impartial and knowledgeable."

JACQUELINE LACY: "At times, I have agreed with the old adage; however, I know now that no matter who you are or where you come from, if you work hard, you can achieve anything. I was the first woman appointed to be the Vermilion County chief public defender and I was the first woman elected Vermilion County state's attorney."

DANA RHOADES: "This is a hard question to answer. I am sure some of this still exists in certain fields or industries. My experience has been that the women and the men I have worked with professionally all work equally hard."

Have you noticed any difference in the way women are treated at the workplace since #MeToo?

SUE GREY: "I would hope so."

CAROL AMMONS: "While there have been some changes in the way women are treated in the workplace, we still have a long way to go. The president recently signed a proclamation on National Equal Pay Day acknowledging the unfortunate fact that 'women working full-time, year-round are paid an average 84 cents for every dollar paid to men. Pay disparities are even more pronounced for Black women.'

"And even though there has been national attention and movement around women's issues, too many disparities remain."

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

As a leader, is there anything you've tried to do to help young women in particular who are just getting started in your profession?

DR. CANDACE MCGREGOR: "I have tried to help them find their voice. Whether it is advocating for their patients, their colleagues or for their own work-life balance, I give them permission to speak up. We are very powerful when we join forces to make things better for those around us."

DIANE MARLIN: "I want children to value and respect public service and civic engagement and to understand that people just like them are running local, state and federal government and making decisions that impact their lives."

"Some of the most rewarding moments I've had as mayor have been my visits to local elementary schools, answering kids' questions and seeing their faces light up when they get a sticker that says 'Future Mayor.' Children learn what they live and see, and I want them to see elected officials and public employees as real people who care about their community."

SHELIA BOOZER: "I use my platform to elevate the voices of those often overlooked, in particular girls and women of color. I am a champion of cultivating and empowering women to lead just as others did for me along my journey to the superintendency. I believe women are unique and have an innate ability to tackle any task and get the job done with amazing results when given the opportunity."

JENNIFER IVORY-TATUM: "As a leader, mentoring and supporting all incoming staff who are just getting started is extremely important. I particularly like to see young women advance in their careers, as I believe mentoring is one of the critical strategies to help close the gender gap in educational administration."

"I am committed to being a positive role model for young women in the profession in order to help them reach their full leadership potential. I take an active interest in young professionals and serve as a sounding board to many seeking new ways to be effective leaders in their sphere of influence. Sharing my experiences, wisdom gained and challenges I have overcome has been a great way to encourage and help build the confidence of young, up-and-coming leaders."

ELIZABETH ANGELO: "I absolutely love to talk with people who are considering jobs in health care. There's such a tremendous diversity of roles in our field and a huge need for talented and caring individuals to join the profession."

"I always encourage people to ask about training, mentorship and ongoing support for professional development. Health care is not for the faint of heart but it's an incredibly rewarding field with many opportunities for growth."

DEB FEINEN: "I have found that women in Champaign support and lift each other up. Those of us who are more experienced also provide opportunities and mentoring to younger or less experienced women. I am happy to be part of that sisterhood."

"Individually, I often talk to aspiring lawyers, politicians and professionals. I recruit and campaign for female candidates and include girls and women as campaign volunteers, providing experience so they can run for office themselves one day."

"As mayor, I also regularly host scouts and other groups to talk about government and host mock council meetings as a way to demystify government service and to encourage our future leaders."

To the young girl who hopes to one day enjoy the same level of success that you have, you say what?

SUE GREY: "The same advice that was given to me — 'do everything.' Put yourself out there. Don't be afraid to try something new. There have been so many times when



Courtesy Jayne DeLuca

When a newcomer joins the local leadership club, this is the kind of welcome she gets, as Sarah Sandquist discovered a few weeks into her tenure as executive director of the Champaign Park District.



Visit Champaign County

LEFT: From parades and proclamations to friendly competitions over which city's name should go first, two-term mayors Diane Marlin of Urbana, left, and Deb Feinen of Champaign — shown at the dividing line on Wright Street — often share the stage.

RIGHT: The school districts are led by superintendents Jennifer Ivory-Tatum of Urbana, left, and Shelia Boozer of Champaign.



Jon Dessen/Illini Studio

I have been out of my comfort zone; use those moments to learn about who you are.

"My daughters also know that like their grandma, I can be a little tough. The common phrase in our house was 'suck it up, buttercup.' Not because I didn't care about their feelings, but I didn't want them to wallow in those moments."

"Be sad, mad, whatever, but don't let that control your next move. Use those moments to motivate you. You can do *big* things."

CAROL AMMONS: "Know your value and remain unapologetic about it. Educate yourself, ask questions and read a lot. It is also important to establish a community of support for life's most challenging moments."

"Lastly, it is important to have faith in a higher purpose. If you establish your why, your how will present itself to you. My why is guided by the kind of world I want my grandchildren to thrive in."

DANA RHOADES: "Stay in school, stay focused and ignore people who try to tell you it's not possible."

ELIZABETH ANGELO: "Be clear on what's meaningful to you. Success can be defined in a lot of different ways, and living a life that's aligned with your values is just as important as other metrics of success."

"Practically, be open to trying new things, be quick to ask for help or guidance and be a generous colleague."

JENNIFER IVORY-TATUM: "You can never go wrong when you work hard and stay true to yourself, your values and your beliefs."

JACQUELINE LACY: "Keep your feet firmly planted on the ground; never, ever forget where you came from — and once you set your goal, never look back."

NIKKI BUDZINSKI: "My advice is always this — take risks and don't be afraid to fail. When you're starting out in your career, don't be afraid to take new opportunities

and find your passion. When you do, work won't feel like work."

DR. CANDACE MCGREGOR: "Be ready to put in the work. Work hard and don't forget to play hard, too. I try to remember that most of the things in this world worth seeking are worth the effort it takes to achieve them."

SHELIA BOOZER: "Just as I have said many times to my own daughters, Keneisha and Karissa: 'Be your authentic self. Do not shrink for anyone or anything. Hang in there and do not be afraid to be excellent. Dream big and work hard.'"

DEB FEINEN: "Get comfortable making mistakes and with failure. If you take risks, you will make mistakes and fail and these learning opportunities are the key to ultimately accomplishing your goals."

Ten years from now, what's your level of confidence that the gender-equality gap will be smaller than it is now and that there will be fewer glass ceilings left to break?

SARAH SANDQUIST: "While there have been positive strides in advancement and closing the gap, we have a long way to go."

JACQUELINE LACY: "There will always be glass ceilings to break."

NIKKI BUDZINSKI: "Women are breaking glass ceilings in business, in labor and in government every day, but there is still a lot of work to do. We need to acknowledge that not all of our progress has been equal — and that women, particularly women of color, continue to face too many barriers."

"In Congress, I'm working to create new career pathways that will help get women and folks in disadvantaged communities

into good-paying careers in the trades. And I'm working with my colleagues to restore reproductive rights and ensure everyone receives equal pay for equal work."

ALICE CARY: "There will always be a glass ceiling or two yet to break. In law enforcement, there are national initiatives under way that I think are promising. UIPD entered into the 30x30 pledge, where we promised to have 30 percent female representation at every level by 2030."

"Nationally, women only represent 12 percent of law enforcement, as of 2021, and only three percent in administrative levels. At UIPD, we are doing better than the national average, but we still have work to do."

ELIZABETH ANGELO: "I'm hopeful that we'll continue to close equity gaps on a number of fronts. It's been encouraging to see more companies investing in returnships, professional development pathways and flexible scheduling options."

"As a nation, I hope we continue to grapple with important questions around parental leave and quality elder and childcare so that fewer women feel like they have to choose between professional opportunities and family responsibilities."

DANA RHOADES: "The nation as a whole has moved toward decreasing the size of the gender equality gap. There are certainly geographical locations that have not progressed as far along. It's hard to know exactly where we will be in 10 years but the gender equality gap will likely still exist in some form or another."

SUE GREY: "There have been many prayers about this one. Let it be so. Women have had much to overcome in the workforce, and we are strong advocates for what we believe is right. We have great tenacity, grit and endurance."

"I think that today's young professional women will see great opportunity in the future."



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

FAMOUS FORMERS: An Oscar winner, Olympians and more

From **Alison Krauss** to **Bonnie Blair** to a young **Kamala Harris**, we could fill a special section with history-making women who once called Champaign-Urbana home. But other area towns have female fame to claim, too. Here's just the short list, courtesy Editor **Jeff D'Alessio**.

ARCOLA

Once home to ... prolific painter, 1970 Arcola High grad and one-time guest Lawn Ranger **Nancie King Mertz**, twice honored as Artist of the Year by the Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau.

BEMENT

Once home to ... **Julie Foran LaPlant**, crowned Miss Illinois County Fair Queen in 1978, a year after Tuscola's **Merci Izquierdo** took top honors.

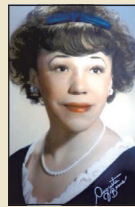


CATLIN

Once home to ... the first female CEO of a top 25 accounting firm — former CliftonLarson-Allen head **Kris McMasters** (UI Class of '78).

DANVILLE

Once home to ... trailblazing 1933 Danville High alumna **Louise Johnson Robinson**, who went on to become the district's first African American educator to hold a teaching certificate. According to her DHS Wall of Fame bio, she was told by then-Superintendent Clarence Vance, "I'll hire you as an experiment. If you do well, I'll hire other" Black teachers. She did, and he kept his promise.



DeLAND

Home to ... 2011 DeLand-Weldon valedictorian **Brielle Jones**, who as a high school freshman blocked 240 shots, a state girls' basketball record that still stands. That season included two 21-swat games, also the most in state history.

MAHOMET



YouTube

'She sounds hideous,' Mahomet's Melanie Paxson tells her TV husband in an unforgettable State Farm ad.

Once home to ... **Melanie (Moore) Paxson** — or as, you may know her, the wife who suspects her husband is up to no good when she catches him whispering on the phone in the wee hours of the morning, grabs it and asks: "What are you wearing, Jake from State Farm?" The insurance spot was one of several dozen national TV campaigns — Red Robin, Glad bags, Honda and Target among them — that you may recognize her from.

GIBSON CITY

Once home to ... Cynthia Ann Smith — or, as you probably know her, **Frances McDormand**, the name she took on when the mother who gave birth to the future three-time Oscar-winner in Gibson City put her up for adoption. She was taken in by a traveling pastor, making the " Fargo " star's stay in Ford County a short one.



GIFFORD



Once home to ... ABC News Radio's **Michelle Franzen**, whose "top-notch storytelling skills" earned the former NBC News national correspondent a promotion in 2020 — to midday anchor.



HOMER

Once home to ... The pride of Homer High's Class of '71 — Champaign native **Diane (Bolin) Kelley** — who made the U.S. women's gymnastics Olympic team at age 15.

MONTICELLO

Once home to ... Monticello High Hall of Famer **Patricia Mosser**, who's on the short list for the most impressive resume of area alumnae — degrees from Wellesley, the London School of Economics and MIT; 20-plus years at the New York Fed, overseeing market analysis; headed up research and analysis at the U.S. Treasury Department; now directs the master's of public administration program at Columbia.



PAXTON

Once home to ... the first Big Ten coach to be named The Associated Press College Women's Basketball Coach of the Year. That'd be PBL Hall of Famer **Angie Lee**, honored after her 1996 Iowa Hawkeyes reached the Sweet 16.



RANTOUL

Once home to ... former Rantoul, Parkland and Illinois Wesleyan basketball star **Brianna Baker** — aka paramedic Nancy, the recurring role she now plays on "9-1-1: Lone Star," the Fox drama now in its fourth season.



SADORUS

Once home to ... One of the real-life stars of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, made famous in 1992's "A League of their Own." **Dottie Schroeder**, whose family moved to Sadorus when she was 9, made three All-Star teams and was the only woman to play in the league for all 12 of its seasons.



ST. JOSEPH

Once home to ... The high school softball stars who rewrote the IHSA record book and hold the No. 1 spots for most career runs scored (**Stephanie Canfield**), most career runs batted in (**Andrea Coursey**), most RBI in a season (**Hannah Bowen**), most career home runs (**Bailey Dowling**) and most stolen bases in a season (**Lindsey Barron**).

TOLONO

Once home to ... 1960 Unity High alumna **Charlena Holl Grimes**, whose work transforming the lives of underrepresented students while serving as academic coordinator for Washington State's College of Engineering and Architecture earned her a trip to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, where George W. Bush presented her with a 2004 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring.

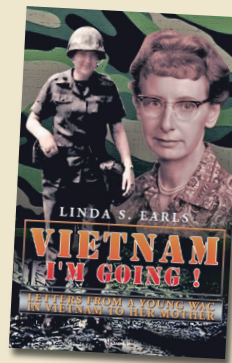


TUSCOLA

Once home to ... **Linda Metheny**, the answer to the trivia question: Who's the first U.S. gymnast to qualify for the finals in an Olympic event? The Illinois Athletics Hall of Famer did at the 1968 Mexico City Games, one of three Olympic squads she made during her storied career.

WESTVILLE

Once home to ... The author of "Vietnam: I'm Going! Letters from a Young WAC in Vietnam to Her Mother," which chronicles **Linda Earls'** remarkable story — of graduating from Westville High in 1964, enlisting in the Women's Army Corps and realizing her dream of serving in Vietnam, among the first non-nurse women dispatched to a combat zone. She retired in 1988 as a first sergeant, with four commendation and two meritorious-service medals.



TOP LAWYERS CHAMPAIGN-URBANA AREA BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS

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