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Women's Impact on the First Decade of the Millennium

As the end of the first decade of the new millennium approaches, let us highlight some of the women who have changed our lives in our country and this state.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

In 2008, **Michelle Obama** became the first African-American First Lady in the White House. During the Presidential election race, **Sarah Palin** was the second woman in history to have won the nomination of a major party as the Republican Party candidate for Vice President, and **Hillary Clinton**, as a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination, won more primaries and delegates than any other female candidate in American history. Clinton was also the first former First Lady to run for public office (U.S. Senator–N.Y.; 2000) and to serve in a president's cabinet (current Secretary of State).

Two other women served as Secretary of State during the decade: **Dr. Madeleine Albright**, the first woman Secretary of State, and **Condoleezza Rice**, the first African-American woman to hold that office. **Nancy Pelosi** is the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives and the highest-ranking female politician in American history. **Sonia Sotomayor**, confirmed by the Senate in 2009, is the Supreme Court's third female and first Hispanic Justice.

In Pennsylvania, **Catherine Baker Knoll** became the first woman Lieutenant Governor in 2002. Although accurate records are not kept, two mayors are probably the youngest U.S. female mayors; Mayors **Jenny Lynn Barger**, age 20, of Sligo and **Cassandra Coleman**, age 21, of Exeter.

MILITARY

In 2000, Navy Commander **Kathleen McGrath** became the first woman to command a Navy warship at sea, and Air Force General **Betty Mullis** was the first woman pilot to attain the rank of Brigadier

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General. The Army and Army National Guard promoted their first women to Brigadier General in 2001 and 2002: **Coral Wong Pietsch** (also the first Asian-American woman) and **Julia J. Cleckley**. In 2004 and 2007, Lt. Col. **Martha McSally** and Commander **Sara Joyner** became the first women to take command of fighter squadrons in the Air Force and Navy. The Coast Guard made history in 2006 when VADM **Vivien S. Crea** became Vice Commandant, making her the first woman ever to serve as a deputy service chief in any of the U.S. Armed Forces. And in 2008, Army Gen. **Ann E. Dunwoody**, was the first woman military officer to attain the rank of four-star general.

SPACE

During the decade, women made 38 space flights; and the first two female Shuttle Commanders, **Eileen Collins and Pamela Melroy**, led missions into space. In 2006, **Anousheh Ansari** became the first female space tourist; and in 2009, **Nicole Stott** was the 10th woman to walk in space.

BUSINESS

Anne Mulcahy took the helm of Xerox in 2001, keeping it from the threat of bankruptcy; her successor, **Ursula Burns**, is the first African-American woman CEO to head a Fortune 500 company. **Lynn Eisenhans** is the first woman to head a major U.S. oil company, SUNOCO; and **Ellen Kullman** is the first female CEO in Dupont's more than 200-year history. **Patricia Woertz**, who heads Archer Daniels Midland, is the highest ranking woman CEO on the Fortune 500 list.

NOBEL PRIZE

Eleven women received the Nobel Prize this past decade. In 2009, Nobel Prizes were awarded to women in four of the six categories, the most awarded to women in any one year. The recipients were **Ada E. Yonath** in Chemistry, **Elizabeth H. Blackburn** and **Carol W. Greider** in Physiology or Medicine, **Herta Muller** in Literature, and **Elinor Ostrom** in Economic Sciences.

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ARTS AND EDUCATION

And lest we forget the arts and education, **J.K. Rowling** reigned over children's lives for this decade with her Harry Potter books. **Stephenie Meyer**, known for her *Twilight* series, gained worldwide recognition, won multiple literary awards and was named *USA Today's* "Author of the Year" in 2008. **Oprah Winfrey**, American television host, producer, and philanthropist, has been ranked the richest African-American of the 20th century and the greatest African-American philanthropist in American history. In Pennsylvania, **Dr. Karen Stout** was hired as the county's first female community college president in 2001 at Montgomery County Community College.

"While much has changed and many advances have been made over the past decade, women still have not achieved full participation, equity and economic self-sufficiency in the workplace" stated **Denise Clawson, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW/PA)**. "That is why BPW/PA will continue its advocacy into the next decade, in order to achieve an equitable and diverse workforce." For more information on BPW/PA, visit www.bpwpa.org.

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