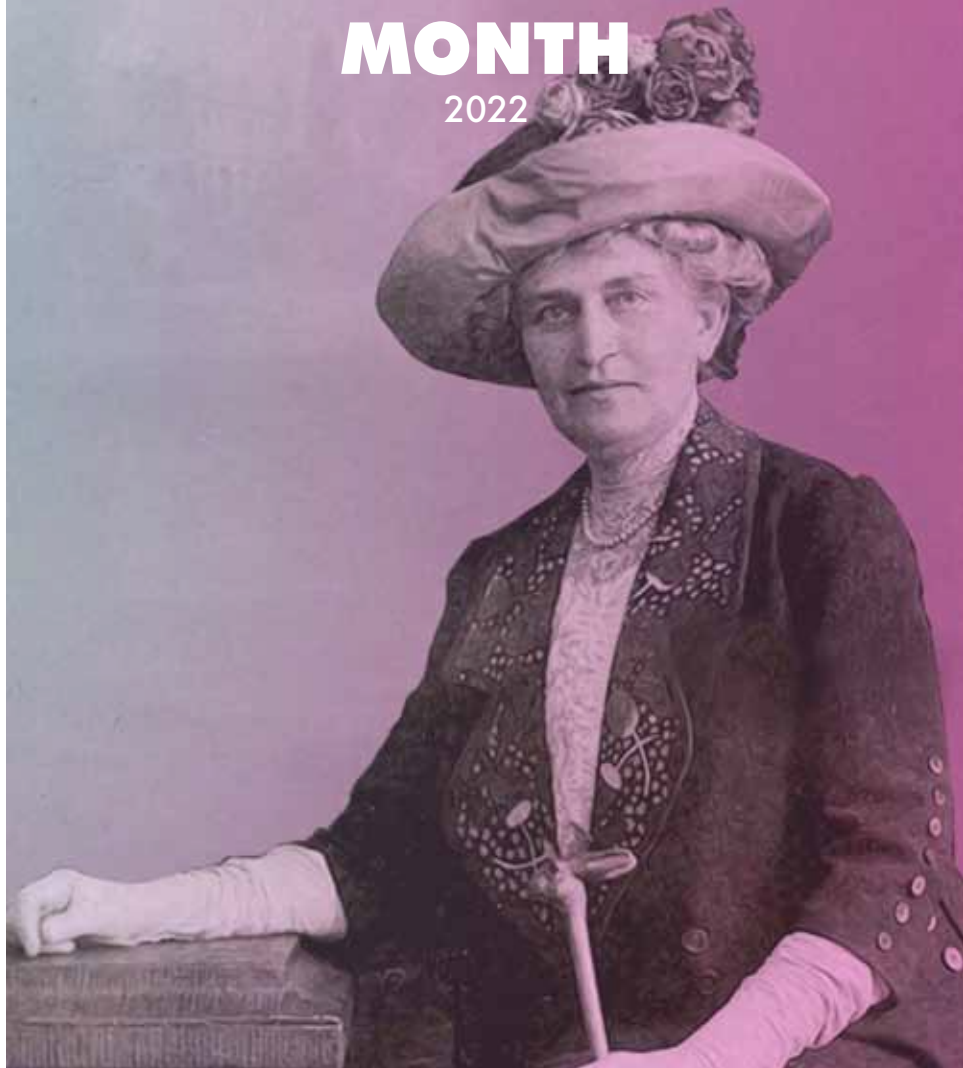


Economic Development | Advocacy

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

2022



TOLEDO
LUCAS COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



www.womenoftoledo.org | www.nwowbc.com



Introducing Northwest Ohio Women's Business Council

The goal of the Women's Business Council is to nurture and support, learning from the past and reflecting on the present, to create a more equitable future. We know that narratives have the power to amplify businesses' access to the next level of social capital and close the network gap. Today we present #HerStory, sharing the stories of ten local women who were change-makers in their time, and their journeys paved the way for women entrepreneurs in the Greater Toledo area.

Our mission at the Northwest Ohio Women's Business Council is to recognize a diverse group of female entrepreneurs who have achieved success and contribute to the economic well-being of our community. In accord with this mission, we introduce the Women's Entrepreneurial Distinction Ovation Award to amplify the voices of women-owned businesses and encourage women's economic development.

We hope that our commitment to do this work will help create a road map for community support to amplify the voices of communities of color and support and encourage women-owned businesses. We believe that every individual deserves to participate fully in our economy, across their life cycle, and build sustainable wealth through generations so that all communities can prosper without exception.

We hope you join us in our mission.

TOLEDO CHANGE MAKERS

Women who led the way



Ella Stewart

(1893–1987)

**Pharmacist,
Community Builder,
Civil Rights Champion**

Ella Stewart was a change maker in her community and a role model for women. Unlike most her peers who only attended primary school, she finished high school. Ella went on to graduate as a pharmacist from the University of Pittsburgh in 1916. Ella was one of the first black female pharmacists in the US. After her studies, she and her husband settled down in Toledo, Ohio, where they operated a pharmacy in an African American neighborhood. Ella was very active in the Toledo community and Toledo politics. She was an inaugural member of the Toledo Board of Community Relations where she advocated for fair employment practices and civil rights. Ella was also the president of the National Association of Colored Women's clubs from 1948–1952. From all the awards she had received, the one that meant the most to her, was when a Toledo school was named after her: Ella P Stewart Academy for Girls.



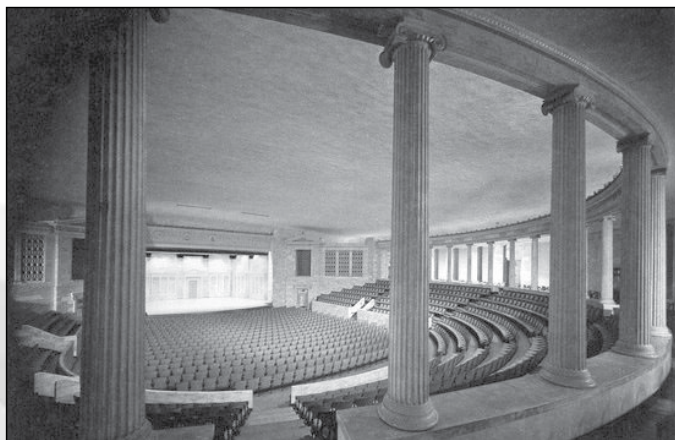


Florence Scott Libbey

(1863-1938)

Art Collector, Philanthropist

Florence Scott was the daughter of a wealthy real estate dealer who had many properties in downtown Toledo. Florence was very interested in art collecting. In 1890, she married Edward Drummond Libbey. They both became interested in the Toledo Museum of Art. Florence and Edward deeded their Monroe Street homestead property to the Museum. Florence donated her personal collections of ceramics and oriental arts, and family paintings to the Museum. After Edward's death, Florence took on more of a leadership role in the museum. She served as a trustee, Vice President, and as a member of the Museum art committee. During the Great Depression in the 1930's, she gave the 1.5 million dollars that Edward left for her, to the construction of the Museum's music center. After her death, she left an annual amount of \$50,000 to pay for work in music, lectures, concerts, and musical entertainments to the Museum. She left \$15,000 as a perpetual endowment for the Jesup W. School Library Fund, which purchases books, periodicals, maps, and other educational materials.





Grace Estelle Smith

(1883-1955)

**Restaurateur,
Food Innovator**

Grace Estelle Smith was a well-known restaurant leader in the country. She graduated from the College of Wooster in 1908 with a degree in Latin and Science. She became a manager at the YWCA where she ran the YWCA'S restaurant. Through her role, she created a safe space for women to enjoy healthy meals. Because of her success at the YWCA, Grace was encouraged to open her own restaurant. Grace Smith opened and operated a cafeteria called, "Smith's Cafeteria". It was first opened in 1916 and located on Madison Avenue. Grace became revolutionary in her approaches to her restaurant business. She did not serve alcohol, which was strange for the time. This allowed single women, like Grace, to feel safe eating. She worked closely with nutritionists and dieticians to make sure her food was nutritious. She paid fair wages, provided more opportunities for women to work, and her workers were a part of a union. During these times of racial segregation, Grace insisted black patrons feel safe to eat at her establishment and sit wherever they please. Grace was also very involved in the Toledo community. She was a member of the Inverness Club, the Chamber of Commerce, Toledo Association of University Women, and the Toledo Planning Commission. She passed away in 1955 and left her \$341,800 estate to her family and Toledo organizations.





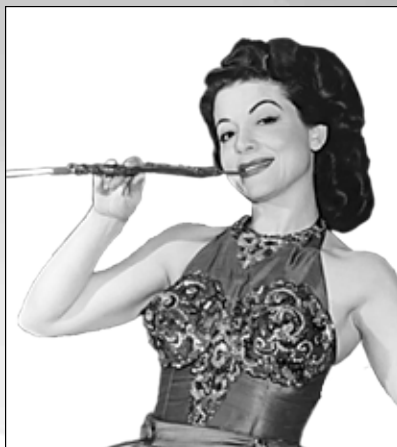
Sophia Lustig

(1898-1972)

Clothier, Trend Setter

In 1936, Sophia Lustig opened her own clothing store in downtown Toledo. This was a store like no other at the time. At this clothing store, customers made appointments with personal stylists. Each item was handpicked and curated by Sophia from the top designers. Women would sip on champagne and shop at this luxury store.





Rose LaRose

(1919-1972)

**Actress, Entertainer,
Entrepreneur**

Rose LaRose was a burlesque queen and was known all over the country. She dropped out of high school at the age of 14. Because she was not educated and was poor, she had extremely limited choices and opportunities to create a life for herself. She then started working as a cashier but wanted something more. She only made \$22/week as a cashier. Once she knew how much more performers were making, she started to travel and perform burlesque in major cities. Rose became very popular; she knew the impact she had on her audience. Rose made around \$2,000/week performing which was more than any working woman at the time was making. She retired from the stage in 1958 and moved to Toledo, Ohio, where she bought and ran the Town Hall Burlesque. Her theatre attracted many tourists and was an asset to the city. Her staff were unionized, and she brought the greatest artists to perform. Rose was a competent and skillful woman who created a successful business despite her lack of resources and opportunities.





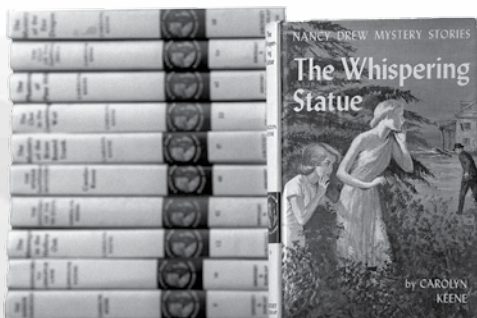
Mildred Benson

(1905-2002)

**Journalists, Children's Author,
Adventurer**

In 1905, Mildred Benson was born in Ladora, Iowa. Millie fell in love with writing from a young age. Her first story was published when she was 12 in St. Nicholas Magazine. She went on to graduate from the University of Iowa in 1925 and received her master's in journalism in 1927. Through graduate school, she began to write for the Stratemeyer Syndicate. Edward Stratemeyer, head of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, noticed Millie's talent right away. Edward Stratemeyer asked Millie to write a new series called Nancy Drew. He thought Millie was writing the heroine to be too outspoken, but the series quickly became a hit. However, Millie did not use her real name when writing the series. She wrote under the pen name, Carolyn Keene. The series was printed in 17 languages and sold over 30 million copies. Millie only made between \$125 and \$250 per story she wrote. During the Great Depression, Millie's pay was going to be cut down to \$75, so she decided it was time to decline the job and pursue her independent work. When she married her first husband, they both moved to Toledo, Ohio, where Millie started to write for the Toledo Times, which is now called The Blade. In 1980, it was revealed that Millie was the author writing under the Carolyn Keene pen name. Her fame grew quickly. She received awards from the Ohio

Newspaper Association, Ohio Aviation Trades Association, and the University of Iowa. Her impact and talent continue to be cherished by many.





Margaret 'Rusty' Monroe

(1918-2008)

**Promoter, Restaurateur,
Entrepreneur**

Margaret "Rusty" Monroe was a Toledo Jazz legend. She was a supporter of the arts, a successful businesswoman, and a music promoter. Rusty was born in 1918 in Hardin County, Ohio. Rusty was raised on a farm with her four sisters and one brother. She never received musical training, but her father was a violin player. Rusty knew from a young age she preferred literature and music over the country life. After graduating from a one-room schoolhouse at 14, she waited tables in restaurants. After World War II, Rusty decided to invest in herself and learn about successful bar and restaurant management. In 1963, she signed a lease on a building in a strip mall in West Toledo. Rusty turned the building into a bar called, "Rusty's Piano Bar." In 1979, Rusty opened "Rusty's Jazz Café" in South Toledo, where young musicians played with nationally famous jazz musicians. In partnership with the Toledo Arts Commission, she created a six-week summer job program for young aspiring musicians. The City of Toledo officially declared November 22, 1993 "Rusty Monroe Day" because of Rusty's positive impact and dedication to the arts. Rusty was co-founder of the Toledo Jazz society and served as president for 5 years. She donated her manuscripts, photographs, and artifacts to the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, where her legacy carries on.





Betty Timko

(1920-1996)

**Restaurant Manager,
Food Creator**

Betty Timko worked as a waitress during high school and from there, she became the Church Hostess of the Collingwood United Methodist Church in Toledo. Betty was awarded the Mrs. Toledo title by the Young Matrons of the Y.W.C.A. She then started to launch her catering business in homes, churches, and at events. In 1962, Betty was working at the Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania, Ohio. While she was there, she created her famous spinach salad that is now known today as "Betty's Salad." She managed the Wooden Indian Restaurant and was the Food and Beverage Director for the company. In 1971, the Holiday Inns International System named Betty "Restaurant Manager of the Year" A few years later, she was named one of the top ten managers in the company.



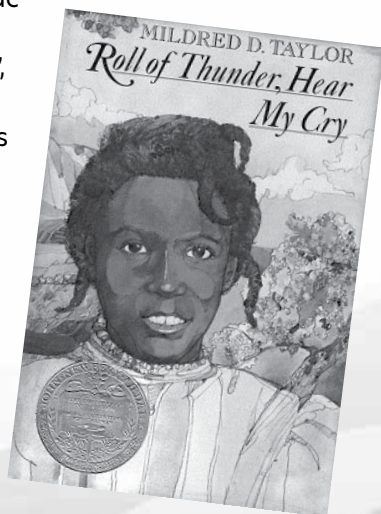


Mildred Taylor

(b. 1943)

Author, Peace Corps

Mildred Taylor was born in 1943 in Jackson, Mississippi. Her father, Wilbert Taylor, did not want to remain in the South due to racial segregation. In wanting a better life and more opportunities for him and his family, he moved to Ohio. Mildred attended Scott High School. During her high school years, she was class secretary, a member of Junior Y-Teens, a part of the school newspaper, writer's club, and French club. Mildred graduated from the University of Toledo in 1965 with a bachelor's in education. She spent two years in Ethiopia with the Peace Corps. Afterwards, she completed her master's degree in Journalism from the University of Colorado. She wrote the prize-winning short story, "Song of the Trees." Mildred won the Newberry Award for her book, "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry." The Toledo Lucas County Public Library has a Gold Cadillac immortalized in the Children's space in honor of Mildred's story, "Gold Cadillac", which is about her experiences with segregation in the south. Mildred knows that some of her stories are considered controversial due to the transparent portrayal of racism in her children's books, but she is dedicated to writing the truth of how people felt at the time. Her dedication to the truth is what continues her impact.





Rose Halicek Ondrus

(1892-1962)

Hardware Store Owner

Rose Halicek was born September 3, 1892, in Czech Republic and came to Toledo by way of NY City January 30, 1906 as a 15-year-old not knowing a word of English. She and her husband established a dry goods store on Consaul Street in the Birmingham neighborhood in 1916. By the 1930s, she was selling hardware. Along with her husband, Frank, Ondrus Hardware soon became an East Toledo fixture. It remains one today, 100 years later.



Founding Council Members



SANDY SPANG *Chair*
Deputy Director of Economic Development
City of Toledo



SENA MOURAD FRIEDMAN *Chair*
Dir. of Development and Communications
The Center of Fair Housing



RHONDA SEWELL
Dir. of Belonging & Community Engagement
Toledo Museum of Art



LINDA FAYERWEATHER
Business Specialist
The Toledo-Lucas County



OLIVIA HOLDEN
Executive Director
ASSETS Toledo



STAYCE FOWLER
Regional Director
Minority Business Assistance Center



ABY SADOWY
Owner, Simplicity Sound
HerHub Chairperson



MEGAN REICHART
Director Innovation
Mercy Health



MEG RESSLER, SHRM-SCP
Principal
Meg Ressler & Associates, LLC

WOMEN OF TOLEDO

Economic Development

Programs focus on the economic advancement of women and young women through business and professional development, networking opportunities, and collaboration with other organizations to promote inclusive economic growth.

Advocacy

A special Response Advocacy Taskforce leads, supports, and assists women in the community through education, engagement, and empowerment initiatives related to current political, economic, and social issues.

Mentorship

Programs linking Mentors and Mentees to fully capitalize on the opportunity to connect, communicate, and collaborate with more women and leaders in our community.

HerHub Initiative

www.419herhub.org | hello@419herhub.org

An online platform highlights women-owned businesses, non-profit organizations, and local events in the Toledo Metro area. Our goal is also to increase the visibility of local female entrepreneurs and promote women's economic empowerment.

EDUCATE ENGAGE EMPOWER



GET INVOLVED

Attend

Create meaningful connections with women of diverse backgrounds and discover opportunities to grow. We've got so much to offer from educational initiatives, power-hour luncheons, mentoring, networking, and much more!

Volunteer

Raise awareness about the Women of Toledo and contribute to your community. We provide opportunities to develop lifelong friendships and peer-networking with a diverse group of women.

Support

Give a financial gift. Each time you make a sustained monthly gift of \$25 or more, you are supporting women's economic empowerment, gender equality, and helping to build a stronger community with HER in it.

Partner

Promote your company's commitment to compassion and generosity while working to push for equality and empowerment. Companies can reach over 1,200 people who are a part of our circle.





PROGRAM ORGANIZER

Women of Toledo: Established in 2014, Inclusive for Women Inc. - Women of Toledo is a 501c3 nonprofit organization serving the Greater Toledo community that advocates for diversity and inclusion with a focus on economic empowerment. The organization offers programs and services that help tackle issues critical to women's economic advancement and interrupt various biases in the workplace, marketplace, community, and family.

www.womenoftoledo.org | www.419herhub.org | www.nwowbc.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANKS



This program was funded part of a grant from the **Winalee Blue Fund** of the **Greater Toledo Community Foundation**.

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Women's History Month
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