



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.



legendary

SHOSHANA SHOUBIN CARDIN (1926-)

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN AND HAVE RENTED AN APARTMENT, obtained a credit card, or purchased a car—and not in your husband's, brother's, or son's name—thank Shoshana Shoubin Cardin.

As chairwoman of the Maryland Commission for Women, Cardin helped ensure equal credit rights, first for the women of Maryland and then for women across the country.

"We were the first state to have a hotline for women who sought and were denied credit and the first state, through the commission, to have publication advertising informing women of their rights," explains Cardin.

That publication, *Where Credit is Due*, and a hotline, coupled with Cardin's appearance on *The Today Show* during the mid 1970s, helped countless women understand and exercise their credit rights, says Jill Moss Greenberg, executive director of the MWHC, who worked with Cardin for several years.

"While many people may take getting credit for granted, prior to this time, women's economic rights were far more limited," says Cardin, who helped women achieve financial equality as she educated them, even though it created flack in her own marriage.

"We created videotapes and held classes to enable women to feel independent as an individual, as well as a wife and a mother: 'Shoshana Cardin,' not 'Mrs. Jerome Cardin,'" she explains.

A civil rights activist and tireless volunteer for over 40 years, Cardin always believed "women could achieve the same heights as men, given opportunity."

In addition to ensuring equal economic rights for women, she lobbied on other key issues for women that resulted in firsts for our state, including the opening of Baltimore's House of Ruth for victims of domestic violence and the governor's first statewide conference on volunteerism. Later, she became the first chair of the Maryland Volunteer Network.

Born in Israel in 1926, Cardin came to the U.S. in 1927. She studied at Johns Hopkins University and at UCLA before becoming an elementary school teacher. She, her husband, and their four children were among the first Jews to move to rural Baltimore County.

Cardin later became the first woman to lead the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Israel Appeal, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Center for Learning and Leadership, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"Shoshana is revered for her consistent advocacy, which is respectful but strong," says Greenberg.

"Her beliefs and obvious hope for possibilities for all humanity has enabled her to stand up to international leaders and give voice to her strong convictions."

In fact, Cardin has discussed politics with numerous international figures. While chair of the NCSJ, she was credited with convincing then Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev to denounce anti-Semitism, a position that would become a government policy. This and other notable feats are included in her autobiography, *Shoshana: Memoirs of Shoshana Shoubin Cardin*, which was released by the Jewish Museum of Maryland.

Cardin is also credited with creating considerable opportunities for youngsters. In the early 2000s, she formed the Shoshana S. Cardin Jewish Community High School, Baltimore's first trans-denominational Jewish high school.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) PHOTO BY MICHAEL BERENSON FOR MARYLAND LIFE