

Women Who Inspire

Honoring Women and
Their Accomplishments



Women's History Month

March 2017

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

The Multicultural Center



photo: freepik.com

This year's publication is dedicated to women who have accomplished and contributed to our nation through hard work and dedication. Often their work was undervalued. We honor women who have worked tirelessly, to make our lives better. This booklet honors and celebrates women who work hard every day!

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*Dr. Claire Van Ens: An Inspiration,
Role Model and Leader*



Dr. Van Ens is currently a professor at Kutztown University in the Communication Studies department, as well as the Chair of the department. She spent one year at Calvin College for her undergrad when she was eighteen years old. As a returning non-traditional student she then spent two years at Mesa Community College in San Diego, California.

She received her BA from the University of California, her MA in Communication Studies and Rhetoric and her Ph.D in interdisciplinary: Communication Studies (performance studies),

Radio-Film TV from the University of Texas.

Growing up, I always knew that I wanted equality and equal opportunities among men and women, but to label myself as a feminist seemed like social suicide. It wasn't until I met Dr. Van Ens that I realized being a loud, proud feminist is okay, and it's exactly what the world needs. She is the reason I now proudly identify as a feminist, stand up for women in situations I normally wouldn't, and registered to vote just in time for this past year's election. Dr. Van Ens has made me realize that as a future educator, it's my duty to educate individuals on the true meaning of feminism. Being a feminist does not mean that I am always angry and hate men. This stereotype needs to disappear because this is not the case whatsoever.

If it weren't for Dr. Van Ens and her Honors Gender Communication course, I would not openly identify as a feminist. I would not stand up for women's rights or voice my concerns in conversations with my friends or peers. I would not have registered to vote and would not have participated in this past year's election. Dr. Van Ens changed my life simply for the better.

Jesse Coffey

Angela Davis



photo: wordpress.com

The woman who inspired me the most I would say would be Angela Davis. Most people would argue that she could not possibly be a good role model but to me she is perfect. She stood for feminism and equal rights for African

Americans and she did it so

gracefully. What influenced her to become an activist was growing up and having first hand experiences to racism. I think what moved Angela Davis was the bombing that killed four girls of the Sixteen Street Baptist church located in her hometown. This not only influenced her but it was a big part of why she became the powerful woman she is. Some people only know Davis for her rebellion and her history in jail. Some may even think she was a problematic person but Angela Davis was a very well educated woman. She went to college at Brandeis University in Massachusetts and later became a graduate student at University of California in San Diego where she became active in the Black Panther Party.

She was then hired to teach at University of California (UCLA), but after a while she was fired because of her social activism and her membership in the Communist Party. Despite this setback, she fought hard to get her job back and won. This is one of the many reasons why I adore her. She had great perseverance and she fought against injustices. In 1970, she became the most hated and most wanted over a crime she did not commit. As a result, a massive campaign for her freedom was planned which helped with her acquittal in 1972.

In the last 25 years, Angela Davis has taught in all 50 states as well as in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the former Soviet Union. She has also authored 9 books. Ronald Reagan tried to ban Angela Davis from teaching at the University of California. Needless to say, Davis is now a distinguished professor at UCLA, Santa Cruz. In my opinion, absolutely nothing stopped this woman from fighting for what she believed in. Her incredible passion was just so courageous and amazing. Angela Davis inspires me because her story gives me motivation to keep fighting no matter what, even if people try to tear me down.

Lillian Anabui
Kutztown Student

Leeydra Wilson



A woman that inspires me is my mother, Leeydra Wilson. Leeydra grew up in Yeadon Pennsylvania with 5 older brothers and sisters. Though she grew up poor, she did not allow her circumstances to hold her back.

Leeydra was a cheerleader at Pennwood high school and was successful academically. She engulfed herself with the Spanish language and became so fluent, that she began to teach some of her classes. Following high school, she applied and was accepted to Bryn Mawr College, an all women private college that is nationally ranked for its prestige. At 22, an unexpected surprise came along (me) and she made the decision to put her dreams on the back burner to try and give me everything she ever wanted.

Life got in the way and Leeydra continued to sacrifice her dreams for those of her husband and children. For years Leeydra has been complimented on her cooking, but this was no ordinary cooking. She explored the world

of culinary arts through taste, color, presentation and culture. She was always brainstorming ideas of what area she could tackle next whether it be pastries, Thai, ice creams or perfectly braised duck.

With this new found love, Leeydra decided that it was time for her to follow her dreams. In 2014, Leeydra enrolled into The Art Institute (AI) as a culinary arts student. From the start of classes, her professors were amazed at her skill and willingness to learn. While studying at AI, Leeydra was also working her full time job, a part time job and being a mother and a wife. This task was not easy but she continued to persevere through every obstacle. In June 2016, Leeydra Wilson received her associate's degree in culinary arts from the Art Institute. She continues to wow and dazzle her friends and family through her culinary genius.

My mother inspires me because she has made me the person that I am today. Through everything in her life she has been an example of elegance and perseverance. My mother has instilled in me the fight to keep going no matter what. I could never repay her for the sacrifices she has made for me since the age of 22 and am truly blessed to say that I can call on her for anything!

Maya Wilson
Kutztown Student

Abby Wambach



photo: buzzfeed.com

Abby Wambach is primarily known as an amazing soccer player. However her life's journey is an inspirational story for everyone. Abby was born in Rochester, New York and started playing soccer at the age of four. During her thirty-one year soccer career, Abby has played professionally, been an Olympic gold medalist, received six U.S. Soccer Athlete of the Year awards and is currently still the leading all-time international scorer for men and women. After retiring from soccer in 2015, Abby has become an advocate for equal pay for women, a media analyst, a motivational speaker and an author.

Abby inspired me when I was soccer player because of her passion, energy, commitment, competitiveness and teamwork approach to the game. She never acted cocky and was a farseeing team leader. In her book, "Forward" Abby reveals not only her successes but her struggles throughout

her life. Through this book, I learned that it is okay to make mistakes and to fight for what you believe. For example, Abby always felt that she could play soccer as well as any man but could never understand why she was paid so much less than her male counterparts.

Abby is a visionary leader. Visionary leaders have an effective vision that attracts commitment and energizes people, has an image that creates meaning for followers, a vision that establishes a standard of excellence, and has a vision that bridges the present and the future. In soccer, Abby's hard work, dedication to excellence and "never give up" attitude inspired her teammates. Today, she is influencing women to push the status quo and be paid equally for it.

Abby Wambach is not just a soccer player. She does not just score goals, she is an example of how anyone with a vision, commitment, hard work and teamwork can be successful.

Jennifer Brittingham
Kutztown Student

Helena Devereux



photo: devereux.org

Helena Devereux

(1885-1975), as stated in the New York Times, was a “pioneer in the establishment of residential centers of mentally

[handicapped]...children”.

She dedicated her life to advocating for individuals

with disabilities during a time

when little was known about the disabilities or how to effectively teach the students. As an aspiring special education teacher and an advocate for their rights, I am inspired by Helena Devereux and her courage and passion to do what she felt was right. When she was my age, 18, she was learning to be a teacher at the Philadelphia Normal School in 1906. After graduation, she was hired at George Washington School in south Philadelphia, which was a disadvantaged school and was where she first noticed the lack of services for students with disabilities. Her philosophy that called for equal access to an appropriate education led way to the individualized education programs we have today.

In 1911, the Philadelphia Board of Educators proposed that Helena become the first Director of Special Education, but she decided to turn down the position and increased salary to continue working directly with her students.

Over the years she housed multiple students with disabilities along with teaching in her classroom, which is now known as the first special education classroom. With her own funds she bought a house to begin the organization “The Devereux Foundation”, all while teaching in a public school and continuing her own education. Helena was the fourth woman and first non-medical individual to hold a position in the American Psychiatric Association and published one paper in *The Psychological Clinic*, which were both rightfully earned.

While her innovative work is impressive, her dedication to the field of special education is what inspires me the most. I strive to be a teacher that is all-in for my students, not for any awards or titles, but to be the best I can to advocate for and educate the students in my future classroom.

Brittany Brown
Kutztown Student

The Yankee Rebel



Margaret Elizabeth Miller nee Huggard was a member of what is now known as “The Greatest Generation”. She and her peers lived through The Great Depression, World Wars, and social upheavals such as the struggle for civil rights. All of these events tested their mettle and Margaret became a strong willed, independent, fiercely loyal

woman determined to overcome any obstacle life sent her way.

When Margaret announced that she would marry Alfred Miller in 1942 her family voiced firm objections to their union. They felt she was too young and inexperienced to deal with the vast differences in culture and upbringing. She was an Irish catholic raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the young man (a stranger to them) serving in the navy during wartime was a protestant from some small ‘hick’ town in the deep South. I’m glad Margaret won the argument because I became their first born in 1947 and my two sisters came along shortly thereafter. Our nuclear family remained in Pennsylvania until 1956 when my mother agreed to try a totally different lifestyle and we moved to St Marys, Georgia. Like Alice through the looking glass, everything was the opposite.

Margaret was not well received. She made social gaffes whenever she expressed her views on race, religion and even child rearing. There was even a caste system defined by which church one attended. My mother heard about a campaign to oust the school's principal because he did not attend an 'acceptable' denomination. Mother was outraged, she circulated petitions and tried to save his position. Even though she was defeated the principal came to our home to thank her for her efforts.

During her life, Margaret was there to assist folks who were going through a rough patch. She opened her heart and her home to them. I remember a period of time when there were sixteen people living in our home, many of which were not close family members. You could say mother was into communes before communes were 'cool'. My mother instilled a moral compass within me and my siblings which was meant to guide us to take the right path during our daily lives. Mother's sense of humor, steadfastness, unconditional love of family, trust in the basic goodness of people and her deep abiding faith in God are traits that I try to emulate. Margaret was an inspiration and I will miss her presence forever.

Margaret Begley
Mother of Kelly Hish Kutztown
Office of Graduate Admissions

My Mother



As I have gotten older and grown into the woman I am today, I have realized that the woman that I look up to the most is my mother. As a child, it is so easy to take your mother or either of your parents for granted. The

lessons they try to teach us and the situations they are constantly trying to save us from during our adolescence are difficult to understand until we are able to experience life on our own and eventually develop a more mature mentality. Growing up, we all think that our parents are just trying to take the fun out of our lives, but we soon realize that it is not the case and usually we wish to have known what we were so stubborn to hear.

Our relationship is the perfect example of that. I was always what you would call a “good child”, but as I came of age I began to become more of a rebel and felt as though I can take on the entire world on my own. I felt as though I didn’t need anyone to accomplish anything, I felt I didn’t even need my family. It was a hard lesson I learned when I was thrown out into the real world with that mentality. If I would have just listened to not only my mother, but both of my parents, I would not have had to go through some of

the obstacles I encountered throughout my adult life. However, no matter how bad things got or how much I pushed her away, my mother always stuck around. She was still the one person I can always turn to if I need any type of help when my “friends” were no longer by my side. I went through a lot before I realized that I really couldn’t take life on completely alone. You always need that one special person that never stops seeing the good in you in order for you to keep moving forward.

It still amazes me that someone can love me as much as my mom did when I wasn’t so easy to love. In hindsight, if I was in her position, I don’t think I would have been able to show the affection she showed me after the things I had done and the things I had said. Rather, she never failed to show me she was going to be right there when I came to my senses. I was extremely blessed to have someone like this woman in my life because she never fails to see the light in every situation. For that, I could never thank her enough.

Yokaira Caberra
Kutztown Student

My Mom

The woman that has inspired me the most throughout my life would have to be my mother. She's been there with me through all the good times and the bad. One memory I have of my mom helping me get through some tough times was the first time I had to move. I grew up in Philadelphia with my Mom and Dad and they felt it was best for me if we move to a new neighborhood. We moved to a town called Cherry Hill which is located in New Jersey. This was very tough for me because I was 12 years old and had no desire to leave the friends that I had grown so close to. I was very emotional thinking about leaving my friends and having to meet all new friends.

My mom talked me through it and reminded me that I was still young and I am going to have plenty of time to meet new friends. She also offered to drive me back to see my old neighborhood every once in awhile since it was only about forty-five minutes away from the new house. After the move, she let me set up my room how I wanted to make sure I felt comfortable. She knew it was tough for me, so she did everything she could to make this new house feel like home and try and take my mind off the move, a little. My mom was also a huge help in picking the right college for me.

As a senior in high school, I was clueless when it came to applying to colleges. My mom would sit down with me at night even after she just got home from a long day of work. We would look at different colleges and see if they fit my major and if I

could see myself living at the university. She would help me plan out my college essays which helped me get into most of the colleges I really wanted to attend. I was able to narrow my college choice down to three schools and I had a really tough time making a choice of which one I wanted to attend. My mom was right by my side helping me list my options and see which one was my best fit. In the end, I picked Kutztown and have met some friends that I can call friends for life. I'm coming up on my senior year at Kutztown as an education major and I could not have done all of this without her.

Even today, my mom is still right there for me. When I come home for breaks from school she always has dinners prepared for me and always makes sure I have clean clothes. I don't know how I would have gotten through life without my mom, as she was there for me through all my problems and struggles in life and helped me get through all of them. She has shaped me into the man I am today and for that I thank her.

Nicholas Karcher
Kutztown Student

Rosina Tucker



photo:folklife.si.edu

Born Rosina Harvey in Washington D.C. on November 4, 1881, Rosina Tucker was an exceptional woman who filled her years with political activism, labor organization, and education. She lived to see 105 years of American history as the nation fought over her rights as a unionist, woman, and African American.

Tucker is a fitting feature for this month's focus on "women in labor and business" due to her legacy of extensive work in the areas of workers' rights and civil rights activism. Her first documented participation with unionizing began through the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), a worker's union led by African American porters. Her husband's job was jeopardized after employers discovered her efforts to support the union. Tucker had been distributing literature, recruiting, and fundraising on behalf of the BSCP. In retaliation to the firing of her husband, she personally visited his supervisor's office and

demanded he would give her husband's job back. She assumed that his supervisor was frightened because she is a black woman and stood against a white man. Sure enough, her husband was rehired the next day. Rosina Tucker's will and commitment are further evidenced by her continued support of the union and its recognition in 1937 by The Pullman Company, which won its workers better benefits and job security. After this success, Tucker, along with other union wives, formed the International Ladies Auxiliary (ILA) in 1938, of which she became the first secretary-treasurer. Together, the members of the ILA continued their work in union advocacy.

Even after this progression, Tucker continued her advocacy for education (she was a music teacher before an activist), civil rights, and labor for decades. She lobbied Congress for legislation affecting her areas of concern, traveled the country to deliver talks, and wrote an autobiography, posthumously published in 2012, titled *My Life as I Have Lived It*. She was the recipient in later years of multiple awards, including one from the NAACP for outstanding service. Rosina Tucker was outspoken, tough and determined to change America's views. This is why she inspires us.

Anna Nissley and
Gabby Smallwood
Kutztown Students

Inspiration

Inspiration is defined as a divine influence or action on a person believed to qualify him or her to receive and communicate sacred revelation. Now, those divine influences almost always start off with a child's parents. In respect to the situations where that is not the case, those that are inspired become so not only because of what they believe in themselves, but by the hope of those people they hold in very high regard. Those dreams of another extended the ambition and aspiration to new unfathomable levels the man, woman, or child could never dream of, or were to afraid to actually entertain in thought.

Inspiration comes from any angle. It can range from more modern examples like Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic woman to serve the United States Supreme Court to sports figure, like Jennifer Welter, the first women to be hired to coach men's pro football. There are older historic examples of women who inspire and even every day-to-day people you meet. The teacher that believed in you a little more than everyone else, or the one that said you would never make it. As dark as it is inside our body, it is what's inside that shines the most. This light's spectrum does not consist of wavelengths but concepts like will, passion confidence, morality, creativity, and those with that "je ne sais quoi" that makes someone special.

It's ever changing and at most reflects what can't be seen. In my case, the majority of my inspiration is an after effect. I have seen and been inspired by my mother, family, friends, and those around me, and received second hand experience beyond my expectations. And although I can't even begin to imagine all the sacrifices they have made along the way, I focus on why it was done instead of exactly what was done. Only in consideration, and with non-diminishing influence do I think about the "what if's" in regards to their opinions. I plan to make them proud by making myself proud. Being scared to take risks for your dreams leaves you with regrets. It was shown to me; true inspiration comes from within.

The inspiration given to me did not have to be a huge fire in my chest, but a fire that evoked a mentality that one's inner fire is only true when self-sustained. My inner fire drives me and my inner light guides me. My hope for those who read these words, remember not to only be goal-oriented motivation, but inspire, by motivating others. The most destructive thing you can do for someone is something they felt they can achieve through self-determination.

Michael Pagan
Kutztown Student

Milk and Honey

did you think i was a city
big enough for a weekend getaway?
i am the town surrounding it
the one you've never heard of
but always pass through
there are no neon lights here
no skyscrapers or statues
but there is a thunder
for i make bridges tremble
i am not street meat i am homemade jam
thick enough to cut the sweetest thing your lips will touch
i am not police sirens i am the crackle in a fireplace
i'd burn you and you wouldn't take your eyes off me
cause i'd look so beautiful doing it you'd blush
i am not a hotel room. i am home.
i am not the whiskey you want
i am the water you need
don't come here with expectations
and try to make a vacation out of me

by Rupí Kaur
Submitted by Corrine Smith
Kutztown Student

Strong Woman

Strong Woman

Spending hour's road

Strong Woman

Given a destination to go

Strong Woman

Transporting people daily

Strong woman

Transferring goods weekly

Strong Woman

Moving through the city streets sleekly

Strong Woman

Trucking across the country

Strong Woman

Making sure kids are on time for school

Strong Woman

Knows its okay to act like a fool

Strong Woman

They told her that her place wasn't the road

They told her that this was a man's occupation

Giving her a hopeless sensation

However she is a strong woman
She is turning the workforce around
Knocking barriers to the ground
The next time you see a woman driving a truck or bus
Look her in the eyes with great robust and say
You are a strong woman within my eyes
And never believe others doubt and lies
My strong woman.

Lynisha Compton
Kutztown Student



photo: freepik.com

Special Thanks

Thank you to those who submitted incredible pieces to this year's publication. Your stories are astounding and we are grateful you have all shared a part of yourselves.

Thank You!

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Project Coordinator and Booklet Design

Arashi Mesa-Melo

Graduate Assistant, Multicultural Center

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