

# WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES

NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2018 | ISSUE 62

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# Aretha Franklin

*Remembering Her Legacy*

**K**nown as an extraordinary singer-songwriter, women's rights advocate, and the "Queen of Soul," Aretha Franklin was one of the most significant female influences in music industry over the past five decades. This August, Franklin passed away at 76 years old in her Detroit home, bringing about a national reflection of her groundbreaking work in the music industry, involvement in the Civil Rights movement, and promotion of women's rights.

She released songs across multiple genres, including Jazz, Pop, R&B, Rock, Blues, and Gospel. Her career was successful, and resulted in 18 competitive Grammy Awards, 20 No.1 R&B hits, and performances at the White House and presidential inaugurations. However, Franklin was known for more than her wide vocal range, popular lyrics, and melodious compositions. She paved the way for future female artists by advocating for women's rights and called for women to be respected in both the home and workplace.

In 1967, her groundbreaking remix of "Respect" was released and became a symbol for feminists and the women's rights movement. Originally sang by American artist Otis Redding, Franklin turned it into an anthem of confidence and dignity for women. Last year, Robert Siegel from NPR music noted, "Respect wasn't a feminist song until Franklin made it one," and he was right. Franklin boldly deconstructed a song that initially reinforced traditional family and gender roles, and delivered powerful lyrics that shift power back to the woman and command equal respect. In Franklin's mind, it was time for respect to be given, and no longer denied.

Franklin's unapologetic advocacy for marginalized groups is ingrained in her identity. From an early age, Franklin witnessed her father's advocacy for equal rights for African Americans and other minority groups. Her work reflected a shared experience and need for respect of women in that period, but also her personal experience as an African American woman in the twentieth century. Although she rarely revealed her personal life to the public, she shared with Time Magazine in 1968 the domestic abuse she endured in her first marriage. She never let the abuse define her, but instead pushed forward and created a conversation about women's rights and equality through her music.

Although her most popular songs were released in the 1960's and 70's, her message is still relevant today. Franklin's song "Respect" has been adopted by the black-power movement, feminist movements, civil rights activists, and most recently the #MeToo movement. Franklin firmly believed that respect was an inherent right of all human beings, and lived her life in a way that empowered others to stand up for the respect they deserve.

written by Emma Duke



# STACEY ABRAMS

*and her rise to the democratic nomination*



**F**rom writing romance novels to leading as the Minority Leader in the Georgia House of Representatives, Stacey Abrams has pursued an array of passions and interests throughout her life. Her most recent accomplishment: shaping history as Georgia's first black female nominee for governor. If elected in November, she will be the first black female governor of any state in the United States.

Although she has experienced success in many areas of life, her journey has not always been easy. Her story begins in 1973 when she was born in Madison, Wisconsin before moving to Gulfport, Mississippi. Abrams, along with her parents and five siblings, moved to Atlanta, Georgia

where Abrams spent the rest of her childhood. In Atlanta, her parents both worked as Methodist ministers and their family lived under moderate financial stress. Abrams was raised to be resourceful in the home and diligent in her studies, which led to success. By 17 years old, she was thriving academically and entered the world of politics by working as a typist and speechwriter in a congressional campaign. She was entering adulthood with the excellent beginnings of an education and career, but she would soon begin to personally confront challenges of privilege and inequality in society.

After graduating high school as valedictorian, she was invited to attend a celebration for valedictorians with the governor. As Abrams tried to enter, she was stopped at the door. She said that the guard looked at her and said, "This is a private event, you don't belong here." Despite growing up in a poorer household, Abrams worked hard to excel in the classroom by reading books and watching educational shows on PBS. She developed a strong work ethic and discipline in school, and earned the distinguished honor of graduating as valedictorian. However, despite her resiliency and determination, she was told no – there was not a place for her. Stacey Abrams has since dedicated her life to making sure every human knows that they are valued, they belong, and that there is a place for them here in this world.

The feelings Abrams felt from such a subordinating, marginalizing experience are all too common in the stories of those in minority groups today. As a black woman living in the Southern United States, Abrams has dealt with stereotypes forced upon her, faced judgements, and battled discrimination. Because of this, breaking down barriers and institutional structures that reinforce inequality has been a priority and focus of Abrams' energy. She has done this through the various projects and initiatives, including her campaign for governor.

In 2013, Abrams found out that thousands of eligible voters of color in Georgia were not registered to vote. She then founded the New Georgia Project, which exists to "register and civically engage the rising electorate" in the state. Within two years, the initiative successfully aided over 200,000 minority citizens in becoming registered voters. This empowers men and women by giving them voting power, and builds deeper connections within communities. She has also worked to empower individuals in the business sector. Abrams co-founded NOW Account, which is an Atlanta-based company that helps small businesses grow and become financially sustainable. She also has created change through legislation. In 2010, Abrams became the first woman to lead in the Georgia General Assembly and the first African American to lead in the House of Representatives. Following her passion for education, one of her first reform efforts as the Minority Leader was with Governor Nathan Deal's administration to improve the HOPE scholarship foundation, which helps students of Georgia further their educations. She also worked closely with Governor Deal on criminal justice

reform and prison reform. Her work within the business sector and public policy created a strong foundation for her to prepare to run in the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election.

" Stacey Abrams has... dedicated her life to making sure every human knows that they are valued, they belong, and that there is a place for them here in this world."

Abrams' vision for Georgia is built upon equality that fosters prosperity. While running on a progressive platform, Abrams supports education reform, expansive criminal justice and reentry reform, growth of small businesses, and affordable housing. She unashamedly supports the LGBTQ community of Georgia, and is committed to protecting their rights and upholding equality. She also stands in strong support of the immigrants who reside in Georgia. On her campaign website, she addresses the immigrant community, saying, "You strengthen our state, and you are vital to its future. Your success lifts us all, and I stand with you." Her campaign is one that is both inclusive and empowering.

Abrams connects her passions, skills, and strengths with the need she sees in her community in order to produce social change. She has a deeply personal motivation for bringing injustices to light, creating equality, and representing people who have historically been silenced. Regardless of the election results in November 2018, the reforms and legislation she has tirelessly poured into will continue to impact the lives of thousands in the state of Georgia. ■



Stacey Abrams: I look forward to making history  
31,389 views

Click above to watch an interview with Stacey Abrams about her campaign

written by Emma Duke



# film: RUTH BADER GINSBURG

written by Emma Taghon



RBG - Official Trailer

830,063 views

4.2K 377 SHARE

"She is the closest thing to a superhero I know", says Gloria Steinem. In her 85 years, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has taken part in and advocated for the great strides women have taken in government, the workplace, and society at large, all while becoming somewhat of a pop culture icon. as explored in this new documentary.

Prior to her Supreme Court confirmation in 1993, Justice Ginsburg was already advocating for gender equality as the director of the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In these cases, she used clever logic and reasoning to fight legislation that discriminated on the basis of sex.

The laws often seemed to be beneficial to women, but were in fact reinforcing females' subordination and dependence on men. By highlighting the ways in which the laws also discriminated against men, Ginsburg was able to appeal to the men in power within the legal system at the time and help bring justice for all by breaking down systems of institutionalized discrimination.

It is her uniquely clever legal tactics and unwavering commitment to gender equality that has made Ruth Bader Ginsburg into not only a powerful political figure, but a true superhero.

## THE RBG WORKOUT

One thing many people do not know about Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is her dedication to fitness.

Justice Ginsburg has trained with a personal trainer, Bryant Johnson, since 1999, combining weights and cardio to stay in optimal physical condition. At age 85, she is able to complete 20 full pushups!

Click the video below to watch Stephen Colbert join her workout regimen.



Stephen Works Out With Ruth Bader Ginsburg

1,340,595 views

14K 888 SHARE

# a brief history of feminism

## first wave

late 19th c. and early 20th c.

The main focus of the first wave of feminism was suffrage (the right to vote) for women. Suffragettes marched and protested for their right to vote and some even faced jail time and cruel treatment from law enforcement.

Thanks to their determination, women gained the right to vote in 1920.



### NOTABLE FIGURES

Susan B. Anthony  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
Lucretia Mott  
Ida B. Wells



## second wave

1960's & 1970's

Second wave feminists were concerned with issues such as:

- reproductive rights (birth control, abortion, etc.)
- sexuality
- family & traditional gender roles
- the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment
- Title IX
- workplace discrimination



Gloria Steinem  
& Dorothy Pittman-Hughes

THE  
PERSONAL  
IS  
POLITICAL

## third wave

early 1990's

Third wave feminism was driven by a need for more intersectional understandings of identity and oppressive systems. Minority women had previously not been well represented in feminism and third wave feminism sought to represent the multifaceted identities and experiences of all women.

Two events in the third wave were the Anita Hill case, which set the stage for justice for victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault and the riot grrrl groups in music that sought to reclaim the derogatory terms used towards women such as slut, bitch and whore.



## fourth wave

now?

The question now stands:

**Are we in a fourth wave?**

With the #MeToo movement and the Women's March of 2017, feminism has seen a resurgence in recent years.



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[Click the logo to see the Facebook page](#)

Check out the Berry College Women's and Gender Studies page for more information about the program

[Click the Berry logo to see the website](#)



For more information on the program, please contact the Director of Women's and Gender Studies, Dr. Susan Conradsen at [sconradsen@berry.edu](mailto:sconradsen@berry.edu)

**WNS NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 62**

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