

March 2021

Women's History Year
By Caroline Purtle

Last month, the nation annually acknowledged March as Women's History Month, a time where individuals reflect on the achievements of females. Although women comprise the majority of the population, historically they have faced professional and societal obstacles unequal to their counterparts, which are still seen today and will undoubtedly persist into the future.

Women's History Month concluded after 31 days; now, well positioned into April, it is important that the girl-power momentum continues. In Waco, Texas, two females hold positions of power within their field, both who have inspired others with their contributions.

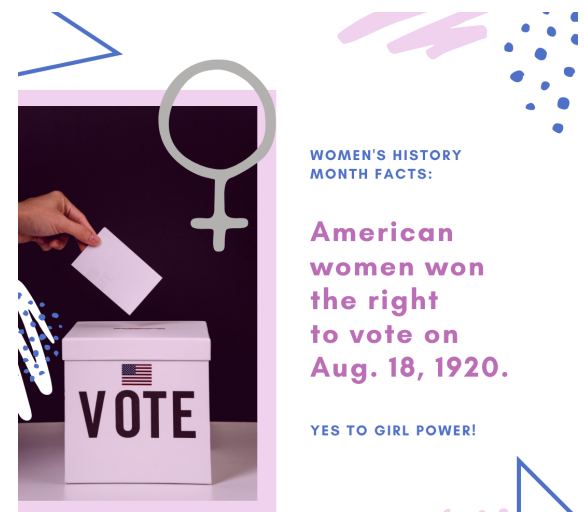
[Alice Starr](#) is an experienced business woman, full-time philanthropist and civic leader. She is currently the President of Starr Strategies Co., a company she founded in 2005 to assist charities and non-profit organizations with marketing, public relations fundraising through unique and innovative events.

"When I graduated from college, I got married and put my husband through law school," said Starr. "I also earned a masters degree in college administration. I enjoyed working at several universities, but paused for five years to raise our three children. I am a wife, mother and grandmother first at this time in my life. When younger, I still put family first but I was considered a 'working woman.'"

Her life's purpose is to contribute to the betterment of society. Starr was an asset of more than a dozen companies and charities, spanning from East to West, and of course, the South. When it comes to the long list of her accomplishments, Starr couldn't pick only one she was most proud of.

"When in Northern Virginia, I chaired a campaign to raise money for Jill's House, now the largest U.S. center with overnight respite care for children with disabilities," said Starr. "When we moved to California, I initiated the Hearts for Hope Gala to raise money for a Union Rescue Mission facility to house homeless women and children. When we moved to Texas, I initiated a 'Going for the Gold Gala' to raise money for Baylor nursing student scholarships. This year, we will host our 11th gala, raising more than \$6 million for scholarships."

When women actively celebrate women, it strengthens universal, feminine self-confidence. It is important to be a part of a community which supports your identity.



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“I belong to several professional women's groups,” said Starr. “We lift up each other's accomplishments and share life stories. All women should have girlfriends with whom they can discuss issues small and large. Finding ways to help others is the best way I know to lead a happy, productive life, regardless of whether one is a man or woman.”

Julie Hays began her journalism career in 2002 at [KWTX](#), the CBS affiliate in Waco and the top-rated station in the market. Prioritizing more time with her family, today Hays anchors “Midday with Julie” and “Tell Me Something Good,” a daily segment where she reports on positive stories happening around Central Texas.

“I started as an overnight producer following my graduation from Abilene Christian University, then moved to part-time reporter and weekend producer,” said Hays; “then the bulk of my career was anchoring the main evening news for 13 years. I was actually the youngest female to ever hold this position, having been named the main anchor at 25.”

She entered the field as a 21-year-old reporter and immediately felt the pressures that came along with being a woman on television.

“For my entire career, I've been judged by my hair, my weight, my clothes, you name it,” said Hays. “I was pregnant on air three different times. I can remember all the talk that came along with weight gain. To this day, when I'm in public, people will say things like 'you're so much smaller in person,' or, 'you're so much prettier in person.' Those types of comments used to really bother me in my 20s and early 30s, but somewhere along the way I've learned to accept and love myself and I've learned to ignore all the outside noise.”

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Hays believes that she got to where she is today for never accepting “no” as an answer.

“The Bush interview is a great example of that,” said Hays. “I could have quit requesting an interview with him after the first or 12th 'no,' but I kept on requesting and trying to find different ways to get my foot in the door, such as contacting old friends of the then-President to put in a word for me. Eventually that paid off.”

Every month should be like Women’s History Month; emphasizing the progress society has made because of others’ actions is what leads to a more equitable future.

“If there is one thing we can all do to keep moving forward,” says Hays, “it's to support one another.”