



Women's History & Disability

By Raquel Castaneda

Since March is Women's History Month, a time to highlight, celebrate, and appreciate women and their accomplishments and contributions to society; I chose to feature the three inspiring women pictured above who have beat the odds and/or paved the way for others.

Claudia Gordon

Ms. Gordon served as an adviser on disability issues to President Obama. She worked in the White House Office of Public Engagement in D.C. Not only is she the first woman with a disability to serve in that position but she is also the first black deaf lawyer in the U.S. and the first deaf student to graduate from the

American University's Law School. She has advocated for deaf and disabled people all of her life through her work at the National Council on Disability, the National Coalition for Disability Rights, and the Office of Homeland Security.

While at the Office of Homeland Security, Gordon worked on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. She has done some amazing work and her life serves as encouragement for others to pursue their dreams and know they can make a difference.

Sudha Chandran

Ms. Chandran might not be well-known in America, but she is considered one of the most famous dancers and actresses

in India. She has appeared in a few films and dance shows in the U.S. but most of her work is shown in India and other parts of the world.

Chandran did not always have a disability. In 1981, she lost one of her legs in a car accident but she didn't let that stop her. (This serves as a reminder that anyone can acquire a disability at any point in their life.) Chandran uses a prosthetic leg to allow her to dance and went on to become one of the most highly-acclaimed dancers in the world. She's definitely an amazing person who I know encourages other young dancers to keep going despite any circumstance.

Helen Keller

Lastly, I would like to highlight one of the most well-known women with a disability, Helen Keller. Ms. Keller was the first deaf and blind person to earn a college degree. There is even a movie about her life called, "*The Miracle Worker*." This movie depicts how her teacher, Anne Sullivan, developed a language for Keller to understand. After Keller gained the

ability to express herself, she never wasted it. She used it to campaign for women's rights and labor rights her entire life. She also published 12 books in her lifetime. Her story is one that inspired many people and continues to do so.

To read more on Claudia Gordon please, visit:

<http://deafness.about.com/od/deafwomen/p/claudiagordon.htm>
http://www.gallaudet.edu/board_of_trustees/board_members/board_of_trustees_list/gordon.html

To read more about Sudha Chandran, please visit:

<http://www.ndtv.com/offbeat/how-sudha-chandran-learnt-to-dance-again-after-losing-a-leg-in-accident-1267558>

To read more on Helen Keller, please visit:

<http://www.biography.com/people/helen-keller-9361967>



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