

Harriet Tubman

A Brave Guide to Freedom



Harriet Tubman was born into slavery around 1822 in Maryland. As a child, she worked very hard and was treated unfairly. Harriet wanted to be free and to help others be free, too.

In 1849, Harriet escaped slavery and made the dangerous journey to freedom. But she did not stop there. Harriet became a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was not a real train. It was a secret network of people and safe places that helped enslaved people escape. Harriet returned again and again to guide others to safety. This was extremely risky. If Harriet was caught, she could be sent back into slavery or punished.

Harriet showed courage, smart thinking, and strong leadership. She helped many people reach freedom by traveling at night and following safe routes. Later, during the Civil War, Harriet supported the Union cause and helped in different ways, including caring for people who were hurt or sick.

Harriet Tubman matters because she used her bravery to protect others and fight injustice. Today, people remember her as a hero who helped open doors to freedom and inspired others to keep working for what is right.

Ida B. Wells

A Fearless Truth-Teller



Ida B. Wells was born in 1862 in Mississippi. She grew up during a time when many laws were unfair to Black Americans. When Ida was young, she worked hard and cared about learning. She became a teacher, and later she became a journalist. A journalist is someone who writes news stories to share information with others.

Ida noticed that people were being treated unfairly. Some people were being hurt because of racism and hatred. Ida believed it was important to tell the truth, even when it was scary. She started writing articles about what she saw. She asked questions, looked for facts, and shared what she learned. This took courage, because some people did not want the truth to be told.

Ida faced big challenges. People threatened her, and she had to stay strong. But she kept speaking up. She traveled to different places to give speeches and to teach others about fairness and justice. She wanted people to understand that everyone deserves safety and respect.

Ida B. Wells matters because she used her voice and her writing to fight for justice. She showed that words can be powerful. Today, people remember her as a brave leader who helped others learn the truth and stand up for what is right.



Ruby Bridges

A Child Who Changed History

Ruby Bridges was born in 1954 in Mississippi and later lived in Louisiana. When Ruby was a child, many schools were segregated. That meant Black children and white children had to go to separate schools. This was unfair, and it kept many children from having the same opportunities.

In 1960, Ruby became the first Black child to attend an all-white elementary school in New Orleans, Louisiana. The school was called William Frantz Elementary. On her first day, Ruby walked into the building with help from federal marshals who kept her safe. Outside, some people were angry and shouted. Ruby felt nervous, but she kept going. She was very brave.

Ruby faced a big challenge because she was treated differently just because of her skin color. Some families did not want their children to be in the same school, so Ruby often learned alone with her teacher. Even so, Ruby stayed strong and continued going to school.

Ruby Bridges matters because her courage helped push schools toward fairness. Her story reminds us that even a kid can help create change.

Susan B. Anthony

A Leader for Women's Voting Rights



Susan B. Anthony was born in 1820 in Massachusetts. When Susan grew up, women had fewer rights than men. For example, women could not vote. Susan believed this was unfair. She wanted women to have a voice in laws and government.

Susan worked hard to create change. She traveled to many towns and cities to give speeches. She helped organize groups and meetings where people talked about equal rights. Susan also worked with other leaders who wanted fairness for women and for all people.

Susan faced many challenges. Some people told her to stop speaking. Others said women should not be leaders. Susan did not give up. In 1872, Susan voted in New York even though women were not allowed to vote. She was arrested for it. Susan wanted to show that the law was unfair and needed to change.

Susan B. Anthony matters because she helped the country move toward women gaining the right to vote. Years later, the law changed and women could vote. Susan's courage helped open the door for more voices in government and more fairness for everyone.

Mae Jemison

A Doctor Who Reached Space



Mae Jemison was born in 1956 in Alabama and grew up in Chicago, Illinois. Mae loved science and asked lots of questions. She worked hard in school and enjoyed learning about how the world works.

Mae became a doctor and an engineer. That means she studied how to help people stay healthy and also learned how to solve problems using science and math. Mae had a big dream: she wanted to travel into space.

Mae faced challenges because not many women—and especially not many Black women—were chosen for space missions. Mae kept working and did not give up. She studied, trained, and kept believing in herself.

In 1992, Mae Jemison became the first Black woman from the United States to travel into space. She worked as an astronaut on a space mission and helped with science activities in space. Mae showed that curiosity and hard work can lead to amazing things.

Mae Jemison matters because she inspired many students to believe, “I can do that, too.” Her story reminds us that science and space are for everyone.

Maria Tallchief

A Star Who Brought Ballet to America



Maria Tallchief was born in 1925 in Oklahoma. She was a member of the Osage Nation, and she became one of America's most famous ballet dancers. Ballet is a type of dance that takes many years of practice and strong muscles.

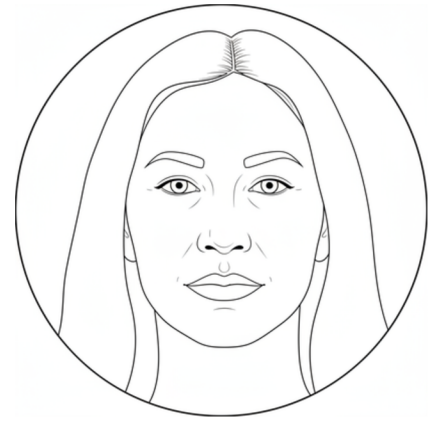
Maria loved dancing, but it was not easy. Ballet training is very hard work. Maria also faced challenges because many people did not expect an American girl from Oklahoma to become a ballet star. Some people did not understand her background or her culture. Maria kept practicing anyway.

Maria moved to study dance and worked with talented teachers. She learned difficult steps and performed in important shows. Over time, she became known for her powerful dancing and strong stage presence. She helped bring ballet to more people in the United States and inspired young dancers across the country.

Maria Tallchief matters because she showed that talent and hard work can break barriers. She also helped shape American arts and culture and made space for more dancers to dream big.

Wilma Mankiller

A Chief Who Strengthened Her Nation



Wilma Mankiller was born in 1945 in Oklahoma. She was a leader in the Cherokee Nation. Wilma cared about helping her community. She wanted families to have better opportunities, strong schools, and needed services.

Wilma faced challenges in her life. Leading a nation is hard work. Also, some people did not believe a woman should be a top leader. Wilma stayed focused and kept learning. She worked with others, listened to community needs, and helped plan solutions.

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first woman Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. As a leader, she helped improve important programs and services for her people. She believed that communities can become stronger when people work together.

Wilma Mankiller matters because she showed what strong leadership looks like—listening, planning, and helping others. She inspired many people and proved that women can lead with courage and wisdom.

Billie Jean King

A Champion for Fairness in Sports



Billie Jean King was born in 1943 in California. She became a champion tennis player. When Billie Jean was growing up, many girls and women did not get the same sports chances as boys and men. Women athletes were often not treated fairly.

Billie Jean worked hard and practiced for many years. She became one of the best tennis players in the world. She also spoke up for fairness in sports. Billie Jean wanted women athletes to be respected and to have better opportunities.

In 1973, Billie Jean played a famous match called the “Battle of the Sexes.” She played against a male opponent, and the match got a lot of attention. Billie Jean wanted to show that women athletes are strong and skilled. She stayed calm, focused on her game, and helped change how people thought about women in sports.

Billie Jean King matters because she helped open doors for girls and women athletes. Her courage and leadership helped push sports toward more fairness and respect.