

The Year of the Woman

[Photo: Dr. Farmer.jpg] **1/13/20** — The year 2020 will be the ‘Year of the Woman.’ This year, we mark the centennial celebration of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and the success of the suffrage movement. After a prolonged fight for the right to vote, the 19th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified on August 18, 1920. Despite the Southern states’ staunch opposition to the amendment, the state of Tennessee broke ranks and voted to ratify the amendment. The Tennessee state legislature was in a 48-48 tie vote until, upon the advice of his mother, 23-year-old Representative Harry Burn cast the deciding vote in favor of the 19th Amendment. Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment thus reaching the two-thirds majority required for national ratification. The 19th Amendment declared, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

Think about the amazing impact that women have had on our society in the last century since gaining the right to vote. American women have served as ambassadors, legislators, senators, justices, and cabinet members. Women have excelled as Nobel Prize winners, Grammy Award winners, Emmy Award winners, Pulitzer Prize winners, Tony Award winners, and Olympic gold medalists. Women have climbed mountains, swam the English Channel, become professional athletes, served as astronauts, and excelled in a plethora of professions. American women have earned the Purple Heart, the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, the Bronze Star, and served as Major Generals and Brigadier Generals in the armed services. During World War II, it was Rosie the Riveter that replaced male workers in factories and shipyards. This transition of women into traditionally male work roles set in motion a decades-long advancement of women in the American workforce that dramatically enhanced both American productivity and ingenuity.

Women have also had an amazing impact on Weatherford College and the quality of life that our broader community now enjoys. The inaugural first lady of Weatherford College, Rebecca Switzer, taught music and brought an appreciation of the arts to the WC community in the late 1800s. A century later, first lady Dr. Velda Boyd would prove to be a unifying force of elegance. The leadership and wisdom of other influential WC women like Dorothy Doss, Marjorie Alkek, Dot Guess, Betty Jo Graber, Sue Coody, and many others added incredible value to the WC culture. Art instructor Myrlan Coleman is currently in her 50th year of teaching at Weatherford College... how many lives has she positively impacted? In addition to their intelligence and artistic talent, WC women such as former Miss Texas Gloria Gilbert, former Miss Weatherford College Clarin Gniffke, the Coyote Cuties of the 1970s, the Gold Dusters Dance Team of the 1990s, and countless WC cheerleaders were admired far and wide for both their beauty and grace. WC alumna such as nationally-known basketball coach Leta Andrews, Dr. Christa Mars of the famed Mayo Clinic, philanthropist Vickie Durant, and Aledo Mayor Kit Marshall have each made their mark on a grand scale. The women of Weatherford College have unquestionably enriched our society by bringing wisdom, beauty, and unbounded love to our community.

As we celebrate the centennial of the 19th Amendment, I tip my hat to all women. Perhaps Chaucer considered a woman’s innate propensity to love when he described the ‘fair maiden.’ Whether considering the unparalleled love of a mother, the soft kiss of a woman in love, or the inherent capacity of a woman to give selflessly, women are truly special! Words cannot aptly describe the beauty, enthusiasm, and singular magnificence of women! After pondering all that women are and marveling at

all that women have collectively accomplished, I can only image what women will achieve in this special year, the 'Year of the Woman.'

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