

Women's History Month is a time to honor, reflect and give back

By **Madeline Pumariega, Miami Dade College President** - March 8, 2021

March is National Women's History Month and March 8 is International Women's Day, celebrated across the world as a grassroots effort to recognize women's accomplishments and raise awareness about their many contributions and innovations throughout history.

In 1980, President Carter proclaimed the week of March 8th as National Women's Week. In 1987, the celebration was expanded by Congressional Resolution to an entire month and became National Women's History Month. We should always honor women's incredible courage and determination, but March gives us an opportunity to celebrate those accomplishments and consider our own responsibility to continue blazing trails for our daughters, nieces, and girls in every corner of our community and the world.



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This year is particularly special for me and for so many other women celebrating a first, including our first female Vice President, Kamala Harris, Miami-Dade County's first female Mayor, Daniella Levine Cava, and the Marlin's first female General Manager, Kim Ng. It's especially fitting because Miami was co-founded by women, such as Mary Brickell and Julia Tuttle.

To have been appointed Miami Dade College's (MDC) first female president is truly a special honor for me. I am proud to work side-by-side with our newly appointed Provost, Dr. Malou Harrison, a seasoned administrator and caring leader who is dedicated to fostering equity in education. In addition, four of our eight campus presidents are women, and each brings special talent to the table.

We have made strides. From the state house to the board room, the number of women in senior management roles grew globally to 29%, the highest number ever recorded.

Despite our accomplishments, I am mindful of the work ahead to help close the gaps where women may not feel represented. It's hard to become what you don't see and believe is possible for you. For example, in higher education, female enrollment is approximately 60%, yet only 29% of college and university presidents are female.

And although slightly more than half of the Florida population is female, they make up only 29% of the Florida Senate and 27% in the Florida House of Representatives. According to a [McKinsey study on women in the workplace](#), women are underrepresented at every level, and women of color are the most underrepresented group of all.

Women's History Month is a time to pause, reflect and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of women. It is also an opportunity to ask ourselves, "What can I do?" Think of the many ways, big and small, in which you can inspire and lift girls everywhere, so that they know if they can dream it, they can be it!

So today, consider mentoring a girl or young woman in your life, connect with a student and encourage her to pursue a career in STEM, and help give a voice to a woman that because of



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circumstances beyond her control has lost her own. Together we are stronger.

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