



## General Federation of Women's Clubs FEDERATION FACTS In The Know

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- ❖ *GFWC* was an important force in founding America's first national parks and supported the creation of the National Park Service. Each federation established a park within their state. Many, including Everglades National Park, were handed over to the National Park Service and now are enjoyed by millions.
- ❖ In 1916, *GFWC* suggested that special naturalization services be made part of Independence Day celebrations, a tradition that endures today.
- ❖ During World War I, *GFWC* formed the Overseas Service Unit, which sent one hundred young women to Europe to assist wounded soldiers. *GFWC* also raised money for the purchase of Liberty Bonds and to support the Red Cross and the YMCA.
- ❖ During World War II, *GFWC* raised monies to buy bombers and planes. State federations provided funds for scholarships and loans to train nurses, and over 6,000 young women were recruited for the Cadet Nurse Corps. Over 4,500 Juniors enlisted in the various services established for women.
- ❖ *GFWC* began a campaign to name official state birds and flowers in the 1920's.
- ❖ *GFWC* was instrumental in securing national support for the United Nations. In 1945, *GFWC* was one of only five women's organizations invited by the government to send delegates to the United Nations Conference.
- ❖ By 1933, *GFWC* had founded 75% of America's public libraries, as well as pioneered the idea of bookmobiles.
- ❖ In the 1950s, *GFWC*'s Americanism Department called for members to help refurbish Independence Hall. *GFWC* raised and contributed more than any other donor organization.
- ❖ Many modern safety measures were early *GFWC* programs. The Federation had campaigns for seatbelts in all cars, streetlights on neighborhood streets and accurate labeling of food and medications.
- ❖ *GFWC* represents its members on Boards of Directors, Advisory Boards and organizational coalitions, including (among others) Keep America Beautiful, Make a Difference Day, Child Labor Coalition, Connect America, Strong Women: Inside and Out, and the National Center on Women and Aging.

## GFWC CLUBWOMEN YOU SHOULD KNOW

- ❖ Julia Ward Howe, a prolific writer and leader in the suffrage movement, is best known for authoring the poem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." She helped to organize the New England Woman's Club in 1868, and served as President of the Massachusetts Federation of Women's Clubs.
- ❖ Jane Addams founded Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago that served as a model for the social reform movement of the Progressive Era. She was a vocal advocate for working women and child labor laws. She was also a leader in the suffrage movement and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. Addams was a member of the Chicago Woman's Club and served as Chairman of the GFWC Committee on Child Labor in the early 1900s.
- ❖ Eleanor Roosevelt was a First Lady, social reformer, columnist, teacher, political activist, and a tireless advocate for the poor and disadvantaged. She served on the first U.S. delegation to the United Nations and drafted the Declaration of Human Rights while chairing the Human Rights Commission for that body. An active member of the Chautauqua Woman's Club in New York, she maintained strong ties with the Federation throughout her years as First Lady.
- ❖ Ellen Demorest, co-founder of *Sorosis*, was the inventor of mass-produced paper sewing patterns. They were included in her magazine, *Mme. Demorest's Mirror of Fashions*, for which Jane Cunningham Croly was the chief staff writer.
- ❖ Dr. June McCarroll, a California clubwoman, came up with the idea of a white line painted down the center of highways as a safety measure. In 1924, the California Highway Commission agreed to paint 3,500 miles of road as a trial. The rest is history. Dr. McCarroll said, "I do know that the entire Federation of Women's Clubs has given time and strong influence to make the line a reality."
- ❖ Bertha Ethel Knight Landes was elected the first woman mayor of a major city (Seattle) in 1926. She had served as president of the city council and as president of the Seattle City Federation of Women's Clubs.
- ❖ Ellen Woodward was appointed by President Roosevelt in 1938 to the three member Social Security Board which administered the programs of the Social Security Act. She was the second woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Woodward was also an active member of the Mississippi Federation of Women's Clubs.
- ❖ Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman elected to both Houses of Congress and served for a total of 33 years (1940-1973). She was an active member of the Skowhegan, Maine Sorosis and became president of the club at age 25. In 1964, she became the first woman to campaign for the presidential nomination of a major political party.