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Contact Information:
Governor's Press Office
NYC Press Office: 212.681.4640
Albany Press Office: 518.474.8418
press.office@exec.ny.gov



Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

Governor Cuomo Announces Opening of Capitol Exhibit Honoring Prominent New York Women

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Exhibition Includes Suffragist Wagon and Parade Banner, Rosie the Riveter Poster From 1942, and Women's Suffrage Sample Ballot From 1917

Albany, NY (March 21, 2012)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the opening of an exhibit in the State Capitol that honors prominent New York women and their contributions to society.

The new exhibit is part of the Governor's ongoing efforts to highlight New York's history at the Capitol, which began earlier this year with the restoration of the Hall of Governors and the Black History Month Exhibit on display in the War Room.

"As the father of three daughters, I believe it's important for our young people to learn about the incredible accomplishments of these New York women," said Governor Cuomo. "The women profiled in the exhibit should serve as examples for the next generation, and I hope it will inspire New Yorkers to learn more about the state's progressive history and the women who led the way."

The title of the exhibit, "From Seneca Falls to the Supreme Court: New York's Women Leading the Way," is meant to evoke how New York women have played a central role in expanding civil rights and leading progressive movements in the United States, from the very beginning of the women's movement in 1848 to present day.

A total of 36 women will be featured in the display. They represent a variety of fields of accomplishments such as government, suffrage, education, labor, health care, social movements, and arts and literature. Two women's studies scholars and staff from the State Museum were consulted on site location and while curating the exhibit.

Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy, Professor Emeritus at the University of Arizona at Tucson and founder of New York's first women's studies program at SUNY Buffalo, said, "At a time when many attacks on women's gains are common place it is important to honor some of the women who struggled to secure those rights for the current generation. From Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Audre Lorde we have had brilliant and visionary leaders. From the twenty thousand women who went on strike against the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory for better working conditions, to the students and faculty who fought for and built women's studies throughout the state university system, we have had courageous movement activists. Let them inspire us to continue these struggles, speaking up for the full humanity of women, while we also challenge the rising tide of racism, and the attacks on workers' rights. We welcome Governor Cuomo's support."

Professor Florence Howe, founding publisher of The Feminist Press at the City University of New York and Professor Emeritus of English at CUNY, said, "I am honored to be included among New York State women who have helped to change the course of history for women not only in the U.S., but internationally, as they joined with other women around the world. In particular, women's activism through the past 50 years has taught all of us that issues of race, class, and gender are inextricably intertwined. Fortunately, also, the Governor's wall provides a testament to the women's movement's pursuit of history through this period and beyond. I for one am grateful for his vision."

Mark Schaming, Director of the New York State Museum, said, "Governor Cuomo's vision is transforming the Capitol into a remarkable exhibit space where important history is shared with all New Yorkers. Today, artifacts, images and stories from extraordinary women who have shaped the State and nation enjoy a new place of respect in our Capitol. The Board of Regents believes that the State Museum collections are an asset all New Yorkers share. These new exhibitions bring our shared history to light in innovative ways."

In addition to the biographical panels, the exhibit also highlights important events in the history of New York State spanning from 1848 to the present, including: the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, the amendment to the New York State Constitution in 1917 and the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920, the election of Ida Sammis and Mary Lilly to the New York State Assembly in 1918 and the election Rhoda Fox Graves to the New York State Senate in 1934, the election of the first woman to a statewide office, Lieutenant Governor

Mary Anne Krupsak, in 1974, the appointment of Judge Judith Kaye to the Court of Appeals in 1983 and her subsequent appointment as Chief Judge in 1993, and finally, the appointments of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in 1993, Justice Sonia Sotomayor in 2009 and Justice Elena Kagan in 2010 to the United States Supreme Court.

The individuals featured in the exhibit include:

Government:

- Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court
- Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court
- Justice Elena Kagan, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court
- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, First woman to be elected to U.S. Senator for New York
- Judge Judith Kaye, First woman to serve as Chief Judge on the Court of Appeals
- Representative Geraldine Ferraro, First woman on a major party's national ticket
- Lieutenant Governor Mary Anne Krupsak, First woman elected to statewide office in New York

Suffrage:

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Famous suffragist
- Susan B. Anthony, Famous suffragist
- Alice Paul, 2nd generation of suffragists, instrumental in getting 19th amendment ratified
- Lucy Burns, 2nd generation of suffragists, instrumental in getting 19th amendment ratified

Education:

- Catherine Beecher, Advocate on behalf of the Common School movement
- Eleanor Baum, First woman to serve as dean of an engineering school at the Polytechnic Institute
- Florence Howe, Women's Studies pioneer and founder of Feminist Press at CUNY

Labor:

- Frances Perkins, Labor activist and first woman to serve as a cabinet secretary
- Kate Mullaney, First woman appointed to an office of a national labor organization, National Labor Congress
- Pauline Newman, International Ladies Garments Workers Union first general organizer
- Helen Keller, Author and advocate for safer working conditions for factory workers

Healthcare:

- Clara Barton, Founder of the American Red Cross
- Elizabeth Blackwell, First woman to receive an M.D. and a license to practice medicine in the United States
- Alma Woolley, Pioneer in nursing education
- Patricia Bath, Medical doctor and researcher who pioneered the use of lasers to treat cataracts

Social Movements:

- Gloria Steinem, Pioneer in the contemporary feminist movement
- Audre Lorde, Poet and author, started the first publishing house exclusively for women of color
- Constance Cook, Author of the New York's 1970 Reproductive Rights Act and instrumental in the creation of the SUNY system
- Billie Jean King, Famous athlete and advocate for women's equality
- Belva Ann Lockwood, First woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court
- Julia A.J. Foote, First African-American woman preacher in the A.M.E. Church and abolitionist
- Molly Brant, Native American leader and diplomat from 1754-1780
- Eleanor Roosevelt, Transformational First Lady and civil rights activist

Arts and Literature:

- Olivia Ward Bush, Poet and instrumental figure in the Harlem Renaissance
- Lucille Ball, Famous actress, comedian, and television producer
- Ruby Dee, Film actress and civil rights activist

- Midori Goto, Musician and community activist
- Pearl Primus, Famous dancer
- Kitty Carlisle Hart, Actress and television personality, Commissioner of the New York State Council on the Arts for 20 years

Objects on display include:

- Suffragist wagon and parade banner
- Chapter law of 1861 Chartering Vassar College
- Chapter law of 1844 establishing the New York's first teacher training school
- Book published by Kitchen Table Press, written by Audre Lorde
- Rosie the Riveter poster from 1942, featuring Rose Hicker of Tarryton, NY, who was the real life "Rosie"
- A Women's Suffrage ballot
- A Women's Suffrage Party advertisement
- Copy of the Lily, signed by Amelia Bloomer

For more information on the individuals and objects featured in the exhibit, visit www.hallofgovernors.ny.gov.

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