

A Celebration of Women

“Just like a rose is beautiful, so is a sunflower, so is a peony...all flowers are beautiful in their own way, and that’s like women, too.”

~Miranda Kerr~

I am somewhat embarrassed to admit that this year, March 2022, was the first time that I have officially celebrated Women’s History Month or International Women’s Day. Of course I celebrate the women in my life in an on-going way, but had never paused to acknowledge either Women’s History Month or International Women’s Day, though International Women’s Day had been adopted by the United Nations in 1977 and Women’s History Month officially codified by the United States in the 1980s. Both celebrations are intended to commemorate the accomplishments and achievements of women across the globe.

As faculty, staff and students at William Jewell College, we don’t have to look very far to find many inspirational women right here on our campus. I would argue that most of us across the country would not have far to look to find exceptional examples of women leaders. The truth of the matter is, women have always played a significant part in and throughout the world’s history, but unfortunately have not received proper acknowledgment for their contributions. Interestingly, John A. Powell (*spells his name in lowercase intentionally*), director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, argues that the United States would not be the world-power that it is today without the contributions of women. It is the unique perspectives of us all and especially our women that have contributed to our collective success as a country.

This is why Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson’s confirmation as the newest Supreme Court Justice is so meaningful. The United States has never had the unique perspective of an African American woman on its highest court, thus her presence there being so consequential. Some individuals may argue that we are being discriminatory by identifying Judge Brown Jackson because of her race or ethnicity. I would beg to differ. The comparison that I often use is when florists are arranging a beautiful bouquet of flowers, typically, they gather a wide variety of flowers (i.e. Asters, Azaleas, Black-Eyed Susans, Buttercups, Poppies, Lilies, Carnations, Chrysanthemums, Crocus, Dahlias, Daisies, etc.) in order to make the arrangement as colorful as possible. And the choice of which flower is most important or most beautiful is left to the beholder, if the choice, in earnest, can actually be made. If one were to decide that, let’s say the chrysanthemums were the prettiest, their choice would be completely subjective, meaning that the choice is personal and could in no way be considered factual or universal. We would also have to conclude that an individual’s personal choice would include that individual’s biases.

All that I have said above was said to drive home the point that, our unique perspectives have caused our collective success. And the perspectives of our women have surely been a part of and are pivotal to our success. The impact that women have had on our society is exponential. The contributions of women may seem like an insignificant point to make, but to ignore the role that women have played in and throughout the world would be a grave oversight. If we are honest with ourselves, we would acknowledge that we draw strength as well inspiration from women in our past and women today. Women are a major part of our story as a country and as a globe. A truly balanced and inclusive society is one that recognizes how important women have been in our past and present and recognize the central role women will play in our future.

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