

# 1968: For Women, It Was a Year Marked by Numerous 'Firsts'

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## 1968: For Women, It Was a Year Marked by Numerous 'Firsts'

By JUDY KLEMESRUD

THE year 1968 may well go down in history as the Year of the Woman.

In the last 12 months women have won new rights and offices and have been admitted to places where female faces had never been seen before. Many of these "firsts" were won by Negro women; in several cases they were the first Negro and the first woman to achieve distinction in a particular field.

In Mississippi, women won the right to serve as jurors for the first time. And in the Swiss cantons (states) of Basel and Berne, suffragettes finally won the right to vote.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunities Commission proved to be some women's best friend. It ruled that the airlines could not dismiss stewardesses when they reached their mid-30's or married. And it also ruled that newspapers could no longer segregate help-wanted ads by sex. As a result, that heading of a newspaper's classified department now reads something like: "Help Wanted—Male-Female."

Men were not the only ones wearing pants in 1968—nor were they the only ones using foul language. Four-letter and twelve-letter words became common additions to the vocabularies of women of the New Left and civil rights groups, many of whom regarded their usage as a natural outgrowth of the equality of the sexes.

All of a sudden, women were hot commodities at previously all-male institutions. Wesleyan University began admitting women in September, and others such as Yale and Princeton began wooing them to their Ivy-colored walls. Not to be outdone, several women's colleges, including Vassar and Bennington, announced plans to go "fully coeducational."

Even the Boy Scouts voted to take in girls. Beginning today, girls will be admitted to Exploring, the Scouts' character-building program for boys from 14 to 18.

A major breakthrough for women came when Muriel (Mickey) Siebert, 38, became the first woman to buy a seat on the 175-year-old New York Stock Exchange. It cost her \$445,000, plus a \$7,515 initiation fee.

"I had an incredible year, much better than I ever dreamed," Miss Siebert said yesterday in her office at 120 Broadway. "I grossed over \$1,000,000—and that was before volume discount!"

### Member of the Big Board

Miss Siebert, who employs three men on her five-member staff, grossed about \$500,000 a year before she became a member of the Big Board. The bubbly blonde specializes in aviation and aerospace stocks, and her clients include nearly all of the nation's 25 largest mutual funds and several of the big New York City banks.

Another major "first" came when Mrs. Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn became the first Negro woman member of Congress. The 42-year-old former school teacher won by a 2 to 1 margin in the 12th Congressional District in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section, where she was born and raised.

The 96-pound Mrs. Chisholm, the Democratic National Committeewoman from New York, defeated James L. Farmer, a former head of the Congress of Racial Equality and the Liberal-Republican candidate.

"I know freshmen are supposed to be seen and not heard," she said on the eve of her election. "But my voice will be heard. I have no intention of being quiet."

Horse-racing was another area where women made history. Two attractive equestriennes, Kathy Kusner and Penny Ann Early, became the first women to receive jockey licenses. Miss Kusner, 27, promptly broke her leg in a fall at the National Horse Show, and won't be able to attempt her track debut until 1969.

Miss Early ran into other problems. Jockeys boycotted her on her two attempts to become the first woman jockey to ride at Churchill Downs. As the year ended, she moved to California and was issued a license to ride at Santa Anita—but only as an exercise girl.

In the fashion world, Naomi Sims, a Negro model, became the first black woman to hit the cover of one of the big three of the women's magazine field—Ladies Home Journal, McCall's and Good Housekeeping. The willowy Miss Sims was on the cover of the November Journal, which also featured an interview with her.

Other Negro women who achieved "firsts" because of their race were Mrs. William (Kay) Dunham of Brooklyn, who became the first black Mrs. New York State; Federal Judge Constance Baker Motley, who became the first Negro trustee of New York University; and Mrs. Elizabeth D. Koontz, the first Negro to head the National Education Association.

In 1968, for the first time in the history of the civil rights movement, two women became major spokesmen for Negro organizations.

### Spokesman for the Militants

Mrs. Coretta Scott King assumed the role for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference following the assassination of her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. And the attractive, bush-haired Kathleen Cleaver became a spokesman for the militant Black Panthers after her husband, Eldridge, disappeared on Nov. 24, the day he was supposed to turn himself in for imprisonment on a charge of parole violation.

The Vietnam war produced several firsts for women, including the first combat decoration—an Air Force Bronze Star. It went to First Lieut. Jane A. Lombardi, 25, of Stockton, Calif., a nurse who helped evacuate 38 patients under fire during an attack on the air base at Danang.

The war also produced the first woman peace negotiator, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, 42, who heads the National Liberation Front's delegation to the Paris talks. Communist source material describes her as "a dedicated fighter for freedom and democracy."

In education, Dr. Suzanne Keller, a sociologist, became the first woman to be granted professorial tenure in Princeton's 222-year-history. And Mrs. Maurice T. Moore, sister of the late Henry R. Luce, became the first woman named chairman of the board of trustees of the State University of New York.

In Washington, two major jobs in the Federal Government went to women in 1968. Mrs. Anthony Camps, 52, became the first woman to be vice chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, an ivory-towered, brain-powered group of 12 persons—all men except Mrs. Camps—that since 1947 has helped plan the nation's long-range foreign policy.

And Mrs. Virginia Mae Brown, a 45-year-old West Virginia lawyer and mother, was named chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission—the first woman ever to head an independent administrative agency of the Federal Government.

"My friends call me 'Peaches,'" Mrs. Brown said, "but at the ICC they call me Commissioner Brown."



The New York Times  
Mrs. Shirley Chisholm, the first Negro woman to be elected to the Congress.



United Press International  
Mrs. Virginia M. Brown, first woman to head Interstate Commerce Commission.



United Press International  
Muriel Siebert, first woman to buy a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.



United Press International  
Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, peace negotiator for National Liberation Front in Paris.



The New York Times  
Mrs. Maurice T. Moore, first woman to head trustees of State University.



United Press International  
Kathy Kusner (above) and Penny Ann Early (below) won jockey licenses.



United Press International



United Press International  
Model Naomi Sims, first Negro cover girl on a major women's publication.