History

The first National Woman’s Day was observed on Feb. 28, 1909, in New York as a way to recognize women’s rights and labor. In 1981, then Maryland congresswoman (later senator, and now Johns Hopkins professor) Barbara Mikulski and Sen. Orrin Hatch cosponsored the first joint congressional resolution requesting the president to proclaim the week of March 7, 1982, as Women’s History Week. In 1987, Congress designated March as Women’s History Month to recognize how “American women of every race, class and ethnic background” have played “a critical economic, cultural and social role in every sphere of our Nation’s life.” Each year since, the president has issued a special proclamation to honor the lives and achievements of American women.

Women’s Impact in Science

In science and technology, women have been unsung heroes. Women were leaders in building the early foundation of modern computer programming, discovery of radioactive particles and unveiling the structure of DNA.

At Johns Hopkins Medicine

73% of all employees are women+

54% of patients served are women+

93.2% Maryland women have access to health insurance

Women’s Impact at Johns Hopkins

Johns Hopkins has been a pioneer in promoting women’s health and education in the medical fields.

1889 One of the first schools to offer nursing training, the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing was founded concurrently with The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Early leaders of the school went on to found the organization that became the National League for Nursing, and they helped establish the American Nurses Association.

1890 Five Baltimore women—Martha Carey Thomas, Mary Elizabeth Garrett, Mary Gwinn, Elizabeth King and Julia Rogers—formed the Women’s Fund Committee to raise money to open the school of medicine, with the condition that women must be admitted.

1893 When the school opened, three of the 18 students in the first class were women. Though coeducational undergraduate education would not start until 1970, women have played key roles as faculty members and graduate students at Johns Hopkins.

1917 Florence R. Sabin was appointed the first woman professor at the school of medicine.

1918 The school of hygiene and public health opened, and women made up one-third of the faculty.

1994 53 percent of the school of medicine’s incoming class was women, outnumbering men for the first time.

2016 Redonda G. Miller becomes the first woman president of The Johns Hopkins Hospital.

+(Fiscal Year 2017)
Prominent Women in Johns Hopkins History

Below are a few notable women in the history of Johns Hopkins Medicine. You can also visit the Johns Hopkins Women in Leadership website to meet more women who are leading the way across our institution.

Mary Elizabeth Garrett
During her lifetime, Mary Elizabeth Garrett was one of the wealthiest women in the United States. Garrett, along with four other progressive women, pledged to raise $100,000 for the endowment of the school of medicine, on the condition that women would be admitted to study alongside men. She was also a powerful voice for women's suffrage, and though she passed away in 1915 before seeing passage of the 19th Amendment, Garrett’s legacy as a visionary for women’s emancipation lives on.

Florence R. Sabin
A trailblazer for women in the scientific fields, Florence R. Sabin was the first woman to hold a full professorship at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the first elected to the National Academy of Sciences and the first to head a department at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. She entered the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as one of 14 women students in 1896—there she developed a 3-D model of a newborn baby’s brainstem and studied embryological development of the lymphatic system. She went on to teach in the Department of Anatomy and, in 1921, was named the first woman president of the American Association of Anatomists. After retirement, she chaired a subcommittee on health for the state of Colorado. Her work led to passage of key legislation known as the Sabin Health Laws, which modernized the state’s public health system.

Helen B. Taussig
Best known as the founder of the field of pediatric cardiology, Helen B. Taussig graduated from Hopkins in 1927 and went on to join the faculty, eventually becoming the school of medicine’s second female professor. She is most remembered for her pioneering work on “blue babies” born with congenital heart defects, for which she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Along with Alfred Blalock and Vivien Thomas, Taussig developed surgical techniques to correct such defects. After her retirement, Taussig became the first woman elected president of the American Heart Association, in 1965. Today the Helen B. Taussig Congenital Heart Center and one of the four colleges at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine are named in her honor.

Ranice W. Crosby
The first woman to head a department at the school of medicine, Ranice Crosby held the post of director from 1943–1983. After an impressive 40 years in that role, she continued teaching until 2006. Crosby transformed what was a certificate program in medical and biological illustration into a Master of Arts graduate program in 1961. She was also instrumental in preserving and maintaining the massive Brödel archives. The university bestowed an honorary doctorate upon her in 2002.

Henrietta Lacks
A mother of five living in Baltimore’s Turner Station neighborhood, Henrietta Lacks passed away at the early age of 31 from cervical cancer. When Lacks was diagnosed and treated at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, her cancer cells were harvested without her knowledge as part of a cancer study. These “HeLa” cells were the first to live and multiply outside of the human body and have been used in studies around the world. Though her cells provided an invaluable scientific gift, neither Lacks nor her family were informed about the research and the advances that came from them. Today, Johns Hopkins hosts symposiums on medical research ethics, invites Baltimore city youth to learn about biomedical research, and offers scholarships to local students in Lacks’ name to celebrate her legacy.

Sivaramakrishna Iyer Padmavati
Regarded as the founder of cardiology in India, Sivaramakrishna Iyer Padmavati first came to Johns Hopkins on a fellowship to train with Helen B. Taussig in 1949. After fleeing from Burma to India during World War II, Padmavati broke barriers in her country to travel abroad as a young woman to study medicine, first in London and then later the United States. After returning to India in 1953, Padmavati went on to establish India’s first cardiology clinic and catheter lab, the first Indian medical school-based cardiology department, and India’s first heart foundation. She was elected to the National Academy of Medical Sciences and received the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan, the highest civilian honors bestowed by the Indian government.
National Women’s History Month

Health Disparities

**REPRODUCTIVE AND MATERNAL HEALTH**

- **FERTILITY RATE:** 62.5 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44

**Those who received late or no prenatal care**

- 4% White women
- 6% Asian or Pacific Islander women
- 8% Latina women
- 10% Black women
- 11% American Indian and Alaska Native women

**MATERNAL MORTALITY:**
African American/Black mothers are much more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than are mothers of other racial groups.

**INFANT MORTALITY:**
Mortality rates in infants born to African American/Black women is more than double that of the mortality rates in White women.

**SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITY WOMEN:**
Lesbians are less likely to get preventive services for cancer.
Lesbians and bisexual females are more likely to be overweight or obese.
Bisexual women are at greater risk of rape, physical violence, and stalking than lesbian and heterosexual women.

Sexual and gender minority female youth have a heightened risk for several health issues, including a spectrum of mental health issues, increased risk of sexually transmitted disease and higher rates of unplanned pregnancy.

**HEALTH CONDITIONS IN WOMEN**

- 1 in 13 women will develop cervical cancer
- 1 in 10 have diabetes in the U.S.
- 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer

Nearly 1 in 4 women report anxiety or an anxiety-related disorder as likely to report a major depressive episode compared to men.

44 MILLION women are affected by cardiovascular disease in the U.S.

90% women have one or more risk factors for heart disease or stroke.

1 out of 3 deaths of women results from cardiovascular diseases or stroke.

**HIV IN WOMEN**

A 2013 report found that the estimated percentage of transgender women living with HIV in the United States was 22% among 2,705 transgender women sampled.

**61%**

African American/Black women accounted for new cases of HIV infections reported in women in 2015.

**EATING DISORDERS: WOMEN COMPARED TO MEN**

- More likely to develop bulimia nervosa
- More likely to develop anorexia nervosa
- More likely to have a binge eating disorder

#HopkinsBetterTogether
National Women’s History Month

The Status of Women in Maryland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#2 nationally for pay equity between women and men*</th>
<th>#2 nationally for women-owned businesses*</th>
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<tr>
<td>#6 nationally for women's overall labor participation*</td>
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Women in the Workforce

- 74.6 million women in the civilian labor force
- 39% of all U.S. workers are women
- 47% of all faculty (all ranks) are women
- 15% of active-duty military personnel are women
- 6.4% of Fortune 500 companies have women CEOs
- More than 39% of work in occupations where women make up at least three-quarters of the workforce

Women own close to 10 million businesses, accounting for $1.4 trillion in receipts

The gender gap in pay has narrowed since 1980, particularly among younger workers, but it still persists. In 2015, women earned 83% of what men earned, both full- and part-time U.S. workers.

Resources

Women’s History Month
https://womenshistorymonth.gov/about/

National Women’s History Project
http://www.nwhm.org/events/womens-history-month

National Women’s Law Center
https://nwlc.org/?s=&post_type%5B%5D=post&post_type%5B%5D=resource&state=maryland

Women’s History Month Resources
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2014/03/womens-history-month-resources/

Johns Hopkins Resources

Johns Hopkins Medicine Women in Leadership
https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/about/women-in-leadership/

Johns Hopkins Magazine: A Timeline of Women at Hopkins
http://pages.jh.edu/jhumag/1107/web/women2.html

Johns Hopkins Center for Women’s Health, Sex, and Gender Differences

The Women of Hopkins
http://women.jhu.edu

The Woman’s Club of Johns Hopkins University
http://web.jhu.edu/jhuwomansclub

Women’s Network Steering Committee
http://www.jhu.edu/~wforum/

Graduate Women Empowerment Network (GWEN)
http://gwen.jhu.edu/

JHU Committee on the Status of Women
http://web.jhu.edu/dlc/resources/status_of_women.html

Bloomberg School of Public Health Women’s Health Action Group (WHAG)

Women’s Pre-Health Leadership Society Group (WHAG)
http://wphls.org

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