March Is Women’s History Month

Celebrate Women’s History Month with inspiring picture book biographies that introduce women who have worked hard, dreamed big, and accomplished amazing achievements.

- Bardoe, Cheryl. *Nothing Stopped Sophie: The Story of Unshakable Mathematician Sophie Germain*. Growing up in Paris during the turbulent times of the French Revolution, young Sophie (1776-1811) relished the way that math could make sense of the world. Though her studies were discouraged by her parents and her society, this self-taught mathematical prodigy would go on to solve an “impossible” problem and become the first women to win a grand prize from the Royal Academy of Sciences. JBiography 510.92 GERM

- Barton, Chris. *What Do You Do With a Voice Like That? The Story of Extraordinary Congresswoman Barbara Jordan*. This gorgeously illustrated, accessibly written offering traces the life of an American patriot (1936-1996) from her childhood in the Fifth Ward of Houston, Texas, through her accomplished career as lawyer, politician, and civil rights leader. JBiography 328.73092 JORD

- Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Game Changers: The Story of Venus and Serena Williams*. Venus (1980-) and Serena (1981-), otherwise known as V and Meeka, grew up together as close as “two peas in a pod” in the “rough-and-tumble” streets of Compton, California, where they rose before the sun six days a week, swept the broken glass off a nearby tennis court, and spent hours honing their game. This accessible picture book depicts the hard work, persistence, courage, and strong sibling relationship that fueled the talented sisters’ barrier-breaking rise to dominance in a nearly all-white sport. JBiography 796.342092 CLIN

- Denise, Anika. *Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré*. Lyrical verses sprinkled with Spanish words and stunning artwork tell the tale of Belpré (1899-1982), who immigrated from Puerto Rico to New York City in 1921, became a librarian, and found a magical way to share stories from her homeland with young listeners. This vibrant book introduces Belpré’s work and her legacy as librarian and author (today, her name graces an annual award given to books about the Latin American cultural experience). JBiography 020.92 BELP

- Halfmann, Janet. *Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and Her Secret School*. Born into slavery in Virginia, Lilly (c1821-1889) secretly learned to read and write as a child and dedicated her life to educating other enslaved people, despite great danger, holding classes in the middle of night in a hidden-away cabin. JBiography 371.10092 GRAN

- Hannigan, Kate. *A Lady Has the Floor: Belva Lockwood Speaks Out for Women’s Rights*. Though repeatedly told, “no,” Belva (1830-1917) continued to follow her dreams, accomplishing many hard-won milestones as educator (initiating public speaking and physical education for girls in her classroom), attorney (she was the first woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court), civil rights advocate (including women’s right to vote), and even presidential candidate (in 1884). JBiography 305.42 LOCK

- Mosca, Julia Finley. *The Girl with a Mind for Math: The Story of Raye Montague*. Inspired by a visit to a submarine when she was seven years old, Raye (1935- ) was determined to become an engineer, but despite her impressive abilities, was forced to navigate years of sexism and racial inequality before reaching her goal. Rhyming text introduces the woman who completed the first ship design by computer for the Navy in 1971, and her upbeat and steady approach to breaking barriers. JBiography 623.8092 MON
Rockliff, Mara. *Lights! Camera! Alice!: The Thrilling True Adventures of the First Woman Filmmaker*. Working as an assistant in a camera shop in France, Alice Guy-Blaché (1873-1968) visualized how a brand-new device, a moving picture camera, could be used for so much more than documenting day-to-day life—“Why not film...*a story*?”—and thus a new art form was born. This tale of the first woman in the world to make movies sparkles with style and underscores the power of the imagination. JBiography 791.4302 GUY

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Who Says Women Can’t Be Computer Programmers? The Story of Ada Lovelace*. Lest her daughter grow up to have a wild imagination like her father, world-famous (and infamously misbehaving) poet Lord Byron, Ada’s (1815-1852) mother hired tutors to train the girl to think like a mathematician. However, as Ada worked with kindred spirit Charles Babbage on his Analytical Engine (a mechanical calculator prototype), she soon realized that “math and imagination do not have to be opposites...they actually went together,” and envisioned all kinds of possibilities for this device (she is recognized today as the first computer programmer). JBiography 510.92 LOVE

Valdez, Patricia. *Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor*. Known for inviting “slithery and scaly” guests to her childhood tea parties and favoring a pet lizard over a doll, Joan (1897-1931) grew up to become a groundbreaking herpetologist at the London Zoo, and one of the first scientists to successfully research and care take Komodo dragons. JBiography 590.72 PROC

Winter, Jeanette. *The World Is Not a Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid*. Simple text and stunning artwork provide an introduction to Iranian architect Hadid (1915-2016), her unique way of incorporating designs from nature into her famous buildings, and her determination to never be held back by her ethnicity, gender, or traditional thinking. Blending art and science, this book shows readers the importance of following one’s dreams. JBiography 720.92 HADI

Winter, Jonah. *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Case of R.B.G vs. Inequality*. Taking a clever approach, this book utilizes the framework of a court case to introduce the life of Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg (1933- ). Instances of the sexism and discrimination she faced are presented as evidence (“Exhibit F: Even among the law firms supposedly open to hiring women, not one firm would hire her. She was a woman, she was Jewish, AND she was a mother”) and readers are asked to act as jury. JBiography 347.732634 GINS

Yousafzai, Malala. *Malala’s Magic Pencil*. In this autobiographical picture book, Yousafzai, the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, describes her childhood in Pakistan, where despite becoming the victim of Taliban violence, she continued to speak out for the rights of all children to attend school. This moving story packs a truly powerful message about fighting for justice and finding one’s voice. JBiography 371.822 YOUS