



legendary ladies

10 WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF MARYLAND

BY JENNIFER KEATS CURTIS

Last year, with help from the Maryland Women's Heritage Center (MWHC) and an outstanding nominating committee, *Maryland Life* started a new tradition by identifying "10 Women Who Changed the Face of Maryland."

This year, 10 more women were selected by an impressive array of female committee members who scrutinized Marylanders past and present and then came together to whittle the list down to the final number.

Although not every woman chosen was born in the Free State, each honoree embodies a strong element of "Maryland." And while their accomplishments are individual and unique, these legendary ladies all share dedication and drive, boundless energy, persistence, and sheer will.

HERE ARE THEIR STORIES.

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EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER (1921-2009)

EUNICE KENNEDY Shriver's brother may have been president of the United States, but her personal legacy is perhaps most closely tied to the work she did on behalf of her sister Rosemary.

In 1946, the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation was established in memory of Shriver's oldest brother, who was killed in World War II. That foundation, of which she became director, helped identify the causes of mental disabilities and improve the ways those with these disabilities were treated.

After her brother John became president, Shriver began crusading for the rights of people with mental disabilities. She also publicly told the story of her sister Rosemary's mental disabilities in an article published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1962.

Six years later, Shriver established the

Special Olympics to provide training and opportunities for athletic competition for individuals with special needs. Thanks to her dedication and determination, millions of such athletes from over 130 countries have competed worldwide in thousands of games and tournaments.

Although today's attitude toward people with developmental disabilities is more evolved, thanks partly to Shriver's advocacy, it wasn't long ago that such people—who were once called mentally retarded—were treated with ignorance, fear, or even disdain.

In 1981, Shriver also founded the Community of Caring concept to empower people to be responsible and caring members of a community.

During her lifetime, Shriver received numerous awards for her service to those with mental disabilities, including the nation's highest civilian award, the



Presidential Medal of Freedom, from Ronald Reagan in 1984, the Lasker Award, and the Order of the Smile.

"She was a wonderful woman," says Frances Hughes Glendening. "I really admire her dedication to people with mental disabilities and believe she should be recognized."

"Her story also reminds us about how important advocacy is in our history and that we can't take these fragile advances for granted or we can have slippage, especially when times are challenging."

legendary

MARY TITCOMB (1857-1932)



BOOKMOBILE FOUNDER Mary Titcomb was born in New Hampshire in 1857, but moved to Maryland and became part of the Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, the U.S.' second county library, in 1901.

Titcomb strongly believed that libraries

should reach out to the surrounding communities. If libraries waited for people to come to them, she reasoned, patronage would never be as large as it could be. To remedy that, she set up 22 "deposit stations" in different communities so that libraries could drop off books and readers could pick them up.

Within five years, the number of stations tripled. In order to reach patrons unable or unwilling to travel, she founded the bookmobile—a horse-drawn wagon with interior shelves for books—in 1905.

During that first year, she convinced the library's janitor to drive the wagon throughout Washington County and hand out books. It took him four days to make the round trip, explains Marlene B. Young,

"[Mary] had a vision that people should not be disconnected or isolated," says Young, who has served with the Washington County Free Library. "She was so determined. She wanted to take those books so that working men and women could take part in the joy of reading."

"The mobile book wagon later became common even in rural areas where I grew up, but Mary Titcomb's vision and passion helped change the face of Maryland, and she has had a dramatic and lasting impact on Maryland and across the nation."

In 1924, Titcomb developed official training classes for library personnel. She died in 1932. Nearly six decades later, in 1990, she was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame.