



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



June 2024 Her Story ENewsletter 2024 Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients

In early May 2024, President Biden awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 19 people including women profiled in *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the nation's highest civilian honor; it is presented to individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public, or private endeavors. Recipients included Elizabeth Hanford Dole, Ellen Ochoa, and Nancy Pelosi.



Elizabeth Hanford Dole graduated from Harvard Law School in 1965 as one of twenty-five female graduates in a class of five hundred. She worked for various government agencies in Washington, DC before being appointed as a commissioner on the Federal Trade Commission. In 1983, President Reagan appointed her Secretary of Transportation; this position includes becoming Director of the U.S. Coast Guard. As such, she became the first woman to command an armed service in the U.S. Later, President George H.W. Bush appointed her Secretary of Labor. She said: "Women share with men the need for personal success, even the taste of power, and no longer are we willing to satisfy those needs through the achievements of surrogates, whether husbands, children, or merely role models." Dole has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



Electrical engineer **Ellen Ochoa** became the first Hispanic woman in space when she flew on the space shuttle *Discovery* in 1993. The holder of three patents related to optical systems and noise removal in images, Ochoa joined the astronaut corps in 1990. From 2007-2012, she served as deputy director of the Johnson Space Center and as director from 2013-2018. She was the second female and the first Hispanic to hold this position. Ochoa said: "Usually, girls weren't encouraged to go to college and major in math and science. My high school calculus teacher made math appealing and motivated me to continue studying it in college."



In 2002, **Nancy Pelosi** became the first woman to lead a major political party in the U.S. as the Democratic Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, and from 2007-2011, she served as the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Upon her swearing in, she said, "It's an historic moment for the Congress, it's an historic moment for the women of America. It is a moment for which we have waited for over 200 years. . . But women weren't just waiting, women were working, never losing faith we worked to redeem the promise of America, that all men and women are created equal. For our daughters and our granddaughters, the sky is the limit. Anything is possible for them." Pelosi has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Elizabeth Hanford Dole, Ellen Ochoa, and Nancy Pelosi are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us. Continue to help us tell women's stories!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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