

Editorial

Women's History Month a 'people issue'

You have one minute.

Name as many women who are important in the history of this country or this state as quickly as you can.

How many did you come up with? Four? Six? As many as ten? Perhaps you thought of Betsy Ross, Sacajawea, Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt, Harriet Tubman, or Willa Cather before you came up with a blank.

Now, for contrast, name as many historically important men as you can in one minute.

Did you run out of names before you ran out of time? If you're like most Americans, you can think of many more men important in U.S. history, than you can women. But it's not because men alone played a major role in shaping our history and our culture.

Approximately half our population is and has been women. Many of these women have played influential roles in the development of the United States. But they haven't been written up in history books, partly because of their historically anonymous status as wives, mothers and volunteers. Women only recently have begun to be active as a group in politics, professional work and literature. The hand that rocks the cradle doesn't often make the papers.

Consider for a moment a few women important in Nebraska history.

Eliza Merrill was one of the first white

women to live in Nebraska. She and her husband, both Baptist missionaries, came to Bellevue in the winter of 1833. They were the first resident missionaries in the Otoe Indian Territory, and lived 200 miles away from any white settlement. She was the teacher at the first Indian school in Nebraska. The Merrills' son was the second white child born in the state. After her husband died in 1840, Mrs. Merrill returned to New York state and established the Albany Orphanage Asylum.

Grace Abbott was an internationally known social worker and reformer and an early 20th-century feminist who championed the rights and status of women, children and the oppressed. She was born and raised in Grand Island, but had to leave the state to find work. In 1908, she went to Chicago and became director of the Immigrants' Protective League of Hull House. In 1917, she was appointed director of the Child Labor Division of the U.S. Children's Bureau. She became chief of the bureau and spent 18 years working there, administering the first federal child labor law and the Maternity and Infancy Act. She was widely recommended for a cabinet post and in 1931, Good Housekeeping magazine recognized her as one of America's twelve most distinguished women. She was twice a U.S. delegate to the International Labor Organization conferences in 1935 and 1937.

Bess Furman Armstrong began setting

hand-type at the age of 6 for her father at the Danbury News. She wrote her first bylined story when she was 7. She went on to become the first woman reporter ever assigned by a press association to cover the House of Representatives and the first woman to hold a top press job with a cabinet-rank agency. After she graduated from Kearney State College in 1918, she joined the staff on the Kearney Daily Hub. From Kearney, she went to the Omaha Daily News, where she worked from 1919 to 1929. She was the Washington, D.C., bureau reporter for the Associated Press from 1929 to 1937 and for The New York Times from 1943 to 1962. She covered White House activities through five presidential administrations, starting with Herbert Hoover's. During World War II, she served as assistant chief in the Office of War Information, and during the Kennedy Administration, acted as head of the press information section of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

These are just three of myriad Nebraska women who played an important role in the development of our state and our country. Yet we remain largely unaware of their contributions to our lifestyles. Their names certainly aren't as easily recognized as those of Zebulon Pike, Peter Sarpy, William Jennings Bryan, George Norris, or even Henry Fonda, Dick Cavett or Gale Sayers. And lack of

recognition to women such as these leaves a void in our body of knowledge.

Women's history is important to men as well as women. We are as affected by our mothers as we are by our fathers. The need to study and remember that the achievements of the women in our past are more than simply feminist issues. They are people issues. The more we know about our past, the more we know about ourselves.

For these reasons, March has been designated Women's History Month across the nation. Gov. Kerrey will make it official in Nebraska Friday when he signs a proclamation.

Across the state, events and celebrations will honor women's contributions to our heritage. But there are other ways to observe the event. Read a book written by or about a woman. Read women's poetry. If you're casting about for a topic for a paper, choose one relating to women's history. Take a look at your mother, your grandmother, your sister, your wife, yourself. How have these women changed your life and your attitudes? Your community?

Such knowledge is important in a broad way. It is not an obscure specialty for women's studies majors. If we only know the history of this country as seen through the actions of men, we know only half the history of this country.

Leslie Boellstorff

University education should 'win toss' over athletics

I heard it on the news last Wednesday night. Some unidentified man was saying, "This is indeed a sad day for Georgia." The newscaster then informed us that the news had struck hard at home, where the Georgia Senate was wearing black armbands to mourn the loss. End of telecast.

I wondered if something had happened to former President Jimmy Carter. He does reside in Plains, Ga., you know. Then, I wondered if, perhaps, the Atlanta



Becky Stingley

murders that had plagued the black children of the area in 1981 had started again.

I grabbed the newspaper. Nothing about Georgia on the front page. Page two . . . nothing. Page three . . . nothing. Nothing about Georgia in the entire first section. I forged through the grocery ads hoping to find news of Georgia's loss. Nothing.

Finally, page 29 of the Lincoln Journal . . . Walker ineligible, to USFL. My mind clicks. Walker plays for Georgia, doesn't he? Yes, yes . . . I remember. He won the Heisman Trophy, scored some 17 touchdowns last season for the University of Georgia.

It says he's leaving Georgia to play in the new United States Football League. He signed an agreement for \$16.5 million. Gosh, I'd leave for a half million. I'd even leave for two free months at the training camp in Orlando, Fla. This Walker guy is smart. He's not going to pay tuition to play football; somebody is going to pay him.

Then, my mind trots back to my original thought, Georgia's loss. I am amazed. Georgia state senators are wearing black armbands to commemorate the loss of a football player? A death, I could understand, but a student football player signing a contract to play professionally?

And then I think, well, so the state of Georgia has its priorities confused. It happens. It's happened in Nebraska. Why, how many times have state citizens worried more about a football loss rather than the loss of quality professors at our university? How many times has the NU Board of Regents quibbled over Orange Bowl funds and student tickets, rather than computer terminals and library resources?

How embarrassing for the state of Georgia. Gee, I hope Rozier doesn't go pro this year. What a scandal it would cause. Poor Big Red armbands in the Unicameral, mourning the loss of an I-back. Not a loss of jobs. Not a loss of state revenue. No, the loss of a football player.

Then I think, wouldn't it be grand if all college football players turned professional and our country's institutions of higher education returned to being institutions of

higher education rather than institutions of higher football ratings? Students could worry about what classes to take, what books to read, which ideas to pursue, rather than which games to attend, which seating section to fight for, and which red shirt to wear.

Georgia's loss could be higher education's gain. What a great idea. People would call to mind Nebraska's great state university and not Nebraska's great university team. We could put Lincoln on the map — without a football draw around it.

And then, when I think seriously about it, I remember that football Coach Tom Osborne is one of education's biggest fans. And it's not Dave Rimington's fault that this state forgets football is an additional program to the university's academic offerings. Rimington seems to have realized that the economics of professional football require a player to know more than the simple laws of supply and demand. Rather than hop aboard when the USFL may have asked, he decided to finish his degree. Three cheers for the all-star center, and not because he knows how to snap the ball.

Our school needs to stress both academic work and athletics, and so does the University of Georgia. We need football players who value their academic education as much as their football learning. We need students who stimulate their bodies as much as their minds. Boring people do one or other. Happy, healthy individuals do both.

So, Georgia is mourning the loss of a running back. Georgia coach Vince Dooley is wasting his time and tears. Herschel Walker made a decision. He left his criminology studies to pursue a professional football career, probably not without some regret. Every student has that option when and if they are offered a job opportunity in the midst of their college career.

Herschel Walker quit school. Many others choose to do the same midway through. Let's hope that Nebraska never drops to the ranks of Georgia's state mentality and declares it a sad day for the state because a university football player turns professional.

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