

Library Lines by Ruth Gilbert, Youth Librarian, Kirkland Town Library

It may be halfway through Women's History Month, but it's not too late to share some books with your family about impressive, history-making women. Picture book biographies are a really fun and accessible way for kids (and adults!) to learn about fascinating people. Here are some of my favorite titles about all kinds of women: musicians, scientists, politicians, and leaders.

On the surface, "A True Wonder: The Comic Book Hero Who Changed Everything" by Kirsten W. Larson and Katy Wu, is about Wonder Woman and how she came to be. But once you start reading this fascinating history, written and illustrated in comic book-style, you'll learn how Wonder Woman is linked to pop culture, politics, history, and feminism, and that she affected a whole generation of women and men.

"Nina: A Story of Nina Simone" by Traci N. Todd and Christian Robinson uses deceptively simple illustrations and clear text to introduce the reader to singer, songwriter, and pianist Nina Simone. Nina Simone's musical talent was discovered in her early childhood, but it was a difficult road to becoming a world-renowned performer. After being rejected from a prestigious music school because of her race, she went on to eventually play concerts in places like the famous Carnegie Hall in New York City. As her fame grew, she used her voice to draw attention to the Civil Rights Movement and to sing "the whole story of Black America for everyone to hear."

"Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer" by Traci Sorell and Natasha Donovan is about the life of an important scientist you've probably never heard of. A member of the Cherokee tribe, Mary Golda Ross worked with a handful of other engineers to design aircrafts that could explore space. The work was top-secret, and much of it is still classified today. She also worked to recruit other American Indians and young women to the field of engineering.

"She Was the First! The Trailblazing Life of Shirley Chisholm" by Katheryn Russell-Brown and Eric Velasquez tells the stories of the many firsts achieved by Shirley Chisholm. After working as an educator, Shirley became the first Black woman elected to the New York State Assembly, and then the first Black woman elected to the US Congress where she served for 7 terms. She was also the first Black candidate from a major political party to run for president. She didn't win that race, but she continued working hard as a speaker, writer, and teacher. In 2015 she was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"When Sue Found Sue: Sue Hendrickson Discovers Her T. Rex" by Toni Buzzeo and Diana Sudyka introduces us to the woman who discovered the world's largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton. Sue was always a curious child who liked to find things. As a young adult she explored the sea as a scuba diver, and later joined a team of paleontologists in South Dakota where she found the dinosaur skeleton that would be named after her.

“History Smashers: Women’s Right to Vote” by Kate Messner is part of a series of history books for older children that look past the mythologies that have sprung up around famous historical events. This book is chock-full of fascinating and true anecdotes about the people involved in the women’s suffrage movement. The author is excellent at breaking down and explaining complicated events and ideas for young readers, and reveals many unknown stories.

Visit your local library today to find more stories of incredible women.