



Lucy Diggs Slowe

Lucy Diggs Slowe was an advocate for African American education and the first African American woman to win a national tennis title. As an undergraduate at Howard University, Slowe was president of the tennis club and was a founding member of Alpha Kappa Alpha. She graduated valedictorian in 1908 and accepted a teaching position. When the first black junior high school was opened in Washington, DC Slowe was hired as the first principal. She organized the school and developed curriculums. In 1922, Slowe was appointed the first Dean of Women at Howard. Slowe then helped organize the National Council of Negro Women and helped founded the National Association of College Women and became its first president.

Alice Coachman

Alice Coachman was the first woman of color, from any country, to win an Olympic gold medal. In 1948, she won gold in the high jump at the London Summer Olympics for the United States. Coachman's medal was presented to her by King George VI and she was congratulated by President Truman at the White House. Unfortunately, Coachman returned to the segregated South. When the mayor of Albany, Georgia honored her, he would not shake her hand and she had to leave through a side door. Coachman worked as a teacher and started the Alice Coachman Track and Field Foundation, which provided financial aid to young athletes.





Maria Tallchief

Born on an Oklahoma Indian reservation, Maria Tallchief studied ballet as a child in Oklahoma and Los Angeles. She joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, where she achieved soloist status. After marrying choreographer George Balanchine, who created her signature *Firebird* role, she became prima ballerina of the New City Ballet. After divorcing Balanchine, Tallchief continued to command roles with prestigious ballet companies. She retired in 1965, becoming the Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet's artistic director. She would go on to found the Chicago City Ballet, cementing her influence within the field of dance.

Martha Graham

Dancer, choreographer, and “mother of modern dance,” Martha Graham’s 181 dance compositions continue to challenge and inspire performers and audiences. Graham created a movement language based upon the body’s expressive capacity. By focusing on the activities of the human form, she enlivened the body with raw, electric emotion. The sharp, angular, and direct movements of her technique were a dramatic departure from the predominant style of the mid-20th century.





Mary Pickford

Mary Pickford became one of Hollywood's most powerful executives during its formative years. She entered acting at age six, first in Vaudeville and then in 1909 transitioned to film. Her popularity and shrewd business sense led to her record-setting salaries. In 1919, Pickford co-founded United Artists with Douglas Fairbanks, D.W. Griffith, and Charlie Chaplin to distribute films they produced, giving them artistic control and a large share of profits. Pickford spearheaded the founding of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and received a Best Actress Oscar in 1929.

Ella Fitzgerald

"First Lady of Song," Ella Fitzgerald was one of the most popular jazz vocalists of the 20th century. During her 60-year career, she delighted audiences the world over with her three-octave range voice, pure tone, and scat singing. Fitzgerald got her start at The Howard Theatre in Washington, D.C. when she won an amateur night contest in the 1930s. She won hundreds of awards throughout her career including 13 Grammys and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1992.





Clare Boothe Luce

Clare Boothe Luce was an American author, editor, politician, playwright, and the US Ambassador to Italy. She was the first American woman appointed to a major ambassadorial post abroad. A versatile author, she is best known for her 1936 hit play *The Women*, which had an all-female cast. Her writings extended from drama and screen scenarios to fiction, journalism, and war reportage. Luce was elected to the US Congress in 1942, where she served on the Military Affairs Committee. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1983 having “served and enriched her country in many fields”.

Katharine Graham

Katharine Graham was one of the most powerful American women of the 20th century. Graham became president of The Washington Post in 1963 and served as its publisher from 1969-1979. Under Graham’s leadership, the newspaper rose to prominence for its coverage of the Vietnam War and the Nixon presidency when it published the “Pentagon Papers,” and then Woodward and Bernstein’s investigation of the Watergate scandal.





Margaret Mitchell

Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* has sold over 30 million copies since its publication in 1936. Mitchell was born in Atlanta in 1900, and as a child loved to write stories and plays. She began writing *Gone with the Wind* in 1935 and titled it after her favorite Ernest Dowson poem. The book won the 1937 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and was adapted into a film. The film won 10 Academy Awards. *Gone with the Wind* was Mitchell's only novel and she devoted the rest of her life to many philanthropic causes, including the American Red Cross during World War II.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett

Ida B. Wells-Barnett challenged discrimination and sexism, exposed injustice, and fought for equality. Born into slavery in 1862 Wells-Barnett grew up in Mississippi. After the death of her parents when she was 16, she became a teacher. Despite having a ticket, Wells-Barnett was thrown off a first-class train; so she turned to writing to point out injustices. She wrote scathing articles decrying the scourge of lynching. Her expose about an 1892 lynching enraged locals who burned her press and drove her from Memphis. She relocated to Chicago and became very active in the suffrage movement.

