

# CELEBRATING WOMEN'S IMPACT

AT THE NIXON LIBRARY

Co-presented by:



RICHARD NIXON  
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM



## Exploring Barrier-Breaking Advancements for Women

On March 15, the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum and the Richard Nixon Foundation partnered to host the women's history symposium, Celebrating Women's Impact. This unique gathering brought together the people who made history with people who study it to explore the post-war 20th-century advancements in the role of women in government.

The symposium was a keystone event of Women's History Month programming of both the National Archives and Records Administration and the Richard Nixon Foundation and held the day before the anniversary of First Lady Pat Nixon's 112th birthday.

A special message from Dr. Colleen Shogan, the first woman appointed Archivist of the United States, kicked off the program.

Attendees then heard from the woman President Nixon hired to recruit more females into government, former Secretary of Commerce Barbara Franklin.

Four panels were then held that explored how the Nixon administration advanced women. A select group of panelists had spent the week researching the archival holdings of both the National Archives and Nixon Foundation and presented their latest findings to



*Reflecting on her work in the Nixon administration, Secretary Franklin remarked, “Barriers were broken. And happily they stayed down in the coming years.” Continuing, she concluded, “Because the President of the United States, in this case President Richard Nixon, did what he did, a cultural change began to move women’s equality forward faster.”*



shed light on the emerging role of women in government and culture during the second half of the twentieth century.

**C-SPAN**  
 This conference was nationally televised on C-SPAN



Scan to watch

**Top:** Secretary Barbara Franklin reflected on the barrier-breaking advancements for women achieved by President Nixon. **Bottom:** Archivist of the United States, Dr. Colleen Shogan, delivered special opening remarks.

## Secretary Franklin Donates Rare Nixon Campaign Button, a Piece of Political Women’s History, to the Smithsonian

During the Presidential campaign season of 1972, Barbara Hackman Franklin, Staff Assistant to President Nixon charged with implementing the President’s mandate to bring more women into the federal government had the idea for a campaign button – NIXON with the female symbol through the O – to underscore the advances for women the President had initiated. She sent her idea to a staff member of the Committee to Reelect the President who had a limited number of the buttons made. Franklin gave some of the buttons to George H.W. Bush, then US Ambassador to the United Nations. He sent her a handwritten note, thanking her for the “absolutely essential buttons”. That handwritten note, along with the campaign button, was recently donated to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History by Secretary Franklin. Both items will be included in the museum’s permanent political button collection.

This campaign button represents a proud chapter of women’s history. In the early 1970s in the Nixon administration, barriers were broken in the Executive Branch when women were placed in jobs no woman had held before. The numbers of women in policy-making positions nearly quadrupled. Those barriers stayed broken and succeeding Administrations built on this progress. This effort rippled through our society and opened new opportunities for women in many fields. These advances were triggered because a President pushed for the advancement of women in the federal government in the 1970s, at a time when there was not a consensus in the US about the appropriate role for women.

