

Celebrating Women's History Month

Teaching Guide/Student Worksheets

This instructional guide supports the use of the profiles for Celebrating Women's History Month. It offers vocabulary words from the text and several short answer questions based on the content of each profile. In some cases, references to related websites are included with additional materials about the person or their pursuits. Lastly, the guide includes two or three activities per profile called "Newspaper Tie-ins." These activities suggest how to bring the lessons of these historical figures into the present, to make their lives relevant and apply the lessons to today's news. These graphic organizers were created for students in grades 4-8 and can be narrowed or expanded to accommodate the needs of each instructor's class. Feel free to modify these activities or create your own.

*Written by Mary Hadigan Miller, Educational Services Director
for the New York News Publishers Association –
News Media Literacy/Newspaper In Education Program
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Any questions contact Mary at mmiller@nynpa.com or call 518-449-1667

. Florida Standards

The Florida Department of Education defines that the Florida Standards provide a robust set of goals for every grade. Emphasizing analytical thinking rather than rote memorization, the Florida Standards will prepare our students for success in college, career and life. The Florida Standards will reflect the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

Building on the foundation of success that has made Florida a national model, The Florida Standards provide a clear set of goals for every student, parent, and teacher.

For more information on Florida Standards, go to the CPALMS website. CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for standards information and course descriptions: <http://www.cpalms.org>.

The reading material and activities in this packet applies to the following Florida Standards for grades four through twelve.

Social Studies: SS.4.A.1.1; SS.4.A.1.2; SS.4.C.2.2; SS.4.C.2.3; SS.5.C.2.4; SS.5.C.2.5; SS.7.C.2.11; SS.7.C.2.13; SS.7.C.2.14; SS.8.A.1.1; SS.8.A.1.2; SS.8.A.1.3; SS.8.A.1.4; SS.8.A.1.5; SS.8.A.1.6; SS.8.A.1.7; SS.8.FL.1.2; SS.8.FL.1.3; SS.8.FL.1.4; SS.8.FL.1.5; SS.8.FL.1.6; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.5; SS.912.A.1.6; SS.912.A.1.7; SS.912.A.7.6; SS.912.C.2.2; SS.912.C.2.3; SS.912.C.2.4; SS.912.C.2.5; SS.912.C.2.8; SS.912.H.1.6; SS.912.S.1.4 **Language Arts:** LAFS.412.RI.1.1; LAFS.412.RI.1.2; LAFS.412.RI.1.3; LAFS.412.RI.2.4; LAFS.412.RI.2.5; LAFS.412.RI.2.6; LAFS.412.RI.3.7; LAFS.412.SL.1.1; LAFS.412.SL.1.2; LAFS.412.SL.1.3; LAFS.412.SL.2.4; LAFS.412.SL.2.5; LAFS.412.SL.2.6; LAFS.412.W.1.1; LAFS.412.W.1.2; LAFS.412.W.1.3; LAFS.412.W.2.4; LAFS.412.W.2.5; LAFS.412.W.2.6; LAFS.412.W.3.7; LAFS.412.W.3.8

Newspaper in Education

The Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and local newspapers to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text.

Informational text is a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. Florida NIE programs provide schools with class sets of informational text in the form of the daily newspaper and original curriculum. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are consistent with Florida's education standards.

Florida Press Educational Services, Inc. (FPES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of newspaper professionals that promotes literacy, particularly for young people. FPES members consist of daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state of Florida. Through its member newspapers, FPES serves educators, students and families in all 67 Florida counties. For more information about FPES, visit fpesnie.org, or email ktower@flpress.com or jpushkin@tampabay.com. Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/nie_fpes](https://twitter.com/nie_fpes).

Name _____

Mary Edwards Walker

Vocabulary – write a brief definition for the following words:

controversial _____

pantaloon _____

lobbying _____

commission _____

meritorious _____

retroactively _____

Read the Famous New Yorker profile of Mary Edwards Walker. Then answer these questions.

1. What clothing style did Mary Walker adopt? What were the women who dressed this way known as? Who was this style named after? _____

2. Why was Walker expelled from Iowa College? When did this occur? _____

3. What was Walker arrested for during the Civil War and why? _____

4. What honor was given to Walker by the U.S. Government? _____

5. What organization was Mary Walker President of? _____

Related Websites:

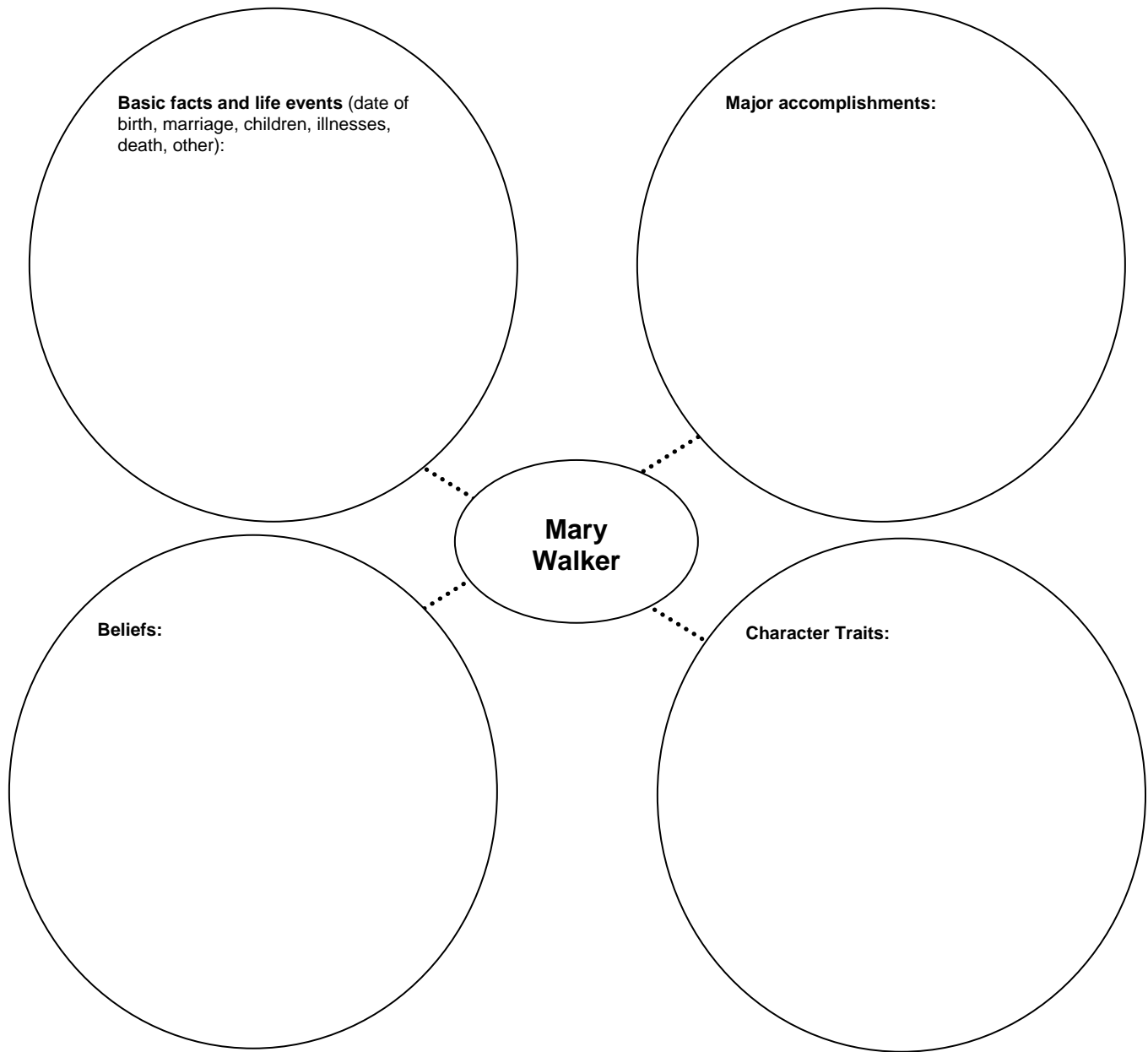
<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-edwards-walker> - Walker's profile on the National Womens' History Museum website

Newspaper Tie-ins:

- Mary Walker administered health care to injured soldiers during the Civil War. Research medical care techniques during the Civil War and compare and contrast the type of treatments Mary Walker may have performed as compared to field medics or civilian Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) today.
- Look recent news stories about how an ordinary citizen made a difference in their community. Compare and contrast this to Mary Walker's life's work.

Name _____

Directions: As you read the profile about Mary Walker, fill in as much of the chart below as you can. If there is more time available, explore other resources to fill out this character chart thoroughly.



Newspaper follow up: From your newspaper, choose a story about someone and complete the chart above based on what you learn from the story.

Assessment question: Name something that you learned and inspired you about Mary Edwards Walker.

Name _____

Emily Warren Roebling

Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words:

prestigious _____

techniques _____

resilience _____

invalid _____

surrogate _____

Read the Famous New Yorker profile of Emily Warren Roebling. Then answer the following questions.

1. About how long were Washington and Emily Roebling married before he was disabled? _____

2. What happened to Washington Roebling that left him unable to travel? _____

3. How did Emily Roebling “work” on the Brooklyn Bridge construction project? _____

4. Name three of Emily’s accomplishments besides the Brooklyn Bridge. _____

5. True or False: Emily Roebling outlived her invalid husband by 23 years. _____

Related Online News Article: *New York Times* – One segment of Overlooked – a series of articles about historic women who did not have obituaries published at the time of their death - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-emily-warren-roebling.html>

Related websites:

PBS Ken Burns: Brooklyn Bridge - <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/brooklyn-bridge-essay-1003/the-brooklyn-bridge-ken-burns-brooklyn-bridge/>

The New York Times Learning Network - <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/24/may-24-1883-brooklyn-bridge-opens/>

Newspaper Tie-ins:

- Pretend you are a reporter at the official opening of the newly completed Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. Write a brief article about what you experienced. Use the News Report organizer on page 33 to gather information and organize your thoughts. Be prepared to present your news report to the class.
- Look through recent editions of the newspaper (print and online) for articles about famous landmarks or tourist attractions. Where are they located, relatively local or far away? Select one and compare it to the Brooklyn Bridge. Use the chart on the next page to record what you’ve found. Give a brief oral report to the class.

Name _____

Name of Attraction:	Brooklyn Bridge
What are the main features?	It is a suspension bridge made of granite towers and steel cables. It allows locomotive trains, motor vehicles, pedestrian and bicyclists to cross. The bridge's construction took 14 years, involved 600 workers and cost \$15 million (more than \$320 million in today's dollars). At least two dozen people died in the process, including its original designer.
Where is this attraction located?	It spans the East River and connects the boroughs of Brooklyn and Manhattan in New York City
Why do people visit this attraction? About how many people visit it?	The Brooklyn Bridge is one of the most popular of America's bridges. And, it's well used. According to the New York City Department of Transportation, "more than 120,000 vehicles, 4,000 pedestrians, and 2,600 bicyclists cross the Brooklyn Bridge every day" (as of 2016).
What helpful hints should you know before visiting this attraction?	Plan to spend at least an hour in each direction, so there's time to stop and look. For safety cross the bridge during daylight hours or any evening when there are lots of other pedestrians around. There are no bathrooms, food or water vendors on the bridge, so be prepared. Wear comfortable shoes.

Follow up: Now that you've researched a tourist attraction, create a newspaper advertisement promoting this location as a place to visit.

Assessment question: What is the most interesting thing you learned doing this activity?

Name _____

Agnes de Mille

Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words:

resounding _____

captivated _____

pursued _____

choreographer _____

synthesis _____

interludes _____

Read the Famous New Yorker profile of Agnes de Mille. Then answer the following questions.

1. Which two dancers inspired Agnes to want to dance? _____

2. Who opposed her plans to dance and why? Who encouraged her? _____

3. What composer wrote the music for Agnes de Mille's ballet *Rodeo*? _____

4. Name at least three different occupations Agnes had during her life. _____

5. After her creative success, what two organizations was Agnes de Mille part of? _____

Related Resource Online: The complete *Oklahoma!* ballet sequence on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D1loAVwiMc>

Newspaper Tie-ins:

- While some people in Agnes de Mille's life disapproved of her career choice, others encouraged her. Look through stories in the newspaper for someone or a group of people who have people encouraging them to succeed at something. What are they being encouraged to do?
- Agnes de Mille was inspired to create the first ballet set in the American West. After looking through several editions of the newspaper (in-print or online) what do you think might inspire Ms. de Mille if she were still alive and working today and why?
- Agnes was one of the first members of the National Council on the Arts. Search the news and other sources to find out what the National Council on the Arts does. Do you think their work is important? Why or why not?
- In the newspaper or online, find and closely read a review of a book, movie, play or CD that you like. Use what you read, and prior knowledge, to write a review of the work in the style of an arts critic. Give

specific details to support your opinions in your review. Remember not to tell any secrets or give away the ending. Use the chart on the next page to organize your writing.

Name _____

My Arts Review

Title:	
Main Characters or Artists:	
Notable Details:	
Rating: 	I rated it this way because:

Summary: _____

What I Liked: _____

What I Disliked: _____

My Favorite Part: _____

Follow up: What impressed you most about completing this activity?

Name _____

Lucille Clifton

Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words:

precocious _____

publication _____

sensational _____

academic _____

minimalist _____

Read the Famous New Yorker profile of Lucille Clifton. Then answer the following questions.

1. What did Lucille originally study when she first went to college? _____

2. When did Lucille begin writing poetry? _____

3. Name at least two other authors/poets who helped Lucille’s poetry gain notoriety. _____

4. Besides poetry, what other work did Lucille Clifton do during her lifetime? _____

5. How old was Lucille Clifton when she died? _____

Related Online News Articles: *The Baltimore Sun* – May 20, 2005 – Poet Lucille Clifton draws inspiration from family - <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1995-05-20-1995140112-story.html>

Types of Poems:

- ◆ Review different styles of poetry with your students including but not limited to:
 - Acrostic - Poetry that certain letters, usually the first in each line form a word or message when read in a sequence.

- Cinquain - Poetry with five lines. Line 1 has one word (the title). Line 2 has two words that describe the title. Line 3 has three words that tell the action. Line 4 has four words that express the feeling, and line 5 has one word which recalls the title.
- Haiku - A Japanese poem having three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, traditionally with a theme of nature or the seasons.
- Free Verse - Poetry written in either rhyme or unrhymed lines that have no set fixed metrical pattern.
- 5Ws Poem - Poetry written in 5 lines, one each for the who (subject), what (what happened?), when (time it happened), where (where did the action take place) and why (why did it happen)

Name _____

Lucille Clifton Graphic Organizer continued

Newspaper Tie-ins

- Lucille Clifton’s poems were often brief without punctuation. Select something from the newspaper that grabbed your interest and write a 5Ws poem about it.
- Lucille Clifton frequently wrote about her experiences, overcoming adversity and current events. Drawing on a combination of stories from the news and personal experiences write a poem of any style. With a partner, critique each other’s work, correct and revise if necessary. Share the final poems as a class.

5 Ws POEM

Who (subject)
What (What happened?)
When (Date or Time it happened)
Where (Where did the action take place?)

Why (Why did it happen?)

Use another piece of paper to write additional poems.

Name _____

An acrostic poem is a poem in which the initial letters of the lines, taken in order, spell a word or phrase. Each line should relate back to the central theme. In honor of Lucille Clifton and her poetry, write an acrostic poem using GOOD TIMES as your theme.

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S

Assessment: Write a sentence or two about something you learned while studying about Lucille Clifton.

Series Exercises:

1. Select any two women and compare and contrast their lives and accomplishments.
2. Create a crossword puzzle using key vocabulary words from each profile. Consider using the crossword puzzle student interactive tool available free online at www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/crossword/
3. Write an obituary notice for each.
4. Write a classified ad for each profile. The classified could be a help wanted ad, an item for sale ad, or perhaps a lost and found notice. Use your imagination and have fun!
5. Write a journal entry from each personality's perspective regarding the challenge(s) she faced during her lifetime.
6. Using various sources, including the Internet, try to find primary documents relating to each woman.
7. Some of these famous women's homes may now be museums or have been designated as historical landmarks. Research online to find out. What more can you find out about any of the women that you didn't already know from her profile?
8. Check your library for an autobiography or biography about one of these women and read an extensive account of her life. Write a book report using appropriate organizational strategies and make an oral presentation to the class.

Answer Key:

Mary Edwards Walker:

1. Skirt with pantaloons, “Bloomer girls,” and Amelia Bloomer
2. For attempting to join an all-male debating society in 1860
3. Walker was suspected of being a spy for the North because she had crossed enemy lines to treat sick civilians
4. Mary Walker was given the Congressional Medal of Honor.
5. She was president of the National Dress Reform Association.

Emily Warren Roebling:

1. They were married for 7 years.
2. He contracted caisson disease, also known as “the bends.”
3. She communicated between her husband and construction workers completing the bridge providing necessary feedback and guidance.
4. Accept any three of the following: designed family home, assisted in relief efforts during Spanish-American War, studied law earning a certificate and essay prize, historian, transcribed and published an historic journal
5. False – Emily’s husband Washington outlived her by 23 years.

Agnes de Mille

1. Ballerina Anna Pavlova, and modern dancer Ruth St. Denis
2. Her father disapproved because others said she didn’t have a “dancer’s body”; her mother supported her decision.
3. Aaron Copland
4. Accept any three of the following: dancer, choreographer, director, President of a labor union, and writer
5. Agnes was a member of the National Council on the Arts and president of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

Lucille Clifton:

1. Drama
2. Lucille started writing poetry at the age of 10 years old.
3. Accept any two of these: Langston Hughes, Robert Hayden or Carolyn Kiser
4. In addition to writing poetry Lucille Clifton was an author of children’s books, writer for children’s television, book author and professor.
5. Clifton was 73 years old when she died.

Additional online resources:

<http://www2.ed.gov/free/features/women-history-month.html> – Women’s History Topic on Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) website. FREE is among the most popular K-12 websites maintained by the U.S. Department of Education because of the many great resources being offered by contributing federal agencies.

<http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/civic-calendar/womens-history-month> - National Constitution Center’s Women History Month resources

http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/women_resources.html - Women’s History Teaching Resources – Smithsonian Education

www.greatwomen.org – National Women’s Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, NY

<http://www.womenshistorymonth.gov/> - Women’s History Month from Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html> - Using Primary Resources Teacher’s Guide and Analysis Tool from Library of Congress

Additional generic NIE graphic organizers are included on next pages to extend these lessons or to use as you wish.

Name _____

A Study Guide*

Working in groups of no more than five, choose and study carefully a newspaper story about a woman who is contributing to your community. Answer the questions below based on details from the chosen story.

1. Remembering (retrieve)

Who committed the action? _____

What is the action? _____

When did the action take place? _____

Where did the action take place? _____

2. Understanding (summarize)

Retell or give the main idea. _____

3. Applying (carry out)

Why is (the specific event) _____ significant?

4. Analyzing (compare)

How does (the problem in the story) _____ compare

with another problem _____?

5. Evaluating (judge)

Do you agree with a viewpoint offered by someone in the story or the opinion expressed by the person writing the opinion _____?

What do you think? _____

6. Creating (plan)

Devise an action plan to solve the problem and present your plan to a group of students, parents, school and/or community officials _____

(*Bloom's Taxonomy revised)

Name _____

Levels of Thinking and Reasoning*

From your newspaper, choose a story about a woman or group of women in your community that interests and/or involves you and is likely to appeal to other students in your class. Ask a question on each level and have a classmate read the story and answer the questions. Also, ask for a critique of the questions.

Headline: _____ Author: _____ Newspaper: _____ Date: _____
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Create

Evaluate

Analyze

Apply

Understand

Remember

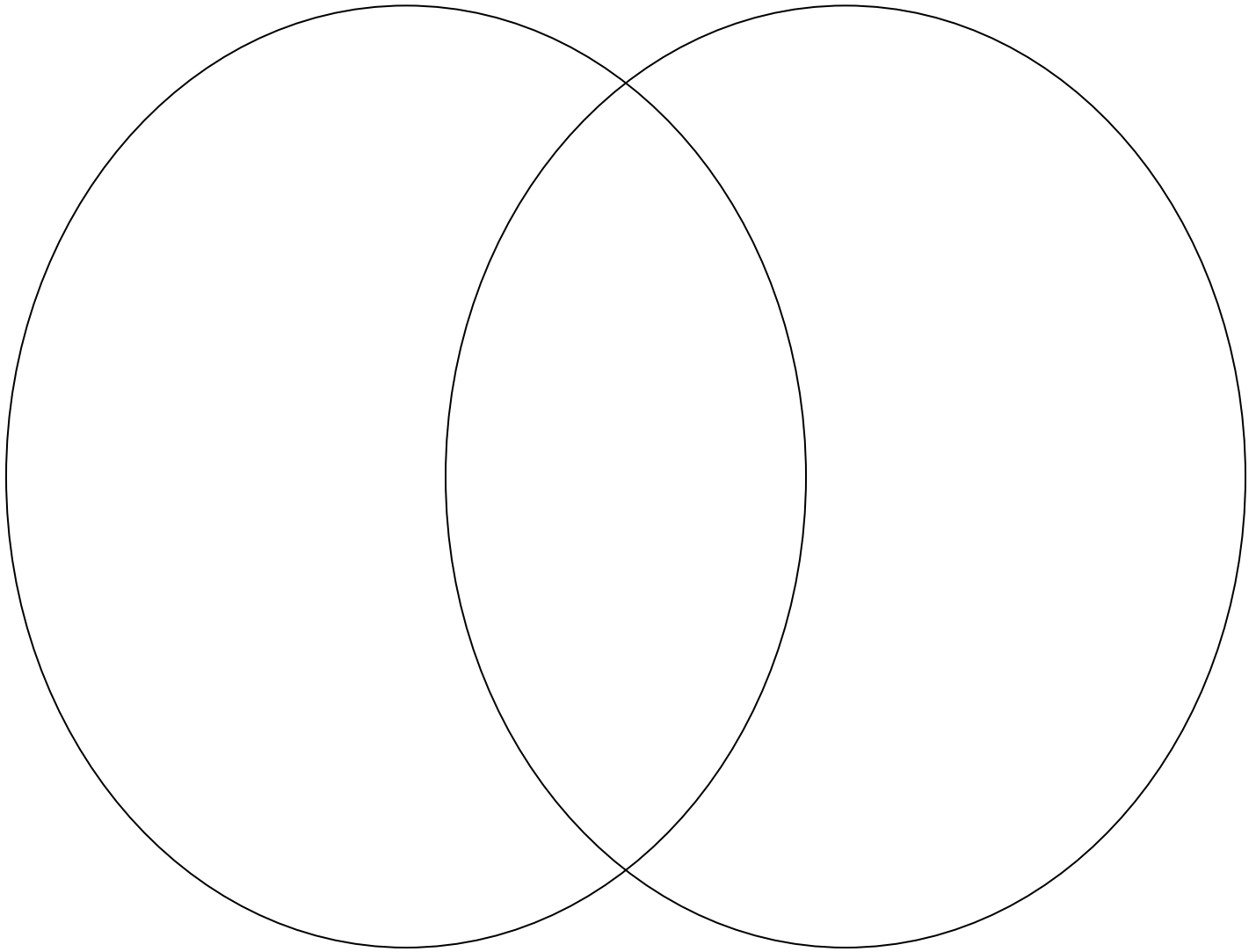
Follow-up: Did the story appeal to your classmate? Did your classmate offer complete answers to the questions? Did your classmate recommend any changes to the questions?

(*Bloom's Taxonomy revised)

Name _____

Venn Diagram

Directions: Compare two women featured in the profiles or compare one of the women profiled with someone featured in current print or online newspapers.



Follow-Up: What character traits to the women have in common?

Name _____

KLW Chart

Directions: Before you read fill out the **KNOW** column with what you already know about the topic. As you read fill in what you've **LEARNED** in the center column. After you have finished reading fill in the **WANT** column with what you *want* to know more about.

KNOW	LEARN	WANT TO KNOW

Follow-Up: Conduct research to answer your questions.

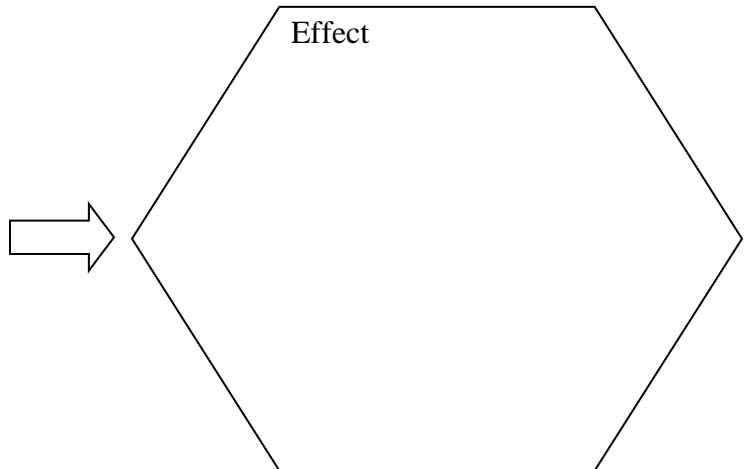
Name _____

Cause and Effect

Directions: From today’s news, choose one or more stories that focus on news about women. Identify cause-effect relationships.

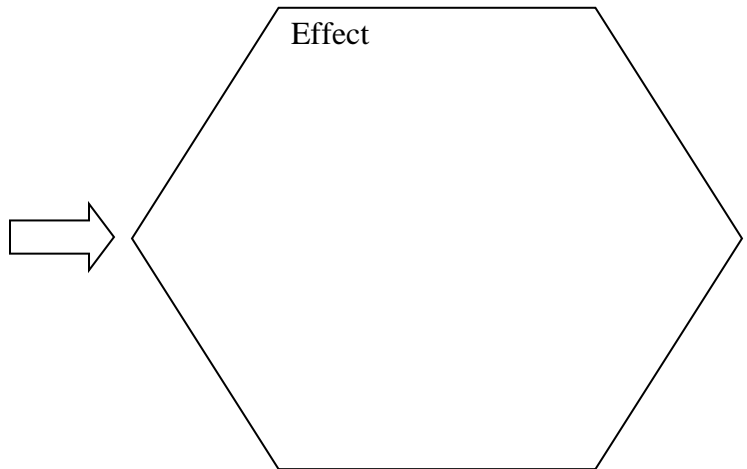
Story Headline:

Cause



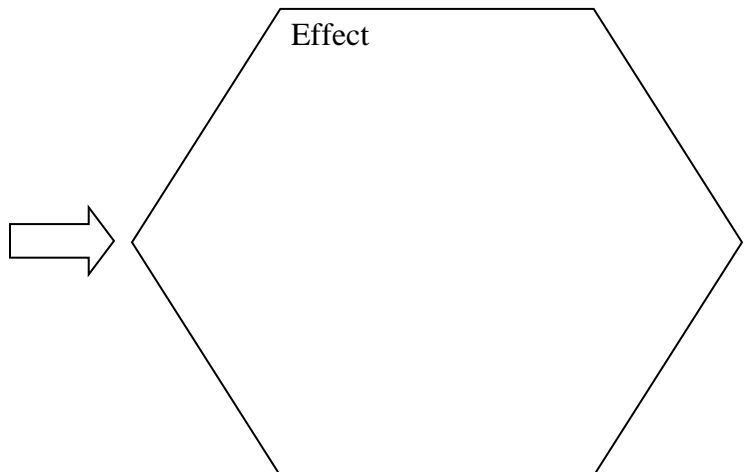
Story Headline:

Cause



Story Headline:

Cause



Follow-Up: Which effects represent positive and which, negative results, for the women involved?

Florida Press Education Services: Newspaper activities

Florida women in the military

There are two rules in war, Tampa, Florida resident and Vietnam veteran nurse Linda Pugsley states. Rule number one is that young men and women die in war. “Rule number two, the medics can’t change rule number one.”

Pugsley was 21 years old when she joined the military. One year later, she found herself in the middle of the Vietnam War. She served two tours in Vietnam: from June 1968 to June 1969 and from January to July 1972. It took her about 15 years to talk about her experiences.

Even though women actively served in Vietnam, relatively little official data exists about female Vietnam War veterans. While women’s roles in the military and during war have changed considerably in the past decade, women have always had some presence in battle. Whether it is taking care of their homes and families, making gun powder or rivets, or helping in hospitals or on the battlefield, women have been involved in war since the inception of the United States. There is little historical documentation about women in war, though.

How much information can you find about women’s roles in assisting or serving in the military in your region? Using your newspaper archives, research this topic and create a Prezi or Power Point Presentation based on your findings. Be sure to document your sources. Share what you have learned with your class.

Women as leaders

Felicia Pecora grew up in Tallahassee. She describes herself as a meek young woman who had no idea what to do with her life. She joined the Army Reserves at the age of 22. It was one of the best decisions she ever made “The military changed my life,” Pecora says. Without the experiences and training in the military, “I never would have known about the leadership qualities I had. I never would have gotten in touch with that at all. I would have just been this meek girl who didn’t talk and read all the time, who looked down on education and would have been stuck in my minimum wage job.”

Pecora says she is not sure she would have had the opportunity to become a leader if she was not in an all-female training unit. “The Army got me to feel like it was okay to be a leader. It was okay to be the person who has the idea and to tell people your ideas,” she says. In 1995, Pecora deployed to Haiti as part of a humanitarian effort. In 1998, she was deployed to Bosnia. In 2000, she joined the Tampa Police Department.

What is the definition of a leader? Think about what that word means to you and then look up the definition in a dictionary. Does your definition match the researched one? Write down your thoughts about what a leader is.

Discuss the terms “leader” and “leadership” with your class. Look for articles in the newspaper that exemplify the idea of a leader. Focus specifically on women as leaders or in leadership roles. What is it about the women in the articles that show leadership characteristics? What is it about the person’s service that makes it stand out beyond being a regular job? What sacrifices may the people in the article have to make as part of their service?

Florida Press Education Services activity: Do the research

Doing research is a great way to learn about a topic or person. The process of doing the research – finding credible websites, reading the information, looking at photos, and understanding the information – will increase your knowledge in a fun way. For this research assignment, you will take on the role of being a detective to learn more about a notable Floridian woman. The first step is to choose one of the notable Floridians listed and learn more about her. You can work by yourself or with a partner.

Harriet Bedell
Betty Castor Bell
Mary McLeod Bethune
Mary B. Billie
Roxcy Bolton
Jacqueline Brice
Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry
Lucreaty Clark
Jacqueline Cochran
Marjory Stoneman Douglas
Dorothy W. Glisson
Ida Goodson
Rhea Grossman
Zora Neale Hurston
Betty Mae Jumper
JoAnn Hardin Morgan
Carrie Meek
Julee Panton
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
Janet Reno
Augusta Savage
Alex Sink

1. When you are doing research, it is important to use credible websites. Websites such as Wikipedia and personal blogs are not always credible since some of the information presented as fact may be opinion or plagiarized from another source. Be sure to keep a list of your sources.
2. Research the person you chose. Write down the important facts, including:
 - Who is this person?
 - What is his or her background?
 - Where was this person born and where did he or she live?
 - When did this person live?
 - Why is this person notable and/or important?
 - How is this person a role model?
3. Create your own set of lesson plans about the person you chose. Using one of the worksheets from this packet as a model, create your own vocabulary list, reading comprehension questions and newspaper tie-in activities.
4. Next, compare the person you chose to one of the other individuals you have read about: Margaret Bourke-White, Emma Lazarus, Nancy Davis Reagan or Harriet Tubman. Create a graphic organizer to show what you have learned (comparison chart, Venn diagram, KWL chart).
5. Create an oral presentation about what you have learned and discovered. Have the other students in the class complete your worksheets.

Celebrating Women's History Month
Mary Edwards Walker
(1832-1919)

During the 19th century, American women like Mary Edwards Walker struggled for both equal rights and individual freedom. While Walker's individual interests were sometimes controversial, her struggle for recognition made her an American hero in more ways than one.

Mary Walker was born to a farm family in Oswego Town, New York on November 26, 1832. She received her early education in her family's common school and attended the Falley Seminary in Fulton. Mary took advantage of new career opportunities for women and graduated from Syracuse Medical College in 1855. Her early practice took her from Columbus, Ohio, to Rome, New York, where she worked alongside her husband, another medical student.

As a progressive young woman, Walker embraced new ideas about women's public role and their public appearance. She became a "Bloomer Girl," adopting the skirt-and-pantaloons costume popularized by Amelia Bloomer. Mary herself wrote articles supporting the Bloomer costume, and encouraged more comfortable, practical clothing for women throughout her life.

Walker also struggled with the many remaining limits on women's rights. In 1860 she was expelled from an Iowa college for trying to join an all-male debating society. One year earlier, she had separated from her husband, but because the law defined very limited grounds for divorce, it took her a decade to be legally free from him.

When the Civil War broke out, Walker went to Washington, D. C. to organize aid societies for soldiers' families. She really wanted to serve her country as an army surgeon. She did volunteer work in field hospitals near the Virginia battle lines while lobbying the government to give her an official commission. She finally received one in 1863, and was assigned as assistant surgeon to the 52nd Ohio Regiment in Tennessee.

Besides tending to Union soldiers, Walker often crossed enemy lines to treat sick civilians. On one such trip in 1864, Confederate soldiers arrested her as a suspected spy. She was confined in Richmond, the Confederate capital, until a prisoner exchange freed her. She ran a hospital in Louisville and an orphanage in Clarksville, Tennessee, before the war ended.

Mary Walker wanted to continue serving her country, but was denied a permanent commission. To honor her accomplishments, however, the government awarded her the Congressional Medal of Honor for meritorious service. She is the only woman to receive this military award.

In peacetime, Walker worked as an inventor, a journalist, and a women's rights activist. She continued to advocate more practical women's clothing, serving as president of the National Dress Reform Association and risking arrest for wearing men's clothes in public. She went to trial on one occasion to win women the right to wear pants in New York City, but her individual crusade made her a fringe figure in the women's rights movement.

As her health and fortunes declined, Walker was stripped of her highest honor when the government retroactively revised the standard for Medal of Honor winners in 1917. She died two years later, but in 1977 a reappraisal of her pioneering work led to the restoration of full honors to Mary Edwards Walker as a Medal of Honor recipient and an American hero.



**Dr. Mary Walker, ca. 1860 - ca. 1865, U.S.
National Archives**

For more information about Mary Edwards Walker and the history of other women in military service go to <https://www.womensmemorial.org/>

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Celebrating Women's History Month
Emily Warren Roebling

(1843-1903)



**Portrait by Carolus-Duran
circa 1896,
Brooklyn Museum**

Emily Roebling's husband and father-in-law designed the Brooklyn Bridge, and an army of workers built it, but she did more than anyone to hold the massive project together.

Emily Warren was born in Cold Spring, a small village along the Hudson River, on September 23, 1843. She attended the prestigious Georgetown Visitation Convent school near Washington D.C., while her brother Gouverneur K. Warren rose through the ranks of the U.S. Army. While visiting Gen. Warren during the Civil War, Emily fell in love with one of his staff engineers, Washington Roebling. They were married on January 18, 1865.

Roebling's father was the bridge builder John A. Roebling. The young couple's honeymoon in Europe was arranged in part so Washington could study advanced bridge-construction techniques. The Roeblings would use those techniques on a bridge across the East River, linking lower Manhattan and the city of Brooklyn. In an early show of resilience on the trip, Emily gave birth to a son despite falling down a flight of stairs during her pregnancy.

When John A. Roebling died suddenly in 1869, Washington Roebling became the chief engineer for the Brooklyn Bridge project. He supervised the construction of caissons, huge watertight structures inside which workers, breathing pressurized air, would lay the foundations for the bridge's towers. Working long hours inside the caisson, Washington gradually overexposed himself to pressurized air and contracted caisson disease, better known as "the bends." By 1872, the disease had left him a virtual invalid, unable to travel to the construction site.

Washington Roebling now depended on Emily to act as his eyes and ears on the bridge project. Her job was to convey his instructions to the workers, and to report back to

him on the progress of the work. To do both accurately, Emily had to master the fundamentals of engineering and construction herself. Tutored by her husband while studying intensely on her own, she learned to analyze every aspect of the project scientifically. The work required absolute precision, as well as focused leadership. Acting as her husband's surrogate, Emily effectively led the project for the next decade.

In 1881, Emily was the first person to walk across a 5' plank connecting the two halves of the nearly-complete bridge. After defending her husband from politicians pressuring him to resign, Emily rode across the completed Brooklyn Bridge on May 24, 1883. At the dedication ceremony, her crucial role in the project was publicly acknowledged for the first time. Congressman Abram S. Hewitt declared that the bridge was "an everlasting monument to the self-sacrificing devotion of a woman."

After her triumph, Emily Roebling pursued a wide range of new projects. She designed her family's new home in Trenton, New Jersey, and organized relief efforts for soldiers during the Spanish-American War. She studied law at NYU, earning a certificate and an essay prize. She became a historian, transcribing and publishing the journal of an 18th century minister.

Emily Roebling died on February 28, 1903. Ironically, her invalid husband lived another 23 years. Today, Emily and Washington Roebling are remembered as the team behind one of the greatest engineering feats of American history.

To learn more about the history of the Brooklyn Bridge go to <http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/brooklynbridge/timeline>. This is one of a series of four Celebrating Women's History Month profiles, written by Kevin Gilbert for the NYNPA -

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Celebrating Women's History Month

Agnes de Mille

(1905 - 1993)

Do American images and themes belong in ballet? Does ballet belong on the Broadway stage? Agnes de Mille answered both questions with a resounding yes and earned a place in the nation's cultural history.

Agnes George de Mille was born in Manhattan, on September 18, 1905. Her father was William C. de Mille, a successful playwright. In 1914 the de Milles moved to Los Angeles, where William's brother Cecil B. De Mille had established himself as a movie director. William started writing and directing movies while Agnes was captivated by the early movie stars.

Agnes dreamed of being an actress, but after watching the classical ballerina Anna Pavlova and the modern-dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis perform in California, she wanted to become a dancer. Her father disapproved, and experts claimed that she lacked a "dancer's body." With her mother's encouragement, Agnes pursued dance training in New York and London after graduating from UCLA, learning classical and modern techniques as a dancer and choreographer.



Photo by Maurice Seymour, provided courtesy of agnesdemilledances.com

Agnes made her solo dance debut in 1927. In the 1930s, she began choreographing dances for plays in London and New York. Throughout her career, she sought a synthesis of classical and modern style. Perfect classical technique was less important for her than expressing personality and emotion through dance. But while modern dance often had an abstract quality, de Mille infused dance with American folk culture.

After choreographing Broadway shows (and occasional movies) for several years, de Mille's breakthrough to fame came when she choreographed *Rodeo* for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1942. *Rodeo* wasn't the first ballet set in the American West, but de Mille's choreography, combined with music by Aaron Copland, created a sensation.

Rodeo led directly to another major breakthrough when it inspired the producers of Rodgers & Hammerstein's musical *Oklahoma!* to hire de Mille. Musicals often included dance or ballet interludes, but de Mille's choreography for *Oklahoma!* raised dance to a new level of importance. While ballet sequences previously had little relation to a show's story, *Oklahoma!*'s dances contributed to character development and advanced its plot in a way that seemed unprecedented in 1943.

Oklahoma! made Agnes de Mille a star choreographer on Broadway. She went on to design dances for many of the era's most memorable musicals, including *Carousel* (1945), *Brigadoon* (1947) and *Paint Your Wagon* (1951). She also directed entire musicals, including Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Allegro* in 1947. In the early years of television, she introduced viewers to "The Art of Ballet" and "Art of Choreography" in episodes of the *Omnibus* series. In the 1960s, she promoted dance as one of the first members of the National Council on the Arts. In 1965 she became the first president of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers – and the only woman to lead a labor union at the time.

In 1975 de Mille suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. She recovered to write a memoir and resume her career as a choreographer until her death on October 7, 1993. Honored by the Theater Hall of Fame and with the National Medal of the Arts, Agnes de Mille merged classical and popular culture to help shape America's cultural heritage.

For more information about Agnes de Mille and dance read one of her books including *Early Doors: My Life in the American Theater*. This is one of a series of four Celebrating Women's History Month profiles, written by Kevin Gilbert for the NYNPA - News Media Literacy/Newspaper In Education Program. All rights reserved 2020.

Celebrating Women's History Month

Lucille Clifton

(1936 – 2010)



Photo courtesy of Ms. Clifton's sister,
Elaine Phillip.

Many American children have grown up reading the stories of Lucille Clifton. As they grow up, many rediscover Clifton as a great American poet.

Thelma Lucille Sayles was born on June 27, 1936 in Depew, New York. Lucille was a precocious learner with an artistic bent. She enrolled in Howard University at age 16 as a drama major. She later transferred to Fredonia State Teacher's College before marrying University of Buffalo philosophy professor Fred Clifton in 1958.

As a professor's wife, Lucille Clifton lived in a fertile intellectual climate as part of an active black arts community in 1950s Buffalo. In 1968, the Cliftons moved to Baltimore, and Lucille took a job in the Washington, D.C. office of education. While working and raising six children she was writing poetry, as she'd been doing since age 10. She thought her poems were good enough for publication, but wasn't sure

how to get them published.

Lucille's friend Ishmael Reed sent some of her poems to the country's best-known black poet, Langston Hughes, who selected some of them for the 1970 collection *The Poetry of the Negro*. By then, Clifton had sent poems to Robert Hayden, whose poetry she'd read in *Negro Digest* magazine. Impressed, Hayden sent them to the poet Carolyn Kiser, who brought them to the 92nd Street Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association (YH-YWHA) Poetry Center. In 1969, Clifton won the Center's Discovery Award. At the award ceremony, she met a representative of the Random House publishing company. Later that year, Random House published *Good Times*, Clifton's first book of poetry. *The New York Times* named *Good Times* one of the Notable Books of 1969.

Lucille Clifton's career as a poet was off to a sensational start. In 1970 she began another career as an author of children's books. *Some of the Days of Everett Anderson* was the first of a series about a boy growing up in the inner city. Clifton also wrote for children's television. She shared an Emmy award as a co-writer of the TV special *Free to Be You and Me* in 1974 and wrote for the *Vegetable Soup* TV series, produced by the New York State Department of Education from 1975 to 1978.

Clifton was popular with academic critics as well as young readers. Her poetry was minimalist, featuring short, uncapitalized and unrhymed lines. It was powerful without being ornate, expressing in spare, direct language her life experiences and her imagination of history, mythology and politics. She could write poems about God and Lucifer, Indians and Africans, her parents and children, her body and her illnesses, all with the same concise intensity.

Clifton was a professor or poet in residence at Coppin State College, the University of California at Santa Cruz, Columbia University, George Washington University, Duke University and St. Mary's College in Maryland. She was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1980 and 1988, and won the National Book Award in 2000. She was the Poet Laureate of Maryland from 1979 to 1985, and the Chancellor of the American Academy of Poets in 1999.

Lucille Clifton died on February 23, 2010, shortly before she was to receive the Frost Medal from the Poetry Society of America for her lifetime of achievement in American culture.

For more about Lucille Clifton and poetry go online to www.poetryfoundation.org.

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