



The Top 5 Greatest American Women: Abigail Adams, Susan B. Anthony, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Hillary Clinton

Charles River Editors

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American presidents have shaped the course of global affairs for generations, but as the saying goes, behind every great man there's a great woman. While the First Ladies often remain overshadowed by their husbands, some have carved unique niches in their time and left their own lasting legacy. Abigail Adams served as a political advisor that earned her the moniker "Mrs. President", while Eleanor Roosevelt gave voice to policy issues in a way that made her a forerunner of First Ladies like Hillary Clinton.

During the last 100 years, Susan B. Anthony has been one of the most venerated women in American history, but in the 80 years before that, she was one of the most hated women in American history. Anthony took note of her contemporaries' distaste for her but remained defiant, asserting, "I have encountered riotous mobs and have been hung in effigy, but my motto is: Men's rights are nothing more. Women's rights are nothing less." Though Anthony is best remembered today for working towards women's suffrage, she was an active and progressive advocate for all of the leading human rights issues of her time. Anthony was an ardent abolitionist from day one, and she spent much of the first 40 years of her life championing the cause of African-Americans, even befriending men like Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison along the way. She also championed "radical" ideas as 8 hour work days, minimum wage laws, and equal pay for women.

To say Helen Keller is one of the most unique figures in American history would be an understatement. As a young child, Helen lost both her vision and hearing, leaving her deafblind, an almost hopelessly debilitating condition that left her literally trapped, unable to communicate with anyone. But Helen eventually overcame the frustration and used unimaginable perseverance to overcome her disability. With Anne Sullivan's help and the sense of touch, Helen eventually broke through and learned to communicate. Helen's story would have been remarkable enough if it had ended simply with her ability to communicate with the outside world, but "I had now the key to all language, and I was eager to learn to use it." With unbridled ambition, Helen became the first deafblind individual to earn a bachelor's degree from a college, published her own autobiography when she was just 22, and in the early 20th century became famous across the world as both an author and speaker.

The Top 5 Greatest American Women profiles each and every one of these American icons, examining their contributions to history and their lasting legacies.

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