

Instructor Guide for High School Educators



Dr. Melissa K. Miller
Professor of Political Science and Master Teacher
Bowling Green State University
melissm@bgsu.edu

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Overview

Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics digs deep into the personal experiences and challenges of women who took the risk to run for office when women's candidacies were exceedingly rare.

The bipartisan group of trailblazers featured in the project began running for office in the 1960s, opening the halls of political power to women in a variety of breakthrough electoral wins. To put their accomplishments in perspective, women held less than 4 percent of the seats in the United States Congress in 1961.

The purpose of Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics is to bring to life the lived experiences of women from a variety of backgrounds who broke electoral barriers in Ohio. While their stories are specific to Ohio, their personal experiences span state lines. They are stories of being discounted, taken for granted, and discouraged from pursuing elective office. Trailblazers describe in vivid detail what scholars have known for some time about the historic experience of women running for political office based on survey research – that women were historically discouraged by political party gatekeepers from running for office and often ignored by the press.

Many high school students – both young women and young men – will find that the trailblazers' stories resonate in their own lives. High school is, after all, a time when students are awakening to challenges in their own communities, broader state, and beyond. It is also a time when students are confronted with new challenges, face peer pressure, and begin to seek personal empowerment. The stories of women from both sides of the political aisle who defied the customary role of women and sought political office are sure to inspire.

This Instructor Guide for High School Educators provides assignments to engage students with various components of Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics. Each assignment is designed to prompt reflection on themes that apply to not only politics, but to the wider world. They also promote reflection on American political history, politics, government, and the unique experiences of women as they have increasingly attained political status and power through elective office.

Appropriate for use at any time throughout the academic year, materials may be of special interest in March of each year – Women's History Month. Project components freely available for classroom use are:

- ◆ Public television documentary produced by WBGU-PBS on the campus of Bowling Green State University and featuring a bipartisan group of eight trailblazing women; stream for free at the WBGU-PBS website at <https://video.wbgu.org/video/trailblazing-women-in-ohio-politics-iouz8a/>

- ◆ Website featuring soundbites, timelines, and biographical materials on 11 trailblazers; also includes theme pages devoted to shared experiences of bias and discouragement, the initial decision to run for office, sources of encouragement, and advice for women and others interested in seeking elective office; available at www.bgsu.edu/trailblazers
- ◆ Oral history collection featuring 60- to 90-minute interviews with ten trailblazing women who describe their upbringing, early adult life, decision to seek elective office, experiences on the campaign trail, sources of discouragement and encouragement; access online at <https://digitalgallery.bgsu.edu/collections/show/161>

Told in their own words, trailblazer stories provide a first-hand account of the obstacles and challenges Democratic and Republican women faced on the campaign trail and in public office. Their stories bring to life the findings of scholars who have heretofore documented the experiences of such women largely via large-scale surveys.

Trailblazers featured in the project come from a variety of backgrounds and got their start in politics through a variety of different paths. They are:

- ◆ **Nickie J. Antonio** – First member of the LGBTQ+ community elected to the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate; elected to leadership positions in both chambers
- ◆ **Jo Ann Davidson** – First woman on the Reynoldsburg City Council; first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Nancy P. Hollister** – First woman Mayor of Marietta; first woman Lieutenant Governor of Ohio; only woman to serve as Governor of Ohio
- ◆ **Marcy Kaptur** – Longest-serving woman in the United States Congress
- ◆ **Joan W. Lawrence** – First woman on the Big Walnut Board of Education; first woman to represent Morrow and Delaware Counties in the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Rhine L. McLin** – First African American woman in the Ohio Senate; first woman Mayor of Dayton
- ◆ **Betty D. Montgomery** – First woman elected County Prosecutor in all 88 Ohio counties; first woman Attorney General of Ohio; first woman Auditor of State
- ◆ **Donna Owens** – First woman Mayor of Toledo
- ◆ **Helen Rankin** – First African American woman in the Ohio legislature
- ◆ **Melody J. Stewart** – First African American woman elected to the Ohio Supreme Court

- ◆ **Mary Ellen Withrow** – First woman on the Elgin Local School Board; rose to become Treasurer of the United States

In the following pages you will find suggested online, in-class, and take-home assignments to engage students with the real-life stories of these remarkable women.

Generous support for Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics has been provided by:

- ◆ Dr. Maribeth S. and Martin E. Rahe
- ◆ Office of the President, Bowling Green State University
- ◆ Ohio History Fund, a grant program of the Ohio History Connection
Ohio Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities
- ◆ Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship, Bowling Green State University
- ◆ Department of Political Science, Bowling Green State University

Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics is funded in part by the Ohio History Fund, a grant program of the Ohio History Connection. Your donations to the Ohio History Fund make this program possible (<https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserving-ohio/ohio-history-fund-grant/>).

Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics is made possible in part by Ohio Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this website do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Public television documentary

Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics is an engaging 56-minute documentary produced by WBGU-PBS on the campus of Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. The film is appropriate for all ages.

This historically important film, featuring seven trailblazers, serves as a time capsule of an important era when women began running for office in greater numbers. From Mary Ellen Withrow, who first ran for elective office in 1965, to Jennette Bradley, who became the first African American woman Lieutenant Governor in all 50 states in 2003, the film captures the challenges, obstacles, strategies, and achievements of this compelling, bipartisan group of women.

In-class screening / written prompts / discussion:

- ◆ Screen the 56-minute film in class. Access the film for free at <https://video.wbgu.org/video/trailblazing-women-in-ohio-politics-iouz8a/>
- ◆ Have students fill out a worksheet with a set of general prompts to respond to while watching the film. Suggested prompts:

Whose story did you find most surprising and why?
Whose story did you find most inspiring and why?
Which trailblazer would you like to meet and talk to in person? Why?
Did any of the trailblazers' experiences strike you as particularly relevant today? Why?
What are some of the main messages or "take-aways" from the film?
- ◆ At the conclusion of the film provide a few minutes for students to jot down any further thoughts about the film and its trailblazers.
- ◆ Use the worksheet prompts to lead a class discussion.

Online or take-home alternative:

- ◆ Adapt the in-class screening assignment outlined above to be an online or take-home assignment.
- ◆ Depending on whether students have access to the internet at home, it may make sense to either screen the film during class or assign them to watch it at home.
- ◆ Have students fill out a worksheet – as outlined above – outside of school. They can bring it to class to either turn in or use as the basis for class discussion.

Pre- and post-screening reflections on politics / politicians:

- ◆ Prior to screening the film – or even announcing its title to the class – have students jot down ten words that come to mind when you mention the word “politician.”
- ◆ Screen the 56-minute film in class. Access the film for free at <https://video.wbgu.org/video/trailblazing-women-in-ohio-politics-iouz8a/>
- ◆ After screening the film, have students jot down ten words that come to mind when you say “trailblazing women in Ohio politics.”
- ◆ Lead a discussion afterward in which students compare their pre-conceived notions about politicians with their impressions of the trailblazers featured in the film. Probe for specific examples / evidence / anecdotes from the film that either altered or reinforced preconceived notions students have about politicians.

Trailblazer trivia:

- ◆ Prepare a worksheet with trivia questions for students to fill out while watching the film.
- ◆ The trivia worksheet can be incorporated with either an in-class screening of the film or a screening of the film students do on their own as homework via the internet.
- ◆ Choose from suggested questions below for the “Trailblazer Trivia” worksheet or write your own after pre-screening the film:

Two African American trailblazers featured in the film – Helen Rankin and Rhine McLin – share the distinction of:

- a. serving as mayors
- b. being initially appointed to public office after the death of a loved one
- c. growing up on a farm
- d. holding statewide executive office

Marcy Kaptur, the longest-serving woman in the United States Congress, is credited with spearheading legislation to

- a. establish a World War II memorial in Washington, D.C.
- b. name the Ohio River a federal protected waterway.
- c. establish all-day kindergarten in public schools nationwide.
- d. establish term limits for members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Former Ohio Lieutenant Governor Nancy Hollister is the only woman to take the oath of office as Governor of Ohio. She served for _____ after _____.

- a. a single four-year term / being elected governor
- b. two full four-year terms / being initially elected in 1994
- c. 100 days / after Governor Bob Taft had to resign for medical reasons
- d. 11 days / after Governor George Voinovich resigned early to be sworn in to the U.S. Senate

Which of the following is not a distinction held by Betty D. Montgomery?

- a. first woman Attorney General of Ohio
- b. first woman county prosecutor in Ohio
- c. achieved large settlement with the tobacco industry on behalf of Ohio
- d. only woman to serve in the Ohio Senate

Which of the following women has an institute named after her, with the mission of electing conservative women to public office?

- a. Mary Ellen Withrow
- b. Jennette Bradley
- c. Marcy Kaptur
- d. Jo Ann Davidson

Rhine McLin, the first woman Mayor of Dayton and the first African American woman in the Ohio Senate, was working as _____ at the time she first entered public office.

- a. a banker
- b. a mortician
- c. a real estate agent
- d. an accountant

Mary Ellen Withrow, who eventually became United States Treasurer, was told which of the following when she ran for county Clerk of Courts?

- a. that she wouldn't have time because she had four children
- b. that she wasn't qualified because she didn't have a college degree
- c. that she would be better suited running for Secretary of State
- d. that she should get a law degree first

Jennette Bradley became the first African American woman to serve as Lieutenant Governor in all 50 states under Governor Bob Taft. Which office did he subsequently appoint her to when a vacancy opened up?

- a. Ohio Attorney General
- b. Ohio Secretary of State
- c. Ohio School Board President
- d. Ohio Treasurer

Helen Rankin, the first African American woman to serve in the Ohio legislature, is credited with successfully spearheading and passing legislation to require insurance companies to

- a. pay for life insurance for elected officials.
- b. lower premiums for new drivers.
- c. cover the cost of screening for breast cancer.
- d. donate excess profits to charity.

As Mayor of Marietta, Nancy Hollister was furious when the print media published pictures of her

- a. pregnant on the campaign trail.
- b. walking barefoot with Governor Celeste and his staff.
- c. sleeping during a city council meeting.
- d. dressed inappropriately for her inauguration.

Oral history collection

Complete oral histories are available on the website of the Center for Archival Collections at Bowling Green State University for ten of the trailblazers featured in Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics.

They offer rich primary source material for students to access in order to hear (or read) complete first-hand accounts of the upbringing, early adult life, decision to run for office and experiences on the campaign trail and in public life of women who broke electoral barriers in Ohio.

For students of both history and government, the Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics Oral History Collection offers students a deep dive into the life and experiences of specific trailblazers. In light of the wide range of trailblazer backgrounds represented in the collection, students are likely to identify a trailblazer of specific interest to them, whether based on their upbringing, demographic characteristics, office(s) held, or specific accomplishments.

Trailblazer deep dive assignment – use as precursor for all oral history assignments suggested below

- ◆ Have students choose one of ten trailblazers featured in the Trailblazing Women in Ohio Politics Oral History Collection. Brief descriptions of each trailblazer are available on the collection's landing page (<https://digitalgallery.bgsu.edu/collections/show/161>).
- ◆ Once a trailblazer is chosen, have each student either listen to or read the transcript of her complete oral history. Oral histories are 60-90 minutes in length.
- ◆ NOTE: Encourage students who opt to read the transcript of their trailblazer's oral history to listen to at least five minutes of it using the audio file. This will enable them to address the essay prompt (below) that pertains to the emotional impact of the oral history.

Observing / reflecting / questioning assignment:

- ◆ Have students listen to (or read) the oral history of their chosen trailblazer (see "Trailblazer deep dive" assignment above).
- ◆ During or after listening to (or reading) the oral history, have students write an essay (length can vary based on instructor time and goals) that addresses the following prompts adapted from "Analyzing Oral Histories" Teacher Guide available at the Library of Congress website (https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Oral_Histories.pdf)

Observe: What format are you using to access this trailblazer’s oral history – audio file or transcript? Describe what you notice first about this trailblazer’s story. What jumps out at you? How would you describe the speaking style and overall manner of this trailblazer? Does “interview” or “conversation” describe this oral history? Explain why?

Reflect: What do you think was the purpose of this oral history? What can you tell about the trailblazer based on the story she tells? What conclusions might you draw about the trailblazer’s point of view? In what ways is this trailblazer’s oral history significant? Would you describe this oral history as more personal or historical? Why? How does listening to the oral history (as opposed to reading the transcript) affect the emotional impact has? What do you feel are the most important lessons to be taken from this trailblazer’s oral history?

Question: Why do you suppose these particular questions were posed to the trailblazer? Are these the questions you would have chosen? What alternative or additional questions would you have asked this trailblazer? What additional information would you like to learn about this trailblazer or her story?

Oral history retelling assignment:

- ◆ Have students listen to (or read) the oral history of their chosen trailblazer (see “Trailblazer deep dive” assignment above).
- ◆ Have students briefly retell the story conveyed in their trailblazer’s oral history in an essay; length can vary based on time / resources available.

Or

- ◆ Have students give a brief oral presentation that retells the story of their chosen trailblazer in their own words; length can vary based on time / resources available.

Biographical add-on assignment

- ◆ Have students listen to (or read) the oral history of their chosen trailblazer (see “Trailblazer deep dive” assignment above).
- ◆ In addition to having students write an observing / reflecting / questioning essay outlined above, have them also summarize the biography of the trailblazer using the biographical narrative provided about the trailblazer on the project’s website (www.bgsu.edu/trailblazers).

OR

- ◆ In addition to having students write an essay or do an oral presentation retelling the trailblazer's oral history in their own words, have them also summarize the biography of the trailblazer using the biographical narrative provided about the trailblazer on the project's website (www.bgsu.edu/trailblazers).

Project website

Journaling about individual trailblazers

Journaling offers a means for students to interact with the personal stories and histories of a bipartisan group of women who have broken electoral barriers in Ohio politics. Each prompt is designed to spark reflection on how the experiences of women who overcame major obstacles in their political lives can resonate yet today.

Recommended assignment:

- Each student picks a trailblazer for close examination on the project’s landing page (www.bgsu.edu/trailblazers).
- Once the trailblazer is chosen, students navigate to their chosen trailblazer’s biographical page by clicking on her photo (or using the drop-down “Trailblazers” menu in the navigation at the top of the page).
- Students examine the information on their chosen trailblazer’s bio page. These include the short (500-word bio), the elections timeline, the visual photos and memorabilia. Students also listen to all four soundbites for their chosen trailblazer, which appear on the far right of the biographical page.
- Students write a journal entry on one, two, or three of the journaling prompts that appear at the bottom of each trailblazer’s biographical page. Choose a journal entry length – 1 paragraph, 1 page, 2 pages etc. – that works for the time available.

Journaling prompts for each trailblazer – along with brief biographical details about each – appear below.

Nickie J. Antonio

First member of the LGBTQ+ community elected to the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate; elected to leadership positions in both chambers

1. A high school guidance counselor recommended that Nickie Antonio either attend community college or get a job as a secretary. Instead, she worked her way through Cleveland State University. Describe a time when you were given advice that you didn’t wish to take. What was the advice? How did you respond? What did you decide to do and why?
2. Have you ever had a great idea for which someone else got the credit? Nickie Antonio’s strategy in such a situation is to spend “two seconds” feeling angry and then work collaboratively with the person who hijacked your idea to move it forward. Evaluate the pros and cons of such a strategy. Describe whether or not you’d be comfortable employing it.

3. When Nickie Antonio became Executive Director of the Women’s Center of Greater Cleveland, she was the youngest person on her own staff. “The women there taught me so much,” Antonio recalls, including how to deliver a hug and how to provide a warm and welcoming environment. Aside from your teachers, from whom have you learned a lot? What lessons did they teach you? In what contexts have you found these lessons helpful?

Jo Ann Davidson

First woman on the Reynoldsburg City Council; first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives

1. When Jo Ann Davidson ran for County Recorder in 1972, a man she had just met at a fundraising event looked her “up and down” and said, “Well, I guess you could dust the books.” Have you ever been judged solely by your looks? What was the context? How did it make you feel? How did you respond?
2. In 1995, Jo Ann Davidson was elected the first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives. A newspaper ran the headline, “Is She Tough Enough to Govern?” A stereotype is a widely held assumption about a group of people (such as women) that is often oversimplified and prejudiced. To what stereotypes have you been subjected? What did others assume about you? How did you respond? How can harmful stereotypes be addressed?
3. While serving as Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and for years afterward, Jo Ann Davidson recruited women to run for office and to run for higher office. Have you had a friend or mentor who convinced you to do something difficult? What was it about their encouragement that made you try it? What did you learn from the experience?

Nancy P. Hollister

First woman Mayor of Marietta; first woman Lieutenant Governor of Ohio; only woman to serve as Governor of Ohio

1. Nancy Hollister often used humor to disarm her critics. After being sworn into the Ohio House, a male colleague told her, “We have a rule about women wearing pants.” In other words, women were expected to wear a dress or skirt when on the floor of the Ohio House. She responded “What about the rule with plaid sportscoats?” When have you used humor in response to criticism? When does it tend to be effective versus ineffective?
2. Nancy Hollister initially dismissed the idea that she should apply for a vacancy on Marietta City Council. When Governor George Voinovich later asked her to be his lieutenant governor running mate, she responded, “I don’t think I need to do this. I’m really happy where I am.” Are you a person who needs a lot of encouragement to try

something new or challenging? Describe a time when you needed to be talked into trying something new or challenging.

3. While Nancy Hollister attended Kent State University, she did not graduate. She was criticized on the 1994 campaign trail for lieutenant governor for not having a college degree. "I have a degree in life," she responded, and listed the many roles she had played as a mother. Compare formal education to life experience when it comes to representing people as an elected official. In what ways might each of them be important?

Marcy Kaptur

Longest-serving woman in the United States Congress

1. Marcy Kaptur recalls her mother taking her to the polls on Election Day. Her mother would lift her up so she could mark "X" on the ballot. She calls it a "happy memory." What is your earliest political memory? Reflect on whether it is positive or negative. How might your earliest political memories influence your likelihood of becoming politically engaged as an adult?
2. When Marcy Kaptur first ran for Congress in 1982, she struggled to raise money. Her suggestion to hold a bake sale was criticized in Washington, yet the event raised \$10,000 – a large sum for a campaign in the early 1980s. Despite her underdog status, Kaptur went on to win the race. Think about a time when you were underestimated. How did you respond?
3. A Democrat, Marcy Kaptur worked with Republicans to establish a World War II Memorial in Washington. The project took 17 years after she first introduced the legislation. Why do you think such bipartisan cooperation seems rare today? Why was the World War II Memorial an exception? What other issues could or should prompt bipartisan cooperation?

Joan W. Lawrence

First woman on the Big Walnut Board of Education; first woman to represent Morrow and Delaware Counties in the Ohio House of Representatives

1. Reflecting on her civic and political engagement over the years, Joan Lawrence remarked, "I just can't help myself. If I see a problem, I want to solve it." To what extent can you relate to Lawrence's problem-solving nature? What might motivate you to take action in your community? Why do you suppose so many people aren't involved in their communities? How can their reluctance be overcome?
2. Running for school board in 1969, Joan Lawrence remembers feeling ashamed when she blurted out, "It's time we elected a woman to the school board" at a candidate event. She recalls wanting "to be elected on my own merit." She went on to become the top

vote-getter in the race, besting three male incumbents. How should voters assess candidates? Should background or life experience be considered in addition to qualifications? Why or why not?

3. Joan Lawrence believes that “women ask good, tough questions... often the question that nobody else wants to bring up.” How comfortable are you asking questions at school and in other contexts? What helps to create an environment in which folks are comfortable admitting they have questions? Why might the ability to ask tough questions be important in a political context?

Rhine L. McLin

First African American woman in the Ohio Senate; first woman Mayor of Dayton

1. If someone says the word “politician,” what comes to mind? Were you surprised that Rhine McLin became a trailblazer for women in politics after spending her childhood roller skating, cheerleading, baton twirling, and studying piano, violin, dance and tap? What in Rhine McLin’s background do you think made her so well suited for a political career? Does her story change your view of the typical politician? If so, how?
2. Rhine McLin recalls the “slick little remarks” men in the Ohio legislature would make about their female colleagues in the late 1980s and 1990s, including inappropriate comments about their dress. According to McLin, there weren’t enough women elected to “be able to fight back and try to do legislation.” Why do you think “fighting back” was incompatible with the efforts of women legislators to pass legislation? What kinds of compromises have you had to make in order to get something accomplished?
3. Rhine McLin offers the following advice: “You can't let their hate or dislike for you damage you.... You just got to keep moving.” How easy is it to “keep moving” in the face of hostility? What kinds of strategies can you use to get through it? She further advised: “It's like skipping rocks. You just skip over them and keep going. You're still going to make some ripples.” Why do you think this strategy was successful for the first African American woman in the Ohio Senate and the first woman Mayor of Dayton?

Betty D. Montgomery

First woman elected County Prosecutor in all 88 Ohio counties; first woman Attorney General of Ohio; first woman Auditor of State

1. When Betty Montgomery ran for Wood County Prosecutor in 1980, she recalls that both parties felt “You can’t have a woman run for office. She’s not going to win.” What other profession(s) remains largely dominated by men? What do you think explains women’s underrepresentation in this profession? How might women make progress in this profession?

2. While campaigning door-to-door for Wood County prosecutor in 1980, a resident slammed their door in Betty Montgomery's face. Interviewed in 2021, Montgomery simply said, "You'd get some of that." How would you respond if something similar happened to you today? Describe some options that would be available to you, and which you would choose.
3. In 1994 Betty Montgomery ran for Attorney General against an incumbent who "everybody thought... couldn't be beaten." She won and became Ohio's first woman Attorney General. Have you ever tried to do something that others thought impossible? Why did you decide to do it? What approach did you take? What strategies did you use? What was the outcome?

Donna Owens

First woman Mayor of Toledo

1. While growing up, Donna Owens never aspired to a career in politics or thought about herself as political. Do you think of yourself as political? Explain why or why not. In Owens' case, the poor condition of her children's school motivated her initial involvement. What issues might motivate you to become actively involved in the politics of your community?
2. Donna Owens observed an elected member of the local school board sleep through all of the board meetings and thought to herself, "I can do better than that." Do you ever have the same feeling – that you could better address your community's pressing issues than the elected officials who represent you? Would you ever consider running for office yourself? Explain why or why not.
3. While serving as Mayor of Toledo in the 1980s, Donna Owens attended a meeting at the White House as part of a large delegation of mayors from around the country. One of the male mayors asked her, "Whose secretary or wife are you?" Owens recalls feeling "very indignant" and responding, "I am a mayor." Have you ever felt dismissed by others? How did you react? What strategies can you employ when others make false assumptions about you?

Helen Rankin

First African American woman in the Ohio legislature

1. When Helen Rankin decided to run outright for her late husband's seat in the Ohio House in 1978, just two months after being appointed to fill the vacancy, many people assumed she was not qualified. Why do you think she was underestimated? Describe a situation in which you were underestimated and explain how you handled it.
2. Helen Rankin introduced a bill requiring insurance companies to pay for breast cancer screening for women four separate times before it finally passed and was signed into

law by the governor. She believes that the men in the legislature felt that she was just “frivolously” asking for something. Have you ever felt like a request you made wasn’t taken seriously? How did you handle the situation?

3. Helen Rankin represented a Cincinnati district in the Ohio House for 16 years, yet felt largely ignored by the Cincinnati media until she decided to retire and one of the newspapers wanted to interview her for a feature story. She turned them down. Would you have done the same? To what extent can you relate to Helen Rankin’s feeling of being ignored?

Melody J. Stewart

First African American woman elected to the Ohio Supreme Court

1. Judges in Ohio’s state court system are elected by voters. Melody Stewart ran twice for Ohio’s Eighth District Court of Appeals and lost both times. She nevertheless ran a third time and won in 2006. Are you surprised that she didn’t give up? Why do you think she persisted? Would you have done the same? Why or why not?
2. After campaigning across the state and winning a seat on the Ohio Supreme Court, Melody Stewart reflected that people across Ohio are “more alike than... unlike.” Describe some things that people from different racial, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds share in common. Also describe ways in which they differ. Do the commonalities generally outweigh the differences or vice versa? Explain why.
3. While running for Ohio Supreme Court in 2018, Melody Stewart reasoned that if she had to attack her opponent to win, she would rather lose. What do you think about negative political campaigning? Under what circumstances is it appropriate or inappropriate? Why do you think so many candidates engage in negative advertising? Should judicial candidates make a special effort to avoid it or not?

Mary Ellen Withrow

First woman on the Elgin Local School Board; rose to become Treasurer of the United States

1. When Mary Ellen Withrow ran for Marion County Treasurer in the 1970s, her detractors said she wouldn’t be able to take care of her children or open the treasurer’s vault. Would such attacks be effective against women in politics, business, or the arts today? Explain why or why not.
2. Mary Ellen Withrow was furious when the local newspaper wouldn’t use her name. They required she be called “Mrs. Norman Withrow.” Write about some ways women candidates are treated differently than men in politics or another sector of American society that interests you.

3. In 1982 Mary Ellen Withrow was mocked by her male opponent for passing out recipes on the campaign trail for State Treasurer, yet she continued to use this strategy. What kinds of things have you been mocked about? How did you respond?

Project website

Journaling about project themes

Journaling offers a means for students to interact with common threads woven through the personal stories and political histories of a bipartisan group of women who have broken electoral barriers in Ohio politics. As with the journaling exercises that are trailblazer-specific (see above), journaling about the project's themes are designed to spark reflection on how the experiences of women who overcame major obstacles in their political lives still resonate yet today.

Recommended assignment:

- Each student picks a theme for close examination by using the “Themes” drop-down menu at the top of the project’s landing page (www.bgsu.edu/trailblazers). There are five themes from which to choose.
- Once the theme is chosen, students navigate to their chosen theme page by using the drop-down “Themes” menu in the navigation at the top of the page.
- Once at their chosen theme page, students listen to all six soundbites – each from a different trailblazer – associated with the theme. Students should be encouraged to note the brief biographical description of each trailblazer provided with each soundbite on the theme page. For further context, students can navigate to the individual biographical pages associated with the featured trailblazers on the theme page, again, using the drop-down navigation at the top of the page.
- Students write a journal entry on one, two, or three of the journaling prompts that appear below, organized by theme. Choose a journal entry length – 1 paragraph, 1 page, 2 pages etc. – that works for the time available.

Deciding to run

Soundbites from the following featured trailblazers:

- ◆ **Jo Ann Davidson** – First woman on the Reynoldsburg City Council; first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Nickie J. Antonio** – First member of the LGBTQ+ community elected to the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate; elected to leadership positions in both chambers
- ◆ **Donna Owens** – First woman Mayor of Toledo
- ◆ **Helen Rankin** – First African American woman in the Ohio legislature
- ◆ **Joan W. Lawrence** – First woman on the Big Walnut Board of Education; first woman to represent Morrow and Delaware Counties in the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Marcy Kaptur** – Longest-serving woman in the United States Congress

Journaling prompts for “deciding to run” page

1. Which of the trailblazers self-recruited when they first ran for elective office, rather than being recruited to run by someone else? Briefly describe one trailblazer’s episode of self-recruitment, describing how she came to run for elective office. Then reflect on whether you would ever run for elective office. Explain why or why not. Would you be more likely to run if someone recruited you or would you be more likely to self-recruit? Why?
2. Briefly describe the experiences of two trailblazers (or other politicians you can think of) who were either discouraged from running or were told they wouldn’t win. Have you ever been told you weren’t capable of doing something? How did it make you feel? What was your response?
3. Women represent 50 percent of the population but comprise less than 50 percent of elective officeholders in the United States. Why do you think so few women run for elective office compared to men? In general, very, very few people run for elective office. What strategies can you think of to encourage both women and men to run for office?

Getting encouragement

Soundbites from the following featured trailblazers:

- ◆ **Mary Ellen Withrow** – First woman on the Elgin Local School Board; rose to become Treasurer of the United States
- ◆ **Donna Owens** – First woman Mayor of Toledo
- ◆ **Marcy Kaptur** – Longest-serving woman in the United States Congress
- ◆ **Nancy P. Hollister** – First woman Mayor of Marietta; first woman Lieutenant Governor of Ohio; only woman to serve as Governor of Ohio
- ◆ **Melody J. Stewart** – First African American woman elected to the Ohio Supreme Court
- ◆ **Betty D. Montgomery** – First woman elected County Prosecutor in all 88 Ohio counties; first woman Attorney General of Ohio; first woman Auditor of State

Journaling prompts for “getting encouragement” page:

1. Briefly describe the encouragement that one of this project’s trailblazers received to run for office. Who encouraged them? Why do you think the encouragement was effective?
2. A couple of this project’s trailblazers were initially reluctant to enter public office even when encouraged to do so. Pick one of them and describe the encouragement they received and how they reacted. Was their initial reluctance understandable? Explain why or why not. Why do you think they decided to run in the end?
3. When Marcy Kaptur was encouraged to run for U.S. House of Representatives in 1982, she remembers laughing, in part because she was told she would need to raise over a

quarter million dollars to run. Do you think the need to raise money is still a barrier to folks running for office? What other factors keep folks from wanting to run for political office? How can they be overcome?

Receiving discouragement

Soundbites from the following featured trailblazers:

- ◆ **Rhine L. McLin** – First African American woman in the Ohio Senate; first woman Mayor of Dayton
- ◆ **Betty D. Montgomery** – First woman elected County Prosecutor in all 88 Ohio counties; first woman Attorney General of Ohio; first woman Auditor of State
- ◆ **Marcy Kaptur** – Longest-serving woman in the United States Congress
- ◆ **Jo Ann Davidson** – First woman on the Reynoldsburg City Council; first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Nickie J. Antonio** – First member of the LGBTQ+ community elected to the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate; elected to leadership positions in both chambers
- ◆ **Nancy P. Hollister** – First woman Mayor of Marietta; first woman Lieutenant Governor of Ohio; only woman to serve as Governor of Ohio

Journaling prompts for “receiving discouragement” page:

1. Pick a trailblazer and describe the discouragement she received when considering a run for elective office. How did she react? Describe a time when you were discouraged from doing something you felt was important. How did you react?
2. Pick a trailblazer who was told she couldn’t win elective office. Why do you suppose she didn’t listen? What strategies can you employ when told that something you want to do is impossible?
3. Very few women ran for office in the 1960s and 1970s, when many of this project’s trailblazers began to run for elective office. Few people are willing to run for elective office yet today. Would you discourage someone from running for office today? Why or why not?

Experiencing bias

Soundbites from the following featured trailblazers:

- ◆ **Rhine L. McLin** – First African American woman in the Ohio Senate; first woman Mayor of Dayton
- ◆ **Donna Owens** – First woman Mayor of Toledo
- ◆ **Nickie J. Antonio** – First member of the LGBTQ+ community elected to the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate; elected to leadership positions in both chambers

- ◆ **Helen Rankin** – First African American woman in the Ohio legislature
- ◆ **Jo Ann Davidson** – First woman on the Reynoldsburg City Council; first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Marcy Kaptur** – Longest-serving woman in the United States Congress

Journaling prompts for “experiencing bias” page:

1. Describe the experience of bias related by one of the trailblazers featured on the “experiencing bias” page. How did the trailblazer handle the situation? How would you have responded if you had been running for office at the same time? How would you respond today?
2. Which trailblazer recalled bias based on her social class? How did she respond? What is your impression of the social class of elected officials today – do they strike you as predominantly from the working, middle, or upper class? In what ways might the social class of a candidate affect their race for public office today?
3. A stereotype is a widely held assumption about a group of people (such as women) that is often oversimplified and prejudiced. Provide two different examples of trailblazers being stereotyped. What assumptions did voters or others make about them? How did they react? How would you react?

Advice for women

Soundbites from the following featured trailblazers:

- ◆ **Nancy P. Hollister** – First woman Mayor of Marietta; first woman Lieutenant Governor of Ohio; only woman to serve as Governor of Ohio
- ◆ **Rhine L. McLin** – First African American woman in the Ohio Senate; first woman Mayor of Dayton
- ◆ **Betty D. Montgomery** – First woman elected County Prosecutor in all 88 Ohio counties; first woman Attorney General of Ohio; first woman Auditor of State
- ◆ **Melody J. Stewart** – First African American woman elected to the Ohio Supreme Court
- ◆ **Jo Ann Davidson** – First woman on the Reynoldsburg City Council; first woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives
- ◆ **Mary Ellen Withrow** – First woman on the Elgin Local School Board; rose to become Treasurer of the United States

Journaling prompts for “advice for women” page:

1. The trailblazers featured on the “advice for women” page offer a range of advice for women considering a run for elective office. In what ways might their advice also be valuable for men considering running for elective office?

2. Is any of the advice offered by trailblazers featured on the “advice for women” page applicable in other spheres of life, beyond politics and campaigning for public office? Whose advice is most relevant to your life today and why?

3. Scholarly research employing large-scale surveys of adult women and men has found that women tend to underestimate their qualifications for elective office relative to men. Which trailblazer speaks to this point? What does she say? Does Davidson’s advice resonate with you? Do you tend to be someone with a lot of confidence or less confidence?