



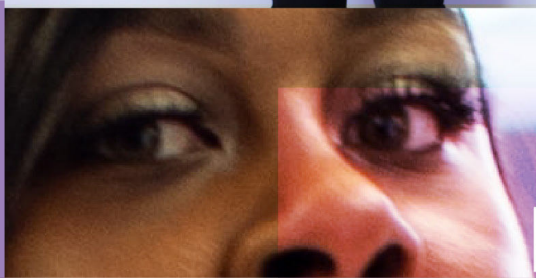
**WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH**



**2021
MARCH ISSUE**



**THE LIONS' PRIDE
MEDIA GROUP**



Campus News

SAINT LEO LIONESSES:

FACES OF THE WORKFORCE

Mariana Navarette

Contributing Writer

Disclaimer: All photographs used in this article were captured while maintaining and uplifting Saint Leo's social distancing policies.

Students and faculty at Saint Leo University might have seen these women once, or every day. In the Dining Hall, in the Cannon Memorial Library hallways, in the apartments, or just around University Campus.

The women working as housekeepers and in the cafeteria are part of the workforce's backbone at the university and should not go unnoticed.

Margaret, who preferred not to give her last name, or "Meg," as students and faculty call her, works in the salad section of the Dining Hall.



Margaret, or "Meg", from the Dining Hall gives apple cider tea bags to students who are feeling under the weather.

Meg has been working for Saint Leo for the past eight years. She leaves her house at 10 a.m. and returns at 9 p.m.

While Meg prepares hearty salads at lunch and dinner, she warmly asks each and every hungry lion, "How are you?"

How was your day?" and after tossing the prepared salad in the container, she never forgets to tell them, "Have a wonderful day!" even in the evening time.

Meg enjoys gardening, crafts, and listening to music in her free time. In December 2020, before students left for the winter break, she gifted many of them handmade angels as a Christmas present.

Meg believes women are important in the workforce because women nurture. It does not have to be a child to nurture, but it can be a project or a business.

"Women thrive on lifting each other." Meg said.

Veronica Menriquez has been working as a housekeeper at Saint Leo for nine years. She



"Women are vital in everyday life." said Veronica Menriquez from housekeeping.

loves baking, accompanying her son to catechism, and being a housewife.

Menriquez believes that women are irreplaceable in the workplace because women tend to be more perfectionistic, thoughtful, and attentive.

"If we were not here, nothing



Isabel Contreras from housekeeping years for parties and dancing from the days before the pandemic started.

would be as clean and organized as it is," laughed Menriquez.

Menriquez stressed that women should never forget that they are essential in the workplace, family, and society.

For the past eight years, Isabel Contreras has been working in housekeeping at Saint Leo. Her day starts at 4 a.m. when she leaves her house, and ends at 2 p.m. when she returns home from the university.

On the weekends, Contreras loves going to her son's soccer

games to support him.

She admits she likes to dance and to enjoy some music in her free time.

"I like to party and have a good time," Contreras said with a shy giggle.

Contreras believes women are indispensable to society and the family since most dedicate their lives to both. She also believes women can achieve anything they set their mind to.

With a noble tone, crossing her arms and firmly raising her chin, Contreras announced, "Women should be proud of being women."

Tabitha Causey started to work permanently at Saint Leo in 2016. What Tabitha likes the most about working here is the fact that she gets to see student and faculty faces every day.

In the Dining Hall, she cooks dishes for students and makes them feel at home.

"I'm like a mom away from home," She said. She laid back in her chair, smiling. "I am a friendly type of person. I like to help people."

Causey loves to go shopping on the weekends and loves cooking when she returns home



Tabitha Causey from the Dining Hall is proud to feed Saint Leo students and faculty.

Campus News



For Berta Dominguez (right) cooking is one of her passions, unlike Minerva Ennis (left) who does not like to cook at all.

after work.

"Yes, I do like to cook in Saint Leo and in my home too," Causey said.

Causey claims that women are essential in the workforce, "One thing about women is that we take charge and we are experts discerning in difficult situations,"

Berta Dominguez has been at Saint Leo as a housekeeper for five years. She leaves her house at 3 p.m. and returns at 1 a.m.

Dominguez enjoys family time and loves to cook for her family. When she has time, she likes to cook for herself, too.

Like Contreras, Dominguez claims that women can achieve everything they set out to do.

Minerva Ennis has been in housekeeping at Saint Leo for seven years. She works in the same shift as Dominguez but gets home a bit earlier, at 12 a.m.

During her youth, Ennis traveled across the United States where there were farming seasons of tomato, potato, orange, or where other crops could be grown.

Ennis said, "Women are irreplaceable in the workforce, and we have important rights just

like everyone else."

Ephonia McCobb started to work in housekeeping, at Saint Leo, 14 years ago. Every day she wakes up at 3:30 a.m. and returns to her home at 2 p.m.

McCobb loves working at Saint Leo because she gets to know different students from different parts of Florida, the United States, and the world.

"It's a blessing to see new faces; we all get along, we are a family, and students are great, and they make you laugh. I love them all," McCobb said with a joyful tone.

"Whenever I see the new freshmen, I try to say to them, 'welcome to the Saint Leo family; I'm never too busy to help you out'," McCobb paused and solemnly continued, "Because you never know how y'all's night is, we need to check on each

other."

McCobb likes to dance and loves to listen and sing gospel songs. However, she makes sure to set one day to take care of her body and soul.

"We [women] tend to forget ourselves sometimes because we give so much to others; therefore, one day, at least, we need to practice self-care," McCobb said.

McCobb mentioned that the women of the Saint Leo workforce, students, faculty, and staff are terrific.

"We have strong women out here at Saint Leo. God made us strong; we handle and endure a lot of stuff."

These are a few of the various faces that maintain clean and cook Saint Leo's food. To thank them might be to say a simple "good morning," "good evening," know their names, and have a



Ephonia McCobb from housekeeping sees student-athletes in their morning practices and always tells them, "Good morning, how are you doing, have a blessed day, stay focused!"

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Campus News

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MATERNAL LIONESS, KATIE CHAMBERLAIN

Mariana Navarette
Contributing Writer

Katie Chamberlain is a non-traditional college student whose experiences as a full-time student and mother might go unaware for the average college student. She and her story are inspiring parts of the Saint Leo community.

Chamberlain is majoring in Psychology with a Clinical/Counseling Specialization. She has spent her entire adult life working with and helping, consoling, de-escalating, and counseling individuals during some of their lowest and/or loneliest life experiences.

With three children of different ages, it has been a challenge for Chamberlain to meet their schooling needs.

"My husband works a full-time job... I sometimes feel like I work about 7"

34-year-old Chamberlain claims. With the COVID-19 pandemic, academic institutions changed their classroom setting into remote learning. This has affected students in a great manner, and Chamberlain it's not the exception.

"Honestly, it has been TOUGH!" Chamberlain points out.

Chamberlain had to buy 2 more computers to set up in our house, so each family member could have their own, because sharing hers with everybody was not an option, since all had to be in class at the same time.

"I often find myself running in-between rooms and answering questions between classes. My 3-year-old daughter is a world-class 'Zoom-bomber' for each of my classes. When her daycare shut down last April, we decided to just keep her home. At that time, she was still just 2 years old."

Chamberlain decided to buy the kids an air hockey table and pool table along with a huge

indoor bounce house to keep them entertained between their classes since all of their local parks were closed.

"So, not only am I juggling my classes and the kid's classes, but I am also juggling lunchtime, playtime, nap time for the 3-year-old, grocery shopping, laundry, etc. Our days are long, and apparently, kids can get 'cabin fever' just like adults, so I take them out on bike rides and walks when able" Chamberlain says.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced people at risk with specific health conditions to take even more precautions, compared to the rest of the people.

For Chamberlain, it was crucial that Saint Leo offered online and hybrid learning since she is part of the 'high-risk' population.

"I was diagnosed with cervical and uterine cancer and ended up having to undergo something called a 'Radical Hysterectomy' in 2020, I did not feel 100% safe with attending classes on campus. Even though I may look 'normal' on the outside, I am considered 'high risk' and as a mother, I felt it would be best to stay home," Chamberlain comments.

Being a non-traditional full-time student and mother is Chamberlain's most important and rewarding adventure.

"Thank you Saint Leo for making this possible!" She gratefully says.

Before being a Lioness and a full-time student, Chamberlain was a Deputy Sheriff back in Arkansas.

"I've always been an unconventional person, so why not have an unconventional job, right? I even got the chance to be Arkansas' PREA poster model for the Detention Center! How neat!"

Chamberlain was also a Hospice CNA on alternating nights and weekends.

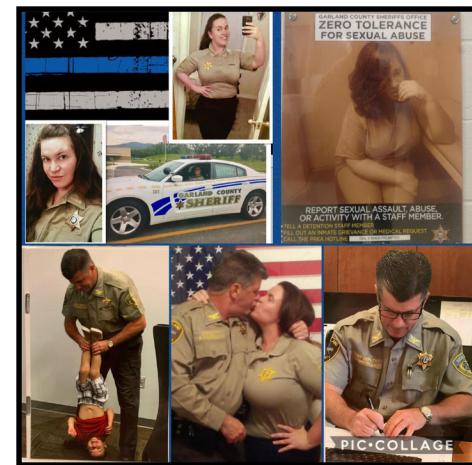
"Another rewarding career that gave me the opportunity to 'protect and serve' my community on a



"We lead extraordinarily busy lives, albeit with an extraordinary purpose!" Chamberlain comments.
Source: Katie Chamberlain



Katie Chamberlain and her husband with her three children moved to Florida in 2018.
Source: Katie Chamberlain



Chamberlain was a Deputy Sheriff in Arkansas for a decade.
Source: Katie Chamberlain

different level. I was equally proud of both!"

After moving to Florida three years ago, Chamberlain enrolled in HCC. She earned her Associate Degree with Honors, was a member of Psi Beta Psychology Honors Society, and also served as chapter President for the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Now, being at home 24/7 is a daily battle. Chamberlain explains that the pandemic has negatively

affected her, and her family's lives.

"Oh goodness! It has impacted every single nook and cranny of our existence! Mostly negatively I believe. My kids can't see or play with their friends. We now 'attend' mass online and our holidays have been just the 5 of us, which has been tough on everybody!"

Katies Story Continues on Page 8.

Editorial

WORKING AND MOTHERHOOD: THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

Tayhana Taylor

World News Editor

Being a full-time mother and career woman can involve very demanding tasks. Saint Leo University has many female professors who are doing an incredible job at fulfilling both roles. Here is how some of them manage motherhood, career, and being a woman.

Dr. Ebony Perez, an Assistant Professor, and the Department Chair of Undergraduate Social Work at Saint Leo, shares how she balances the various aspects of her life as a mother and college professor.

"I was a social work practitioner for 17 years before I entered the teaching profession, so I started having kids before I became a professor [...] the year I got hired full-time as a professor I also started a Ph.D. program, so I was a mom, a wife, and a full-time student at that point [...] there was a lot of pressure there and it takes a lot of physical, mental, and emotional strength," said Perez.

Perez further went on to talk about maintaining the important relationships in her life all while being a student, mom, and a full-time career woman.

"Being a wife means that my husband needs some attention because you can't let that relationship go [...] so there was that pressure of how I navigate being a student and working full-time but also still keeping these relationships with my husband and my kids [...] that meant making some hard choices and sacrifices," said Perez.

It is important that women have support from those around them when managing all these roles.

"My husband saw the end goal and he stepped up [...] I also have a village of women supporting me

when I need it [...] I also saw the men in my life support the women in their lives and that makes a difference," said Perez.

Amid the challenges that come with motherhood and being a full-time career woman, there are rewarding moments as well.

"When you see your kid get 'it,' whatever that 'it' is, whether it is an important lesson or seeing their accomplishments is definitely rewarding [...] it's good watching my kids thrive. It is fulfilling hearing my child say, 'I watched you grind mom, and you did it,' said Perez. "Watching the impact I have on students, who I teach and do not teach, is very rewarding as a professor."

Women constantly face criticisms especially when they are a mother and a full-time career woman.

"As Black women, we get it done and that's how folks see us [...] not giving into society comes with maturity because I learned that the world does not get to define who I am [...] I am not everyone's cup of tea, and that is okay, but I still have to be civil and be kind to others."

Another incredible super-mom and career woman here at Saint Leo is Dr. Cheryl Kozina. Kozina is an Associate Professor of Biology and has completed two postdoctoral fellowships in the field of DNA damage and repair at the University of Pittsburgh. She started having kids after she became a professor. She is now a proud mom of an 18-month-old baby named Lucy.

"In order to get to where I am today, I did six and a half years in a graduate Ph.D. program and then three and a half years in post-doc, and in both of those situations, I did not see a way to balance the pressure of the hours I would work and a family [...] I have friends who did it and most often they were men," said Kozina.

Kozina enjoys being a mom and she describes it as "fun".

"My little girl is the best and she is super affectionate and funny, and you see so much of yourself in your kid," said Kozina.

She also enjoys being a professor and connecting with students here at Saint Leo.

"I have always enjoyed teaching [...] you think a lot of your students like family, and I feel this sense of pride when I see my students do well [...]" said Kozina.

Many times, women are told that they should get married and have kids as if it is somewhat a rite of passage for them.

"I have been in instances where I felt this extreme pressure to have kids [...] it is believed that sometimes, once you're a woman, you should have kids, which is not always true because women have different reasons to not have kids; fertility issues may be a problem for some women," said Kozina

Due to Kozina's scientific nature, she ensures that she does a lot of credible research about how to provide her daughter with the best care instead of allowing society's criticisms and rules to crowd her judgment.

"You're going to be judged for everything as a mom [...] I try to do everything by evidence because I am a scientist and I am trying to do the best for my child," said Kozina.

Achieving a 50/50 work-life balance can be hard especially for women who are mothers. Dr. Allyson Marino, an Assistant Professor of English at Saint Leo believes that it is a myth that...

Article Continues on Page 8.



Dr. Kozina is an Associate Professor of Biology and has completed two postdoctoral fellowships in the field of DNA damage and repair at the University of Pittsburgh. She teaches Cancer Bio as well as the new University Exploration - The Science of Cooking. (Source: Saint Leo University faculty page)



Dr. Perez is Assistant Professor, and the Department Chair of Undergraduate Social Work. Her concentration focused on children and adolescents who had learning exceptionalities and co-morbid psychiatric diagnosis. (Source: Saint Leo University faculty page)

Arts & Culture



LITERARY LADIES:

WOMEN AND THE ENDURING BEAUTY OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Alora Peters

Arts & Culture Editor

Both men and women have contributed in beautiful and meaningful ways to the realm of literature. In honor of Women's History Month, here are just a few of the notable literary achievements of the ladies.

Women have been adding to the world's collection of written works throughout history.

In fact, one of the earliest known prose novels is attributed to a royal lady from Japan. "The Tale of Genji," by Murasaki Shikibu, is believed to have been written in the early 1000s and tells the tale of a prince's adventures and romantic dalliances in the courts of medieval Japan. Works like "The Tale of Genji" give readers an insight into ancient cultures and help preserve the knowledge of the past.

One of the world's first science fiction novels was also written by a female author. The classical novel "Frankenstein," written by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, was a prime example of the Gothic literary era, but also exemplified the beginning of authors using futuristic technologies and inventive sciences in their fictitious work. Shelley's narrative followed the experiments of a scientist who assembled and animated a human

corpse, and the tragedies and trauma that inevitably followed. While the story has now been so continually reused as to become a popular cliché, Shelley's original "Frankenstein" is a thought-provoking exploration of what it means to be human and remains an important bedrock of the science fiction and horror genres.

Fiction novels are not the only contributions that have been

classics such as "Interior Castle" and "The Story of a Soul." All three ladies were named Doctors of Church, which means they have been specially recognized for their written contributions to Catholic thought and teaching.

Ladies have also used writing as tools for social causes, in order to promote change in the culture around them. For example, author Harriet Beecher Stowe took up

woman who wrote the book that started this great war!"

In modern times, female authors continue to make contributions to the contemporary literary body. Many young adult fiction novels have been written by women—the popular "Harry Potter" series by J. K. Rowling, "The Hunger Games" trilogy by Suzanne Collins, and the "Twilight" saga by Stephenie Meyer were some of the most popular books in the early twenty-first century. These and other woman-authored bestsellers have been major influences on current pop culture.

Today, women continue to use the power of the written word to communicate beauty and meaning to others. There are many opportunities for writers to practice their craft here at Saint Leo University, such as in the annual publication of the literary magazine, the Sandhill Review.

It would be a nearly impossible task to catalogue all of the great literary works available to read today—especially as more new additions to the written world are contributed every day. As we continue into this new decade, it will be exciting to see which of the books of today will become the classic masterpieces of tomorrow.



Check out the Cannon Memorial Library for some classic tales or modern offerings to read and enjoy today!

offered by female writers—great spiritual works have also been penned by women. Saint Catherine of Siena is one such author, who wrote powerfully on her mystical experiences and the beauty of prayer. Saints Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux are two other revered women who crafted

the pen to write the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which exposed the inhumanity of slavery in the United States. Her work was instrumental in the abolitionist movement that eventually led to the Civil War—in fact, upon meeting her, President Abraham Lincoln is reported to have quipped, "So you are the little

Photos of mentioned novels on

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Arts & Culture

WHAT THE LIFE AND WORK OF VAN GOGH SAYS ABOUT BIPOLAR DISORDER

Disclaimer/Content Warning/Trigger Warning: This article discusses suicide. The National Suicide Prevention hotline is 1-800-273-8255. If you are concerned about immediate self harm or harm to others, call 9-1-1.

Emily Miller
Copy Editor

March 30 is both the birthday of famed painter, Vincent Van Gogh, and World Bipolar Day. Van Gogh was posthumously diagnosed with bipolar disorder, according to Texas Medical Center.

A 2020 case report dubbed “New vision on the mental problems of Vincent van Gogh; results from a bottom-up approach using (semi-)structured diagnostic interviews” presents evidence from his visits to various doctors—Felix Rey, Rey’s chief, Jules Urpar, and Théophile Peyron, specifically—as well as Van Gogh’s extensive correspondence in letters.

The case report concluded Van Gogh most likely “suffered from comorbid illnesses.” Specifically, bipolar mood disorder, along with “traits of a borderline personality disorder as underlying vulnerability,” alcohol abuse, and malnutrition—all of which led to “psychosocial tensions,” resulting in Van Gogh’s infamous slicing of his own ear.

Dr. Karen Hannel, an Assistant Professor of the Fine Arts at Saint Leo University, teaches a course on Van Gogh which examines his life to a fuller extent.

For those uninformed on bipolar disorder, The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) provides information on their website. According to NIMH, there are three types of bipolar disorder—Bipolar I Disorder, Bipolar II Disorder, and Cyclothymia. Each one is characterized by manic and depressive episodes but differ depending on the length of time episodes last, and the extremity of those episodes.

During manic episodes, one is highly energetic; may have racing thoughts and speech; and may show poor judgement and impulse control. During depressive episodes, one might experience hopelessness, a lost interest in almost everything, and may even contemplate suicide.

Bipolar I and II differ as Type I experiences full mania, while Type II experiences what is referred to as hypomania. Cyclothymia is a lesser extent of the mood disorder, where those diagnosed experience intense mood swings but not to the extent of a full depressive or (hypo)manic episode.

Those with bipolar disorder face social stigma, often in the form of shame around discussing the topic. Touro University Worldwide’s article “Breaking America’s Mental Health Stigma” explains that simply

talking openly about one’s mental health can help. Additionally, being supportive and refusing to dismiss another person’s struggles as well as encouraging the person to seek treatment can break the stigma, too.

Despite being hospitalized, the care Van Gogh received was likely not optimized for who he was as a person.

“There have been a couple times where they put him in an asylum and he didn’t want to be there,” said Pam DeCius, Associate Chair of Language Studies and the Arts at Saint Leo. “One of the times, they took his paint away and his brother found out.”

His brother, Theodorus “Theo” van Gogh, vehemently opposed the separation of Vincent van Gogh and his paints.

Tragically, Van Gogh’s death was by suicide.

On his death bed, he was quoted to have said, “My body is mine and I am free to do what I want with it. Do not accuse anybody, it is I that

wished to commit suicide.”

An analysis on suicide attempts from those who struggle bipolar I and bipolar II disorder at the University of Pittsburgh suggest that anywhere between 25 to 60 percent of diagnosed individuals will attempt suicide at least once in their lives, and between 4 and 19 percent will pass away from it.

Suicide is not inevitable. Reducing stigma, providing support, and opening the door to that conversation is what nonprofits like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline are dedicated to.

But, DeCius emphasized and expanded on Van Gogh’s life as instead of his death.

“He is a people and plant and landscape-watcher. He’s so good at it and you can see that in the details. The postman’s face doesn’t look anything like the barkeep’s face [...]” said DeCius, referring to the portrait of Joseph Roulin and

Article Continues on Page 8



“He really was intrigued with Japanese arts,” said DeCius, commenting on the similarities between van Gogh’s paintings and Japanese wood cuts. “You start to see it when you look at ‘Starry Night,’ for example. Source: Pam DeCius

Continued

Student Spotlight Cont.

Having young children, and three, of different ages, has been challenging for Chamberlain. She has a hard time explaining and helping them cope with what the 'new normal' is, when even for her it is frustrating.

"They all three have acted out in some manner, out of frustration for a situation that they don't understand and one that I, as their mother, can't fix for them... not this time!" Chamberlain says.

As everybody deserves breaks, Chamberlain does her best by taking their children to the beach, some bike rides, to get ice cream, or something else they choose, so they can breathe a different breeze.

Chamberlain highlights that "As a Mother, you are accustomed to being able to 'fix' everything for them and in this situation, we all have to rally together and see it through."

There have been moments where Chamberlain just wants to press pause on everything until all the pandemic is over since there are days that it is truly overwhelming for her and her family.

"One day my 7-year-old son was frustrated about 'everything' and started crying which prompted my 14-year-old daughter to start crying over missing her friends and how life isn't fair. I eventually started crying too as everything just hit me like a ton of bricks all at once," Chamberlain recalls.

As a mother, Chamberlain tries to hold everything together flawlessly, but that day when everybody cried at the same time, she had to show her children that she felt scared, confused, defeated, and vulnerable at times too

"They needed to see that Mom was human too. The whole world is experiencing the same thing right now- some far worse off. I told them that we all needed to be thankful and appreciative of the things we do have access to because soo many do not."

People speak of tenacious "Mama Bears" but this "Maternal Lioness" holds court amidst the pride!

Working and Motherhood Cont.

...working parents have "balance".

"It is a myth that working parents have parents balance [...] it's a day-to-day thing; some days you can juggle everything and prevent things from crashing, and other days you just drop everything [...] you have days where I feel like I am not the best parent I can be or I am not the best professor I can be," said Marino. "Men are not always asked how they balance it all like we women are [...] my husband is a professor at Saint Leo, too, and he does not get asked these questions about how he juggles parenthood and a career."

Marino further explained that she has never received any criticisms about how she chooses to live her life as a mom, wife, and full-time professor.

"As women we internalize criticism [...] we fall into traps of judging how we are doing against how other women are doing. It took many years for me to offer myself the same kind of gentleness I extend to others, to forgive and accept the way that it is, and understand that I am doing the best that I can as a mom and a professor," said Marino.

Marino also stressed the facade that social media, TV shows, and even books create about what it is like to be a mom and balance everything else.

Van Gogh Cont.

the barkeep in "The Night Café."

DeCius continued, "He felt underappreciated. His dad always thought he [Vincent] was kind of a failure."

Van Gogh internalized his father's view of him and frequently wrote letters to his younger brother

Female professors are sometimes seen as more nurturing than male professors, so even in the workplace they continue to play that motherly role.

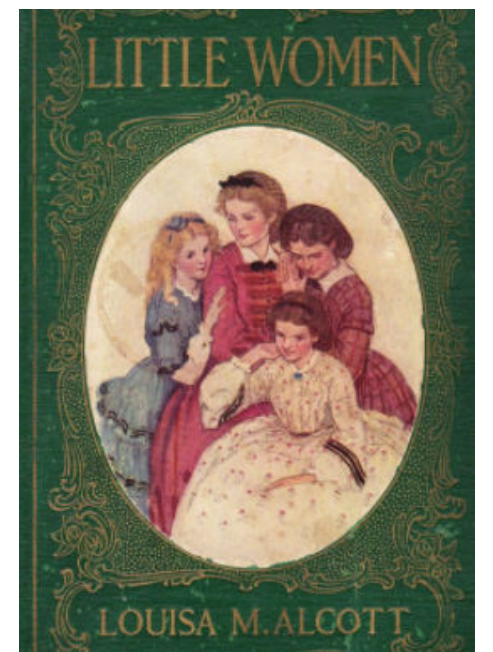
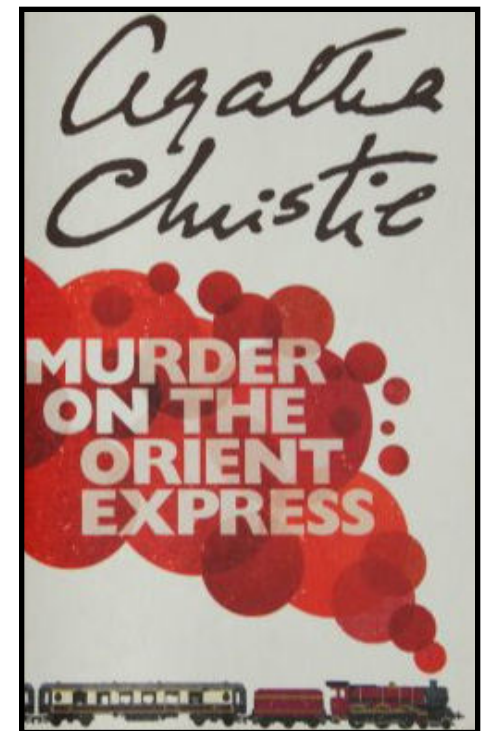
"Women faculty often fall into the caregiving roles more than male professors [...] male professors at Saint Leo might not be asked to do the same level of caregiving. For example, helping students with personal situations that are happening in their home, or even pointing them to counselors on campus [...]" said Marino.

Work life and motherhood are roles women will always have to juggle throughout their lives. There is no right or wrong way to balance these two tasks. It just takes figuring out what works best for you and your family.



Dr. Marino with her husband Dr. Hobbs and her two children. Dr. Marino teaches selected topics courses such as Multiethnic American Literature, Women and Literature, and Literature and the Environment. Source: Saint Leo University Blog.

Literary Ladies Photos:



to defy that narrative and to demonstrate his successes.

DeCius also portrayed Van Gogh as a peaceful and quiet anarchist, contradictory as that seems. His paintings may not appear explicitly political today, but DeCius explained his paintings as rebellion against his father's way of life. He was able to slow down and focus on the details, refusing the nine-to-five day job.

Van Gogh found joy outside of the typical job structure.

March 30 has been marked as a day to both commemorate the life and art of Van Gogh and to bring awareness to those among us suffering with bipolar disorder—seeing the people with this disorder holistically, giving credence to their struggles, and providing the care they need without shame.

The National Suicide Prevention hotline is 1-800-273-8255

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Women Icons in Sports

By: Miurel Zamora, Contributing Writer

For the last few decades, female athletes have been highlighted in the industry due to their talent and ambition in sports. As they become more popular in the industry, they become role models for young girls who are looking to become future athletes. Here are four women who have demonstrated what it means to be powerful icons in United States sports history.

Ronda Rousey is a former professional wrestler, mixed martial artist, and judoka. Her national career started at the age of 15, when she was named to the United States Olympic team. Rousey won gold at the 2004 World Junior and Pan American Judo Championship and became an icon since then.

In 2008, she became the first U.S. woman to earn an Olympic medal in judo. She was the first woman to sign with the Ultimate Fighting Championship, the world's largest mixed martial arts league.

In 2018, the UFC released a statement to announce that Rousey would become the league's first female Hall of Famer.

Over the years, Rousey had demonstrated to be a strong woman dominating a less commonly seen female field, positioning herself as one of the best in contemporary mixed martial arts.

"This is an immense honor, to not only take part in bringing women to the forefront of this sport, but now the UFC Hall of Fame," Rousey stated in an Instagram post.

Danica Patrick is a former American race car driver, who achieved many first female titles based on her successful career. Patrick started at the age of 10 when she achieved the World Karting Association Grand National Championship in the 1990s.

In 2005, she competed in the Indianapolis 500 and finished fourth place, achieving the name of "Rookie of the Year". She became the highest ever female driver passing the previous record of ninth set by Janet Guthrie in 1978.

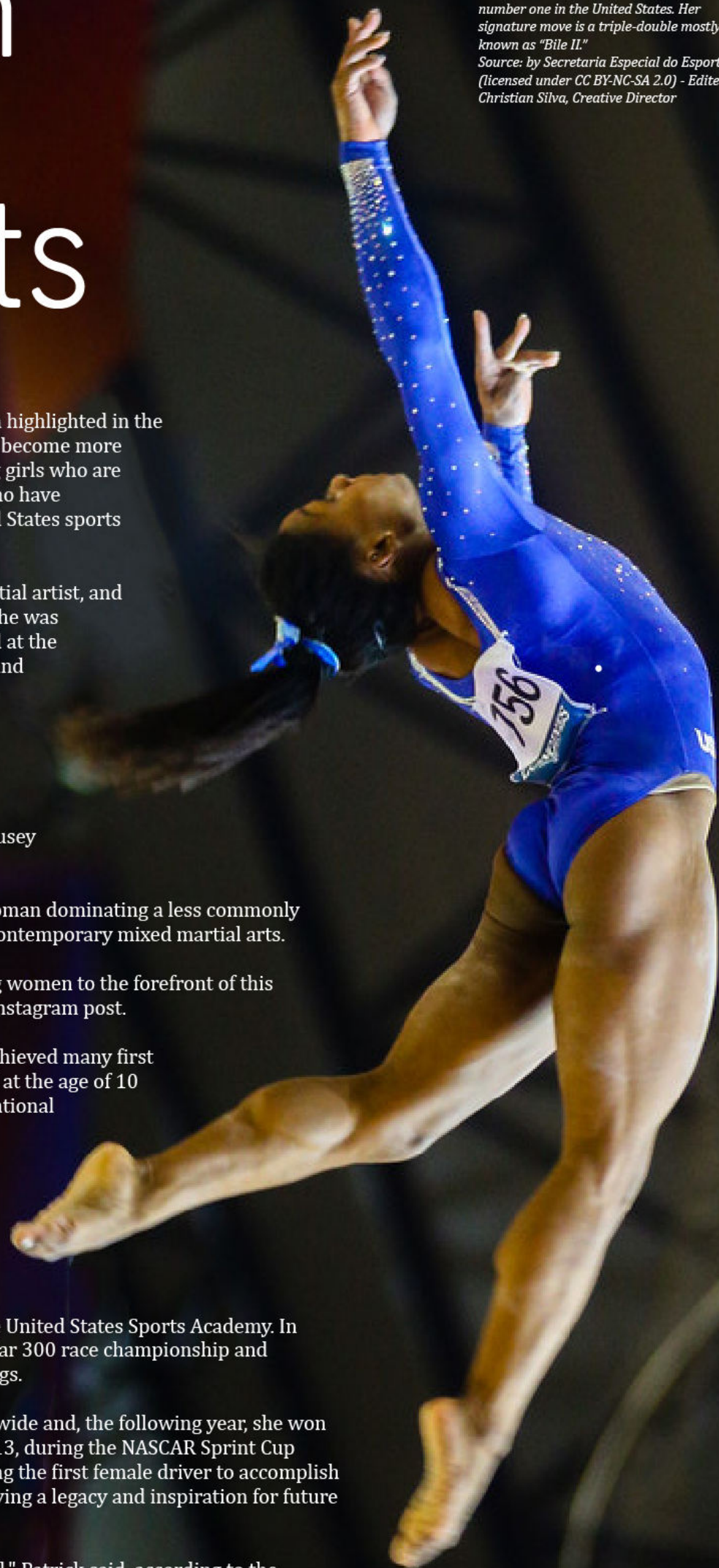
In 2006, she was named "Female Athlete of the Year" by the United States Sports Academy. In 2008, Patrick made history by winning the Firestone IndyCar 300 race championship and positioned herself in the sixth-place overall driving standings.

In 2010, she began racing stock cars in the NASCAR Nationwide and, the following year, she won the fourth-place finish at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. In 2013, during the NASCAR Sprint Cup circuit, she won the time trials at the Daytona 500, becoming the first female driver to accomplish this at a famous NASCAR event. Patrick retired in 2018, leaving a legacy and inspiration for future female racers.

"I was brought up to be the fastest driver, not the fastest girl," Patrick said, according to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway website. "That's how I've always approached my racing career. I have

At only 24 years old, Simone Biles is the world's third most decorated gymnast and number one in the United States. Her signature move is a triple-double mostly known as "Bile II."

Source: by Secretaria Especial do Esporte (licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) - Edited by Christian Silva, Creative Director



been lucky enough to make history and be the first woman to do many things. We have a lot more history to make and we are excited to do it."

Serena Williams is an American professional tennis player who revolutionized women's tennis due to her incredible talent and powerful style of play. Williams won her first major championship in 1999 in the U.S Open, becoming the second African American woman to do so and the first in the Open Era.

In 2000, she won her first women's doubles Olympic gold medal with her sister Venus. Serena and her sister accumulated a total of four Olympic gold medals and 14 Grand Slam titles.

In 2009, both sisters purchased shares of the Miami Dolphins to become the first African American women to own part of an NFL team.

Serena is a very successful woman who has accumulated a record of 22 singles Grand Slam events—combined, she has a total of 39 Grand Slam titles. She has faced her sister more than 30 times in professional tournaments and holds an advantage—however, both sisters have demonstrated their talents in tennis.

Serena holds the record for the longest run as the No. 1 ranked female player, gaining this title multiple times since 2002. Williams is the tennis player with more Grand Slam titles than any other woman or man during the Open Era, breaking numerous records in both singles and doubles.

“Williams is the tennis player with more Grand Slam titles than any other woman or man during the Open Era...”

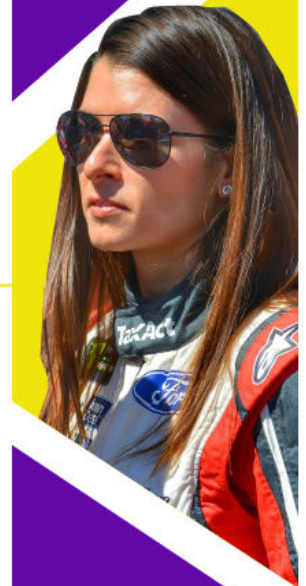
Simone Arianne Biles is an American gymnast with multiple world records from recent history. Biles began her career in 2007 as a level 8 gymnast and, after only three years, she achieved junior elite level.

In 2012, she won the vault and the all-around events at the American Classic, the Alamo Classic, the Houston National Invitational, and the Secret U.S Classic. In 2013, she won the U.S P&G Championship and delivered a historic showing at the World Championships. She became the first female African American athlete to win gold in all-around.

In 2015, Biles became the first woman, since Kim Zmeskal in 1992, to win her third consecutive world all-around title. Biles holds the record of 19 world championship gold medals and 25 world championships medals.

At the 2016 Olympics, she became the first female U.S gymnast to win four gold medals in a single game and led the U.S to gold in the team event, consequentially winning the individual all-around. In 2019, she claimed her fifth individual all-around gold at the World Championship. Biles became an iconic figure, holding the title of the most decorated gymnast.

All four women have accomplished world records and revolutionized their sports through dedication and passion. They have contributed to the development of women athletes and have demonstrated the capacity of women in any sports field. Their inspiring work will open the possibilities for younger girls to join sports teams, demand equal rights in the industry, and become appreciated as athletes.



World News

WINNING WOMEN WORLD LEADERS IN POLITICS

By: Erika Morales

Contributing Writer

As the world progresses, the movements of women in the political world have grown. More women are becoming prominent leaders in the world of politics.

According to the Women and Foreign Policy Program, women's leadership positions in politics promote equality, stability, and cooperation between two political parties that oppose one another.

Female U.S. senators are more likely to cross party lines to find common ground. It enables them to pass more legislation. These legislations usually advance gender equality, including sexual harassment and domestic violence.

25 percent of women are parliamentarians on a national level. The Women and Foreign Policy state that countries with female parliamentarians are less likely to resort to violence when face with an international crisis.

A recent study done by Harvard University has found that, prior to the pandemic, women



President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen has acknowledged the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the E.U. institutions. Leyen points out that less than 20% of commissioners were women and wants to make sure that women are represented just as much as males are.

Photo credit: CC-BY-4.0: © European Union 2019 - Source: EP

leaders were rated at 53.1 in the effectiveness of leadership compare to males who rated at 49.8. During the pandemic, women's rating went up to 57.2, and male's rating went up to 51.5.

14 countries have achieved 50 percent or more of women in cabinets with an annual increase of 0.52 percent. According to the UN Women, a "Women in politics 2020 map," the top five ranking countries were Rwanda, Cuba, Bolivia, United Arab Emirates, and Mexico.

21 percent of women were government ministers. Women serving as Head of State or Government are found in 22 countries. Halimah

Yacob is the Head of State of Singapore. Bidya Devi Bhandari is the Head of State of Nepal. Erna is the Head of Government of Norway. This leaves 119 countries that have yet to have a woman be the Head of State.

The United States is slowly opening its door to women in the political world. Though there are many males in leadership roles, there are more women taking on a leadership role in politics.

"In the United States, we have Vice President Kamala Harris and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, as well as three court supreme court justices: Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor, and Amy Coney Barrett," said Professor Frank Orlando, an instructor of political science at Saint Leo University. Vice President Kamala Harris was the first African American to serve as the Attorney General of California. She is also the second African American woman to serve in the United States senate.



Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Sonia Sotomayor is described as sharp and fearless during her time serving as a trial judge. Photo Credit: <https://www.supremecourt.gov/about/biographies.aspx>

Harris is now the first female Vice President of the United States. Nancy Pelosi is the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House. Pelosi was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 2013. She strives to lower health care costs, increase workers' pay through economic growth, and rebuild America.

In 1997, Elena Kagan was appointed as Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy. Afterward, Kagan was appointed as Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council. In 2008 former President Barack Obama appointed Kagan to be the first female solicitor general which was later confirmed by the Senate in 2009. Elena Kagan began her career as the Supreme Court Justice in 2010.

Sonia Sotomayor is the first



Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel is the first East German to hold office and will be German's second-longest-serving leader. Photo Credit: Raimond Spekking on Wikimedia Commons

World News

Hispanic and the third woman to serve as the judge in the Supreme Court. Former President Barack Obama nominated Sotomayor for Supreme Court Justice on May 26, 2009. Confirmed by the Senate on Aug. 6, 2009. Her liberal views have served the court well.

Each of these women holds different views but they all strive for a single goal: justice for all. Prominent women leaders are not only seen in the United States. "One of the most influential leaders in the world is German Chancellor Angela Merkel, along with EU President Ursula Von Der Leyen," said Orlando.

Angela Merkel was elected for her first term as chancellor in 2005. Merkel was the first female leader of the German political party. Angela Merkel's leadership approach is measurable, methodical, and well-tempered. She seeks cooperation and not confirmation.

Ursula Von Der Leyen is the first woman to be the leader of the European Union Commission. Leyen values gender balance. She is striving to create a European Green Deal. Leyen has also said that the EU would be more assertive towards the U.S. now that she has



Women hold more than 30 percent of parliamentary seats in Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Northern America. In Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Oceania there is less than 17 percent of women in parliaments. Women hold 6 percent of seats in parliament in Pacific Island State. Photo credit: parliamentary copyright.

taken office.

Barbados now has its first-ever woman Prime Minister, Mia Mottley. Mottley won the general elections on May 24, 2018. Mottley is currently serving as the Development Committee Chair for the joint committee World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Halimah Yacob became the Head of State of Singapore on Sept. 14, 2017. Yacob was elected as Speaker of Parliament in 2013 making her the first woman to hold this position. Yacob held various positions during her time serving in the National Trades Union of Congress.

As the years pass more and

more women are taking on political leadership roles.

"I think that the world of politics is definitely becoming more welcoming to women because women are now voting at a higher rate and running for office more often," said Orlando.

Women leadership holds many potentials for the future.

As a U.S. Senator, Vice President Kamala Harris has helped advance policy in global health, human, trafficking, rights for women, and global climate change. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, Harris introduced the Improving Pandemic Preparedness and Response Through Diplomacy Act to the Senate. Photo credit: Gage Skidmore



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi led Congress to pass the Wall Street reforms to protect consumers from big banks. She also aided in the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act to further educational opportunities. Photo Credit: Gage Skidmore

World News



By working on creating masks, women have helped thousands, if not millions of people in Bangladesh, maintain safe from the coronavirus. Source: unwomen.org

WOMEN'S RIGHTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Juan Carvajal
Contributing Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic has made evident the lack of protection and enforcement of women's rights, worldwide, and this has forced some governments to try to protect them.

COVID-19 has taken an incredible economic toll in the lives of several women, globally. A clear and devastating example of this is the case of Riya Akter.

According to a report by the United Nations, "As a single mother, Akter had to close her business in Dhaka, Bangladesh, after the pandemic started. Without any other option, she was forced to make masks to put food on the table for her children."

As a young mother, she faces one of the most difficult situations. The Lancet, a British medical journal, states that the pandemic has highlighted the consistent inequalities women face and has exposed the issues within the social and economic systems. As the year 2020 passed, each of these problems became clearer and went on a downward spiral.

According to The Lancet, "Across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, and are more likely to be employed in the informal sector. They have less access to social protections and are the majority of single-parent households. Their capacity to absorb economic shocks is therefore less than that of men."

Another consequence that the pandemic has led to is the increase in domestic violence that women are forced to face.

Based on a report by the United Nations, "As a result of mandatory lockdowns, women in abusive homes suffered because given the health concerns they were forced to stay home."

According to a report from the United Nations, "In the United Kingdom alone, calls to the domestic helpline went up by 65%, since the beginning of the pandemic."

Not only are women going through a tough economic period, as well as being physically and psychologically abused, but their reproductive freedom is also being violated, during the pandemic.

In Italy, women are currently forced to endure unwanted pregnancies due to the excessive amount of coronavirus cases that are filling hospitals. Doctors also refused to perform abortions which led to an increase in unsafe abortion methods.

Based on a report from Al-Jazeera, an independent news organization partly funded by the Qatari government, "In Italy, doctors can refuse to perform abortions, and up to 90 percent do, in some areas. Medical terminations, which consist of two pills taken across several days, are only available during the first seven weeks of pregnancy, rather than nine as in many other European countries."

On the bright side, not everything is lost for women, during this time of crisis.

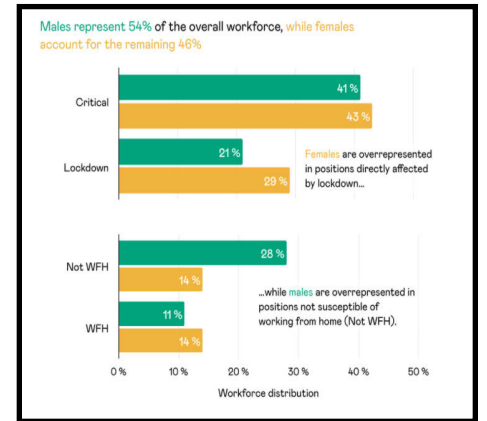
In Spain, gender equality has been consistently demanded, and in response to such demands, the Spanish government has approved a series of decrees.

According to the news chain, Rteve, a radio and television chain based in Spain, "the government has approved at least five royal decrees, two laws, and the modification of a law linked to gender equality[...]" Additionally, "three of them were aimed at equity in the world of work, another two were of economic nature and the remaining three were aimed at the fight against gender violence."

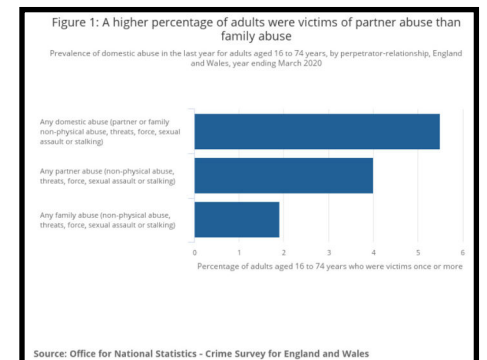
Despite the approval of these decrees, which included the State Deal against gender violence, their implementation has not been effective.

Rosa San Segundo, director of Gender Studies Institute at University Carlos III de Madrid suggests that, "[t]he development of the State Deal has not been implemented in more than 70% of the measures."

According to statistics from the European Institute for Gender Equality, with 70.1 points, Spain holds the ninth place in gender equality, after Sweden (83.6),



Despite the implementation of the State Deal in Spain, gender inequality issues have risen, due to covid-19, especially in the workforce. Source: dobetter.esade.edu



In the United Kingdom, domestic abuse reached its peak during March, 2020. While family abuse reasonably increased, sexual assault became ubiquitous. Source: ons.gov.uk



The State Deal in Spain, was the result of consistent marches and demands of the people, for gender equality. Source: somostierradecampos.com

Denmark (77.5), and France (74.6). Though the country still needs to adjust its policies, the numbers show that gender inequality in Spain has had a considerable improvement.

The fight for the protection of women's rights worldwide in the pandemic is an endless journey that requires commitment and perseverance. Though countries like Spain have made small improvements, other countries like Italy and Bangladesh are still facing gender inequality issues, which are becoming more evident with the pandemic.

World News

VACCINATION IN EUROPE: ASTRAZENECA COVID-19 VACCINE UNDER SCRUTINY

Tayhana Taylor
World News Editor

The AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine was created by researchers from Oxford University, yet people are still wondering how this vaccine works, and what is it made of?

The AstraZeneca vaccine uses adenovirus-vectored technology, which is a harmless, altered version of a common cold virus that typically spreads among chimpanzees. This modified virus cannot cause people to become ill, it carries a gene from the novel coronavirus spike protein, the portion of the virus that triggers an immune response. This enables the vaccinated person's immune systems to create antibodies that work against COVID-19, teaching their body how to react if they become infected. Over the past month, this vaccine has expanded to non-European countries in other continents like Asia and Africa, but not the U.S. The AstraZeneca vaccine is more cost-effective than the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

The vaccine recently got approval from the World Health Organization (WHO). This organization is a distinct agency of the United Nations with a broad mandate to act as a coordinating authority on international health issues. The WHO has 194 member states globally and has been helping coordinate the worldwide response to COVID-19. WHO ensures to enforce strict

international regulations and cautious measures to make certain vaccines are safe and efficient. The health experts at WHO conduct ongoing monitoring to make sure that vaccines continue to be safe. All adverse side effects of a WHO approved vaccine are evaluated by special group of experts from the Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety.

The AstraZeneca vaccine was being used in over 70 countries globally, yet, on March 15, 2021, a multitude of European countries suspended the use of the vaccine because of several reports that recipients of the vaccine reported having blood clots.

Germany, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Portugal, Slovenia, and France were amongst the group of countries that promptly paused vaccination. These reports caused major setbacks in the European Union's vaccination drive, which has already undergone interruptions due to shortages and other obstacles. Germany's Federal Minister of Health, Jens Spahn...

To read the rest of this article, scan the QR code below to reach it on our website.



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Science and Technology

BLACK WOMEN & DISCRIMINATION IN THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Ryn Williams

Social Media Manager

Near the start of the pandemic, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that blue lips are a possible symptom of COVID-19. Medically, this is referred to as “cyanosis,” and it happens when the body doesn’t receive enough oxygenated blood.

It is ignorant to assume that symptoms appear the same way for people of all races – in Black people, cyanosis is more likely to appear in the gums than in the lips, meaning that their symptom may go unnoticed by a white doctor.

This is not the only case of irresponsible disparity in medicine. Since the 1700s, and likely before that, there have been myths that Black patients are simply less sensitive to pain, that Black people’s skin is thicker than white people’s skin, that Black people are stronger than white people, and so on.

In 2016, a research study from the University of Virginia surveyed 418 medical students and residents (with 222 being white, American, native English speakers) and found that 50 percent of them believed Black people had a stronger pain tolerance than white people.

This carelessness leads to events like four-time Olympic

gold medalist Serena Williams’ life threatening experience giving birth to her daughter at St. Mary’s Medical Center in West Palm Beach, Florida. She experienced pulmonary embolism, and due to her history with it, was able to identify it immediately.

Shortly after giving birth, Williams walked out of her own hospital room and insisted to a nurse that she needed a CT scan and an IV heparin, a blood thinner. The nurse assumed that her pain medication was causing her to be confused. When Williams finally convinced a doctor to perform a CT scan, they realized several blood clots were forming on her lungs.

Had the nurse ushered her back to her room, she may have died.

“Even Serena Williams can’t get proper care,” Britt Julious, a music critic for the Chicago Tribune, tweeted in response. “This is why black [sic] women are statistically at the greatest risk for pregnancy-related deaths. The medical community does not take our pain seriously.”

In the modern world, the United States is an outlier: women are more likely to die from childbirth and pregnancy related causes here than anywhere else. In the U.S., Black women of all incomes are three-to-four times more likely to die from pregnancy complications than white women, the CDC



Serena Williams' harrowing pregnancy complications while giving birth to her daughter Olympia (right) lump her into the 50k women who experience life-threatening issues during pregnancy and her being Black increases the likelihood of these complication threefold. Photo credit: @serenawilliams on Instagram Data: VOX

states. Research suggests that almost half of these deaths are preventable.

California seems to be the only state to care. Forming the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative (CMQCC) in 2006, they were determined to understand and stop maternal mortality. Due to their efforts, they have managed to reduce maternal mortality rate in women from 16.9 per 100,000 people to 7.3.

The CMQCC has been working closely with organizations led by Black women, but there is still work to be done to end racism in the healthcare industry.

A 2016 study published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology found that Black women were less likely to undergo testing for BRCA1/2, a gene that determines breast and ovarian cancer risk, than white women. Black women were less likely to report that they received any physician

recommendation for testing even if they showed signs that they were at-risk for it. There is no medical basis for this discrimination: the probability of carrying the BRCA1/2 mutation is similar between both races.

Racial segregation still exists in the U.S., and it thrives in hospitals.

Schedule II opioids sit in time-locked safes in pharmacies all around the U.S. These drugs can be prescribed either for long-term pain management, or three-day supplies in the wake of a car accident.

Black Americans are two times less likely to receive opioid prescriptions than white Americans, but their pain is the same. Doctors have been found to be overly cautious when prescribing to Black patients, and this is likely due to stereotypes of what an opioid addict looks like – which harms both Black and white patients.

Science and Technology



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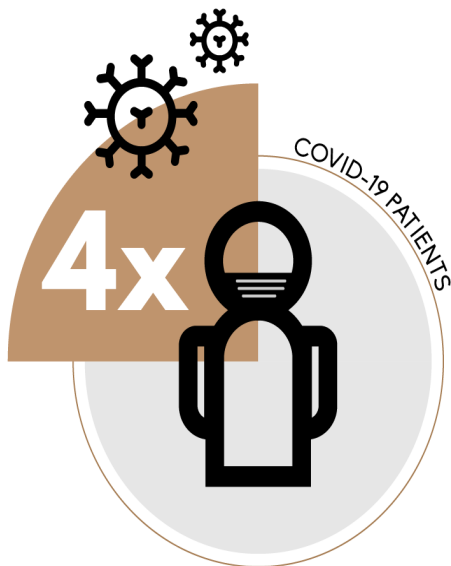
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Nearly **25%** of COVID-19 patients are Black, and compared to white patients, they are over four times more likely to die from the disease.



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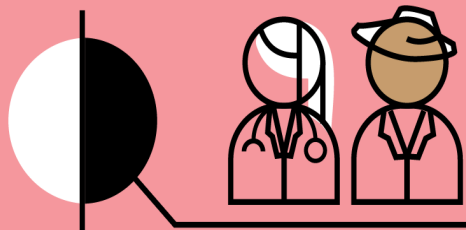


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418



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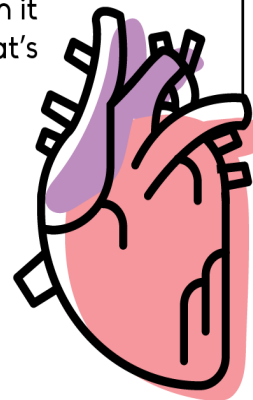
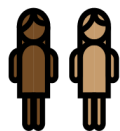


believed Black people had a stronger pain tolerance than white people.

According to Black Women's Health Imperative

49% of Black women over the age of 20 have some type of HEART DISEASE and they're more likely to die from it than their white counterparts. That's

1 out of every 2 BLACK WOMEN



Black women are the demographic that suffers the most from heart disease out of all Americans. Despite that statistic, no major heart health organizations have pushed statements for Black women specifically or individually.

This discrimination begins at birth, as Black newborns are more than twice as likely to die than non-Hispanic, white newborns. It doesn't end there.

Nearly 25 percent of COVID-19 patients are Black, and compared to white patients, they are over four times more likely to die from the disease.

49 percent of Black women over the age of 20 have some type of heart disease, according to Black Women's Health Imperative, and they're more likely to die from it than their white counterparts. That's one out of every two Black women.

There are a few causes for this. Negligent testing is one of them, along with preexisting conditions like obesity, which affects 82 percent of Black women, and diabetes, which affects 25 percent of Black women over the age of 55. On average, one in five Black women smoke cigarettes, another contributor to the heart disease epidemic.

Fortunately, there have been efforts to curb the risk of heart disease in the Black community. The Truth Initiative, a campaign to prevent tobacco usage in young Americans, published a video last year bringing attention to tobacco companies predatory advertisements to Black communities.

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Nearly sixty years ago, Malcolm X announced, "The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the Black woman. The most neglected person in America is the Black woman." He was right.

Sports

NFL DRAFT EVALUATIONS

Anthony Martinez
Sports Editor

The NFL Draft is one of the most important days for American football. So much resides on this day. It's the day for bad teams to change their future with a transcendent player and for good teams to find ways to fill any missing pieces they may have. April 29th is the start of the NFL Draft and until then evaluations are made from college tape and their ongoing pro-days.

Every season, there are a couple of players who separate themselves from the rest of the bunch and become in the mix for the number one pick in the draft. Some seasons create more obvious number one choices, however, it has been a while since a bigger obvious number one has been in the draft than this season's Trevor Lawrence.

Trevor Lawrence, quarterback for the Clemson Tigers is everything a team could want in their franchise quarterback. He is truly a generational talent, up there with Andrew Luck and Peyton Manning. Lawrence does everything at least good. There aren't any obvious signs of weakness. Of course, he could improve decision-making, and not staring down the first receiver, but he still does those things well, especially for a college quarterback. Mix



Clemson quarterback and potential #1 overall pick had an extremely successful college career, winning a national champion in the process. (Photo from flickr.com by TigerNet).

that with his height at 6'6 and amazing arm strength and accuracy, Lawrence is a lock to go number one in this year's draft.

Outside of Trevor Lawrence, this year's quarterback class is extremely loaded. Five quarterbacks will most likely go in the



DeVonta Smith/Ja'Marr Chase/Jaylen Waddle (Photo from SNY)

first round, maybe six, and four of them will most likely go in the top ten. While there might be better value picks and other players who are better at their respective position if a team truly needs a quarterback then that triumphs any other need.

Other top quarterbacks include BYU's Zach Wilson, whose stock skyrocketed last season with phenomenal play. He is an electrifying player, he's very creative and the ball jumps out of his hands and his ball placement

was great. The only concerns really with him are potential injuries, he has

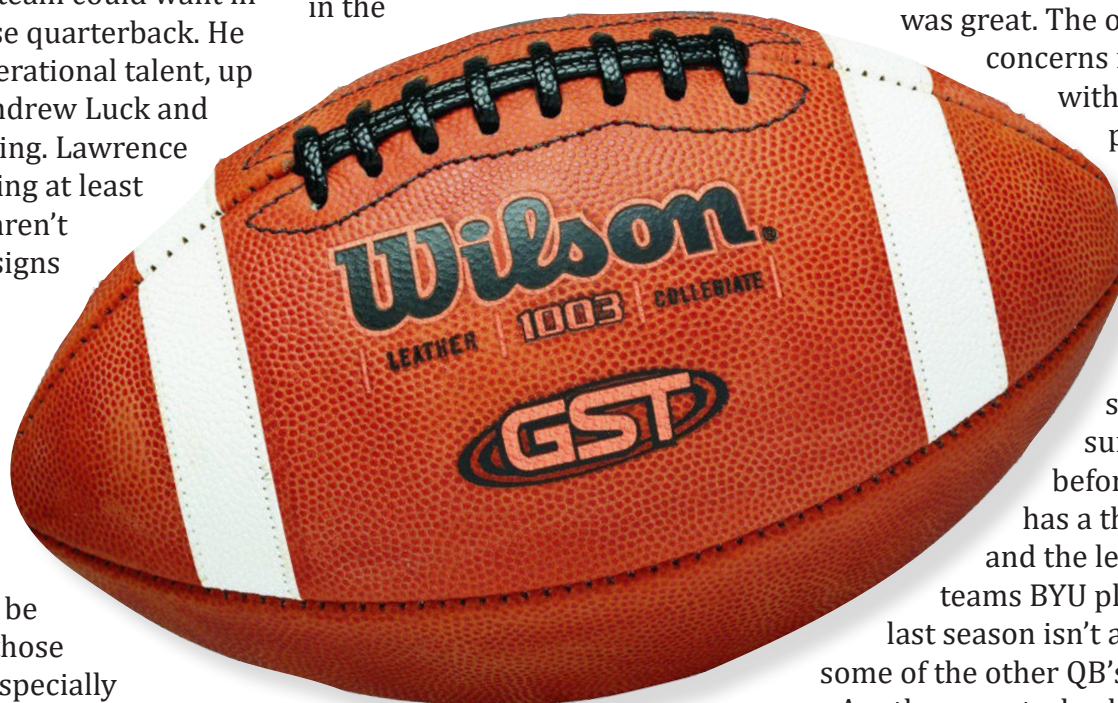
already had shoulder surgery before and has a thin frame and the level of teams BYU played last season isn't as high as some of the other QB's.

Another quarterback whose

collegiate competition doesn't stack up to some of the other QBs in North Dakota State's, Trey Lance. In terms of potential though, no one except Lawrence has as high of a potential. His arm strength is fantastic and his ability as a runner is the best of his class, he can run through tackles. Again, his concerns are his weaker opponents he's played as well as his limited starting experience, he will need time.

One quarterback who has both of those things is Ohio State's Justin Fields. Solid arm strength, great speed, and good accuracy, fields fit the modern mold of today's NFL quarterbacks. One concern is that Ohio State has not been able to create successful NFL quarterbacks, so Fields will have to do what he can to break that.

When looking outside of the quarterbacks, the talent in this year's class is outstanding. In a heavier offensive draft, at least in the early goings, there are plenty of players who will be ready to start and make an impact immediately. Outside of Lawrence, the best player in this



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class may very well be Penei Sewell, who played tackle for Oregon. Sewell opted out of this previous season so his tape is limited to his redshirt freshman campaign but what a campaign it was. He looked extremely dominant. Despite missing last season he could go as early as second in the draft and no one would question that decision.

The wide receiver class has a great pool of talent as well. The top three are considered to be as good to go in the top ten, even top-five and one of the receivers most likely will. Those would be LSU's Jamar Chase, Alabama's Devonta Smith, and Alabama's Jaylen Waddle. Chase is the most physically dominant receiver, he highpoints the ball extremely well and is reminiscent of Deandre Hopkins.

For the Alabama receivers, Smith just won the Heisman award. An award that very rarely goes to a receiver and because of that and mixed with his great skill set and ability to just find ways to get open, there is a lot of hype for Smith. Then Waddle is the fastest receiver this season, an absolute burner, and still has other great qualities about him outside of just great speed.

One player that might fall a little bit because of position need who is a top ten, maybe top-five talent is Kyle Pitts, the tight end out of Florida. An incredible athlete, he creates so many mismatches at tight end, a more polished Evan Engram when he came out of college. Pitts can go out wide and even line up against a corner and people would still expect results. The most versatile player in this year's class.

A lot more process has to happen before these teams make their eventual picks on the 29th of April, but these players will certainly be towards the top. It's just a question of where they will land.



Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James hopes to finish the season strong and attempt to repeat as champions. (Photo from flickr.com by Lila Broomberg).

NBA MIDSEASON UPDATE

Anthony Martinez
Sports Editor

At the bottom of the barrel in the east, are the Detroit Pistons. They made a lot of questionable decisions in the offseason, overpaying for certain players, signing too many bigs, passing on Tyrese Halliburton in the draft. Now with a record of 10-29 and trading Derrick Rose and Blake Griffin, the Pistons are still in complete rebuild mode. With March Madness coming up shortly, there will be plenty of talent for them to get a good look at.

Currently, the odds on favorite to win a championship are kind of blurry. The Jazz have a strong record but their star-power is outmatched by other teams, they're reminiscent of the Atlanta Hawks several years back when they had the best record and then getting dismantled easily by

LeBron and the Cavaliers. The Lakers and Clippers have great duos and the Lakers are the defending champs but the favorite has to go to the Nets currently. Time will tell when Anthony Davis returns if they can compete with the Nets when both teams are healthy but the Nets have so much firepower. Between three all-NBA level players and great surrounding pieces, they are the team to beat currently.

In terms of individual awards like the Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year award, one seems much more clear than the other. In terms of the MVP, it seems to be lead by three standouts, the aforementioned Joel Embiid from the 76ers, Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James, and Denver Nuggets star Nikola Jokic. With Embiid's injury, James and Jokic could pull ahead in the race.

For the rookie of the year, there have been some great rookies. Or at least ones that have shown lots of potential. Players like Tyrese Halliburton and James Wiseman, but clearly, it will most likely go to LaMelo Ball. Ball has exceeded expectations and is having a wonderful season at just 19-years-old. He's playing well and as a result, the Charlotte Hornets are currently in the playoff picture after being one of the worst teams last season. The season has a lot more storylines to go through for the remainder of the season before the playoffs eventually start. It's been a great NBA season and thankfully has managed well through the pandemic, and one could only hope it remains that way for the rest of the season.



**WOMEN'S
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