

Kappa Kappa Gamma



Tradition of Leadership

Joyce Wilson Carson,

History Chairman 2010-2012

Historically Speaking.....

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March has been designated as Women's History Month. Who are some notable Kappas of whom we should be aware?

Mary Harriman Rumsey, Beta Epsilon, founded the first Junior League chapter in New York in 1901. Since its founding, the organization has spread to virtually every large city in the United States. Inspired by a lecture on the settlement movement, Mary, along with several friends, began volunteering at the College Settlement on Rivington Street in New York City's [Lower East Side](#), a large immigrant enclave. Through her work at the College Settlement, Mary became convinced that there was more she could do to help others. Subsequently, Mary and a group of 80 debutantes established the Junior League for the Promotion of Settlement Movements in 1901, while she was still a student at Barnard College. The purpose of the Junior League was to unite interested debutantes in joining the Settlement Movement in New York City.

As word of the work of the young Junior League women in New York spread, women throughout the country and beyond formed Junior Leagues in their communities. In time, Leagues would expand their efforts beyond settlement house work to respond to the social, health and educational issues of their respective communities. In 1921, approximately 30 Leagues banded together to form the Association of Junior Leagues of America to provide support to one another. With the creation of the Association, it was Mary who insisted that, although it was important for all Leagues to learn from one another and share best practices, each League was ultimately beholden to their respective community and should thus function to serve that community's needs.

As the 20th century progressed, more Junior Leagues were formed throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom. Now known as the [Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.](#) (AJLI), the organization encompasses 292 member Leagues with over 160,000 members committed to continuing the legacy established by its founder.

Julia Ward Howe was an honorary member initiated by Phi Chapter, *Boston*, in November 1884. On the occasion of her initiation, Mrs. Howe spoke appreciative words to the active members, and the inspiration of her presence provided a high idea of womanhood. She always took an active interest in the Fraternity and wrote a poem for the Convention of 1890. She always expressed the most sincere pride in her Kappa key.

She was inspired to write "[The Battle Hymn of the Republic](#)" after she and her husband visited [Washington, D.C.](#) and met [Abraham Lincoln](#) at the [White House](#) in November 1861. It quickly became one of the most popular songs of the [Union](#) during the [American Civil War](#).

After the war, Howe focused her activities on the causes of [pacifism](#) and [women's suffrage](#). In 1870, Howe was the first to proclaim [Mother's Day](#), with her [Mother's Day Proclamation](#). From 1872 to 1879, she assisted [Lucy Stone](#) and [Henry Brown Blackwell](#) in editing [Woman's Journal](#).

After her husband's death in 1874, Howe focused more on her interests in reform. She was the founder and president of the Association of American Women, a group which advocated for women's education, from 1876–1897. She also served as president of organizations like the [New England Woman's Club](#), the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association, the New England Suffrage Association, and the [American Woman Suffrage Association \(AWSA\)](#).

From 1891 to 1909, she was interested in the cause of Russian freedom. Howe supported Russian emigre Stepniak-Kravchinskii and became a member of the Society of American Friends of Russian Freedom (SAFRF).

Mareta West, Beta Theta, *Oklahoma*, was the first woman astrogeologist to be hired by the United States Survey. She had been a petroleum geologist before entering the new field of astrogeology. She mapped the moon landing site of the Apollo 11 flight, which put the historic first man on the moon in July 1970. Six prospective sites were submitted, but hers was the one chosen. Mareta was the first woman elected as a fellow of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers.