

Women with Stand Alone Courage.

This year I will celebrate the life of a woman I admire each month.



Julia Butterfly Hill (born February 18, 1974 as Julia Lorraine Hill)

I'm the short one in tie dye...very excited to meet Julia!

There is a quote in Julia's book, *The Legacy of Luna*, in which she says, "I gave my word to this tree, the forest, and to all the people, that my feet would not touch the ground until I had done everything in my power to make the world aware of this problem and to stop the destruction."

I gave my word! How powerful! And then she stayed in that tree for OVER 2 years to keep that word. Do you even know what a winter on the coast is like? Wind storms, snow storms, freezing and frying and bugs and loneliness and boredom and boring meals and cramped quarters and on and on and on...but she gave her word! For 738 days she lived in a tree. She was 23. The tree, named Luna, was 1500 years old. It was 180 feet tall and she had two 6' square platforms high up in Luna's branches for her home.

During my growing up years there was always at least one trip to the Redwoods to camp every summer. I have tried to continue that tradition with my children and grandchildren. This year I will take my great-granddaughter. My grandmother and grandfather went there for their honeymoon. The Redwoods are like a part of my family...and still here because of people like Julia. She, and many others, sacrificed years of their lives to contain the industrial drive that is clear cutting the earth like a headless horseman.

Julia recently said, "The tree-sit and action since has created this very particular role that Julia Butterfly Hill fulfills. And, because I'm a person committed to growth, to looking for where my edge is, that role is now too narrow for me. But it's hard to figure out what's next because there's this entire reality that's been created around this role that I play." I so can relate to that statement right now in my own life! Thank you Julia, for the role model that you continue to be!



Miep Gies (February 15, 1909 – January 11, 2010)

We have all heard of the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Her courage and spirit during a time of fear and oppression is well known. But what of the people who risked their lives to feed her family during all those years. Miep Gies was a secretary to Anne Franks' father. She and her husband and several other employees hid that family and took care of them for 2 years. Miep recovered Anne's diary and gave it to her father when he returned from Auschwitz. Otto Frank was the only survivor of the 8 people who had been hidden for so long. Two of the employees who had helped feed and hide them also died. Miep Gies and her husband were spared because the interrogator who questioned her was from her home town and didn't pursue her arrest. According to Miep there were many people who hid and helped their Jewish friends and neighbors during that dark period of history. She and her husband also hid a student in their apartment for many years. After the war she lived quietly as a housewife until persuaded to write her memoirs. When they were published and brought a bit of recognition to her, she traveled widely speaking publicly about the lessons of the holocaust. Every August 4th, the anniversary of the arrest of the Frank family, she and her husband would shutter their house and stay there, commemorating the day of loss and grief. She wrote: "So much had been lost, but now Anne's voice would never be lost. My young friend had left a remarkable legacy to the world. But always, every day of my life, I've wished that things had been different. That even had Anne's diary been lost to the world, Anne and the others might somehow have been saved. Not a day goes by that I do not grieve for them."

According to Wikipedia, "In 1994, Gies was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the Wallenberg Medal by the University of Michigan. The following year, Gies received the Yad Vashem medal. In 1997, she was knighted by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. The minor planet 99949 *Miepgies* is named in her honor."



Rosa Parks (February 4, 1913 – October 24, 2005)

On Dec. 1, 1955, a young Rosa Parks said “no” to a white man. She refused to give up her seat on a bus so that a white man could sit down. She had refused before on other buses, and said that she spent a lot of time walking around Montgomery. She was not the first person to refuse to move, but this time was different. There had been several senseless murders of black people in the prior weeks. There was a lot of anger; people were tired of the atrocities. This time her action spurred others to protest their treatment. There was a massive boycott of the bus system and racial segregation was suddenly a volatile political movement. Rosa Parks was secretary for the local NAACP office, but she made her living as a seamstress. Her activism caused her to be fired but her involvement with the freedom movement grew. She was a symbol for nonviolent civil disobedience. Parks said, "When that white driver stepped back toward us, when he waved his hand and ordered us up and out of our seats, I felt a determination cover my body like a quilt on a winter night."

At her husband's urging, she had finished her high school studies in 1933, at a time when less than 7% of African Americans had a high school diploma. She also managed to register to vote after her third try. This quiet, peaceful woman was impressive in her determination. Rosa outlived her husband, brother and mother, leaving her without immediate family in her later years. After caring for them through their illnesses and dying, she worked tirelessly for education opportunities for young black students. She co-founded the Rosa Parks Scholarship Foundation and Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development.



Emily Carr (Dec 13, 1871- 1945)

Emily Carr was a Canadian artist and writer...Eclectic, determined, dedicated to her art...and to nature...and to the disappearing Native art she saw fading into the forests around her. Emily found ways to support her art education, studying in England and later in France. While in England she suffered a prolonged illness and was hospitalized in a TB Sanatorium. She wrote the 'sketch book' *Pause* about that experience...“starved on skim milk...Gradually they changed the starving to stuffing, beating the food into my system with massage, massage, electricity...four hours of it a day...The electricity sent me nearly mad. I was not allowed to read, to talk, to think.” Her sketch books are insightful, enjoyable journals of her life and the times in which she lived.

Emily spent much of her time in the outdoors, camping in the woods or staying in the First Nations Villages. When her art was not well received she turned her home into a boarding house and did little art for a number of years (1913-1927). Her collection of paintings was included, and applauded, in a National exhibit in 1927 which revived her interest and enthusiasm. At that time she met the 'Group of Seven' fellow artists who inspired her to return to the Native villages. The work from that time until her death constitute the majority of her collection.

Emily Carr faced the issues of women artists and authors of struggling to find ways to survive without the prerequisite 'husband' to support her. Her life was difficult and yet adventurous. Her dedication to the disappearing trees, landscapes, and First Nations villages of her country was unfailing.

“They express her profound identification with the landscape of the province and her belief that nature was a tangible expression of God.” Vancouver Art Gallery



Victoria Ka'iulani (October 16, 1875 – March 6, 1899)

A Friend to her Scottish father, Robert Louis Stevenson's parting gift to the Princess as she departed for schooling in England, was a beautiful poem which he wrote in her autograph book,



Forth from her land to mine she goes,
 The island maid, the island rose,
 Light of heart and bright of face:
 The daughter of a double race.
 Her islands here in southern sun
 Shall mourn their Ka'iulani gone,
 And I, in her dear banyan shade,
 Look vainly for my little maid.
 But our Scots islands far away
 Shall glitter with unwanted day,
 And cast for once their tempest by
 To smile in Ka'iulani's eye.

Victoria Ka'iulani Cleghorn, Crown Princess of Hawaii, gained the right to vote for her people with her own powerful writing and presence. This in an era when only white men had the right to vote in the United States which had 'annexed' her kingdom.

"Four years ago, at the request of Mr. Thurston, then a Hawaiian Cabinet Minister, I was sent away to England to be educated privately and fitted to the position which by the constitution of Hawaii I was to inherit. For all these years, I have patiently and in exile striven to fit myself for my return this year to my native country. I am now told that Mr. Thurston will be in Washington asking you to take away my flag and my throne." "I am coming to Washington to plead for my throne, my nation and my flag. Will not the great American people hear me?" "I am strong in the strength of seventy million people who in this free land will hear my cry and will refuse to let their flag cover dishonor to mine."

Her flag and her throne were taken by our nation. But her voice and her conviction won her people at least the right to vote. Her dignity prevailed as did Hawaii as a unique and beautiful example to us all of honor even in defeat. "I dreamed of all that I would do for my people. I was sure that I could make them the happiest people in the world. They are a happy people, you know—very kind and simple and trusting. They have shown that to the world, haven't they?"



Jacqueline Cochran (May 11, 1906 - August 9, 1980)

I was privileged to attend the Women Veterans Conference this month (April). Learned so much about women and their contributions to every war we have ever fought... and I shared about SoulCollage! Thanks so much to Jacki Gethner for the opportunity to attend and the sharing of her booth and weekend. Check out her program "*Women of a Certain Age*" at: www.jackigethner.com

Jacqueline Cochran advocated for women to be part of the politics and adventures through her life and career. She was instrumental in the formation of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and Women Airforce Service Pilots. These women served the armed forces during World War II even though they were never considered to be in the military and were not given any military benefits or recognition for their expertise or effort.

"Known by her friends as "Jackie", and maintaining the Cochran name, she flew in the MacRobertson Air Race in 1934. In 1937, she was the only woman to compete in the Bendix race. She worked with Amelia Earhart to open the race for women.^[3] That year, she also set a new woman's national speed record. By 1938, she was considered the best female pilot in the United States. She had won the Bendix and set a new transcontinental speed record as well as altitude records (by this time she was no longer just breaking women's records but was setting overall records).^[4]

Cochran was the first woman to fly a bomber across the Atlantic. She won five Harmon Trophies as the outstanding woman pilot in the world. Sometimes called the "Speed Queen", at the time of her death, no other pilot held more speed, distance or altitude records in aviation history, than Cochran.^[5]

Before the United States joined World War II, Cochran was part of "Wings for Britain", an organization that ferried American built aircraft to Britain, becoming the first woman to fly a bomber, (a Lockheed Hudson V) across the Atlantic. In Britain, she volunteered her services to the Royal Air Force. For several months she worked for the British Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), recruiting qualified women pilots in the United States and taking them to England where they joined the Air Transport Auxiliary.^[6] In September 1940 Cochran wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt to introduce the proposal of starting a women's flying division in the Army Air Forces. She felt that qualified women pilots could do all of the domestic, noncombat aviation jobs necessary in order to release more male pilots for combat." Wikipedia



Mother Teresa (August 26, 1910 – September 5, 1997)

Mother Teresa, born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu (pronounced [ag' nɛs 'gɔndʒa bɔja'dʒiu]), was an Albanian Roman Catholic nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata (Calcutta), India in 1950. For over forty years she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying, while guiding the Missionaries of Charity's expansion, first throughout India and then in other countries.

“People are often unreasonable and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway.
If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway.
The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.
For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

“The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved.”

It doesn't take a lot of looking to find truly wonderful quotes from the **Mother** of Love and Care and Compassion and Housing and Feeding and Clothing and Hospice-ing and, and, and.... I'm sooo glad she was alive while I was and I got to know about her.



Maya Angelou, born April 4, 1928

I have included here a paragraph of one of my favorites of her poems. “Our Grandmothers” ranks #1 in my mind. This woman has had an amazing, sometimes terrifying, full of compassion, and passionate life. She has shared it courageously and her sharing has enriched us all. Maya Angelou brought journal writing into the lime light. Her journals sing. She is, in my mind, the perfect example of a woman who has handled adversity, poverty, and sorrow and yet maintained her dignity and the ability to follow her heart unerringly.

Her childhood is marred with painful events, yet her smile remains contagious. Her efforts to support herself are peppered with what could be tragedies, yet her courage is undiminished. She has been to the brothel and participated in the inauguration of a president. She has been to Africa and changed America. She has been willing to make a difference, for herself and for the world.

“All my work, my life, everything I do is about survival, not just bare, awful, plodding survival, but survival with grace and faith. While one may encounter many defeats, one must not be defeated.”

Our Grandmothers

She lay, skin down in the moist dirt,
the canebrake rustling
with the whispers of leaves, and
loud longing of hounds and
the ransack of hunters crackling the near
branches. She muttered, lifting her head a nod toward
freedom,
I shall not, I shall not be moved.



Rachel Carson (May 27, 1907-April 14, 1964)

“Those who dwell amongst the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.” Rachel Carson had a Masters degree in Biology from Johns Hopkins University, very unusual for a woman at the time. She did not get her Doctorate because she quit school to take care of her family. She was the second woman (in 1936) to become a full time employee of the Dept. of Fisheries as a Junior Aquatic Biologist. She was a prolific writer with many published articles and books about the life of aquatic creatures and the workings of nature. Yet she died young, only 57. She must have felt very sad to leave. Her passion for the earth and all its creatures, coupled with her unflinching dedication to the truth as she saw it, changed the way we look at science, industry, and earth. Before her books (especially *Silent Spring*) and her research, Americans believed that science was good and that industry operated in good conscience. Rachel Carson shed light into the dark corners and complex realities of science and industry. We won't have such blind trust ever again.

As I was preparing to walk in the “Relay for Life” to support cancer research, I was surprised to read that Carson had died of cancer. She was facing that eminent death when she agreed to work with John F. Kennedy to address environmental issues with legislation. He had been moved by her books, as I was. He supported her at a time when it was not a popular decision and prior to the subsequent corroborating research that has shown her fears to be based in very harsh realities. Carson hid the fact that she had breast cancer because the pesticide companies would have used the information to discredit, or at least diminish, her voice. There was considerable discussion even in the '60's about the relationship of pesticides to women's breast cancer rates. She was determined that her public stance on the environmental issues not be connected to her personal crisis with cancer.



Betsy Ross (Jan. 1, 1752 – Jan. 30, 1836)

Elizabeth (Betsy) Griscom was the 8th child of the 17 born to her Quaker parents. She was schooled in the Quaker schools learning the usual academics and the skill of being a seamstress. She was apprenticed to an upholstery shop which offered her further development of her skills.

At 21 Betsy eloped with John Ross, an Episcopalian, and was subsequently “written out” of the family of Quakers. She was widowed in Jan. or 1776, during his participation in the Revolution. Betsy then joined the “Free” or “Fighting” Quakers. A new branch of the sect who supported the war effort. It was May of 1776 during which she created our flag at the request of George Washington, George Ross, and Robert Morris.

She married again, in 1777, to Joseph Ashburn, a sea captain. They had two children. She endured the occupation of their home by British soldiers and then Joseph was captured at sea and imprisoned by the British. He died in the prison. Betsy married John Claypoole after the war. She had five children with him. Five of her seven children survived. Betsy remained dedicated to the Free Quakers until the doors closed on that bit of history. She and one other were the final members; it was their decision that it had fulfilled its mission.

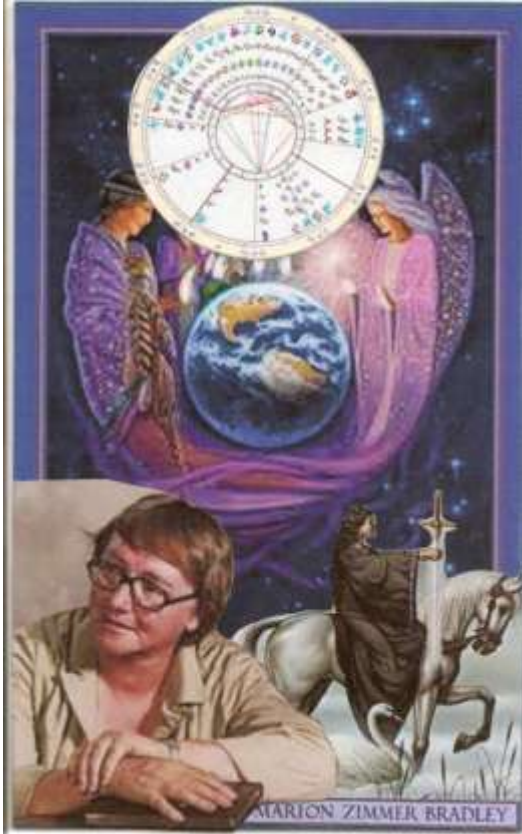
Betsy’s grave has been moved several times. It appears to be in poor condition from the pictures I can find. There is a bridge in Pennsylvania named for her, but her name is not given to many tokens of appreciation. I feel sadness that her flag was altered in later years. I only fly the Betsy Ross Flag at my home. The symbol of the circle holds a special significance of equality for me and I’m sure it did for her as well. Betsy was the only woman invited to contribute significantly to our nation’s foundation. Her flag, her strong character, her willingness to start again (and again and again) to make a life for herself and her family, symbolize the United States of America for me.



The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an Argentine organization of human rights activist women who have, for over three decades, fought for the right to re-unite with their abducted children.

In protests, they wear white head scarves with their children's names embroidered, to symbolize the blankets of the lost children. The name of the organization comes from the Plaza de Mayo in central Buenos Aires, where the bereaved mothers and grandmothers first gathered. They have continued to convene there every Thursday afternoon for a decade.^[1] The Mothers' association was formed by women who had met each other in the course of trying to find their missing sons and daughters, who were abducted by agents of the Argentine government during the years known as the Dirty War (1976–1983), many of whom were then tortured and killed. The 14 founders of the association, Azucena Villaflor de De Vincenti, Berta Braverman, Haydée García Buelas, María Adela Gard de Antokoletz, Julia Gard, María Mercedes Gard and Cándida Gard (4 sisters), Delicia González, Pepa Noia, Mirta Baravalle, Kety Neuhaus, Raquel Arcushin, Sra. De Caimi, started the demonstrations on the Plaza de Mayo, in front of the Casa Rosada presidential palace, on 30 April 1977. It started as 14 individuals searching for their children through legal means. By the following year, hundreds were participating and gathering in the Plaza. The government tried to marginalize and trivialize their work by calling them, "*las locas*", or the madwomen.^[2]

The military has admitted that over 9,000 of those kidnapped are still unaccounted for, but the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo say that the number is closer to 30,000 - a predicted 500 among this figure are the children born in concentration camps to pregnant 'disappeared' women and given to military related families, whilst the remaining number are presumed dead. The numbers are hard to determine due to the secrecy surrounding the abductions. Three of the founders of the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo have also "disappeared". After the fall of the military regime, a civilian government commission put the number of disappeared at close to 11,000 In later years, the association grew and became more persistent, demanding answers from the government as to where their missing children were. After the military gave up its authority to a civilian government in 1983, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo have pressed the new government to help find answers to the kidnappings that took place in the Dirty War years On 26 January 2006, members of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo Association made their final annual March of Resistance around the Plaza de Mayo, saying no more such marches are needed because "the enemy isn't in the Government House anymore".^[6] This decision was in recognition of President Néstor Kirchner's success in having the Full Stop Law and Law of Due Obedience (two Alfonsín era measures which had effectively ended most Dirty War prosecutions) declared unconstitutional. *All information copied from Wikipedia.*



Marion Zimmer Bradley
June 3, 1930 – September 25, 1999

We all have our favorite authors...and I am no exception. Marion Zimmer Bradley wrote "*Mists of Avalon*" in 1983 at about the same time I was experiencing Consciousness Raising and a new awareness of myself as a woman living in a man's world. That novel had a profound effect on me and many others. While I consider myself a Spiritualist, and I practice Wicca...much of my Spiritual underpinning comes from *Mists*... She defined women's power in a new way in that novel. Bradley also co-founded the Society for Creative Anachronism. The name reflects her unique humor and imagination and the gatherings are fun, serious minded, bawdy...all the things I love about her writing.

"Bradley broke major ground with her 1983 *The Mists of Avalon*. The single most successful novel of her career, it won the 1984 Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel and has continued to rank among the top five trade paperback books on Locus's bestseller list. Meanwhile Bradley's Darkover novels attained such popularity that other authors began generating their own Darkover stories, which Bradley allowed to be collected together in anthologies and published for public consumption. A certain amount of Darkover's popularity surely derives from its inclusion of both gay male and lesbian relationships as well as Bradley's invention of The Free Amazon Society. Its women characters provided inspiring heroines for young female (and male) readers at a time when the women's movement had yet to find mass acceptance." www.nmbd.com