

## Press Release

For immediate Release  
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*Images below*



### ***From Suffrage to #MeToo* Exhibition Highlights Groundbreaking Sonoma County Women**

January 25-September 13, 2020

**(SANTA ROSA, CA)** December 20, 2019- The year 2020 is the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, giving women the constitutional right to vote. While different in goal and origin, the recent #MeToo movement and women's marches also represent pivotal change and the power of the collective voice to challenge the status quo. The Museum of Sonoma County's upcoming exhibition, *From Suffrage to #MeToo: Groundbreaking Women in Sonoma County*, explores the changing expectations, challenges, and obstacles to inclusion that women have faced and the remarkable people who have broken through the barriers. The exhibition opens to the public on Saturday, January 25, with an **opening reception on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-7:00pm** (details below).

The campaign for women's suffrage required strategy and coordinated action. Across the century, between the suffrage movement and today, women in Sonoma County have risen above many challenges, with achievements in realms ranging from cultural preservation, science, politics, law, activism, education, athletics, and more. Over a dozen remarkable women will be highlighted in this exhibition, including:

- **Frances McGaughey Martin**, the first woman elected to office in Sonoma County in 1886 and a local leader in the campaign for women's suffrage as the President of the Political Equality Association
- **Mary Ellen Pleasant**, abolitionist, businesswoman, and Bay Area civil rights leader
- **Augusta Metzger**, business owner, philanthropist
- **Song Wong Bourbeau**, prolific philanthropist, whose greatest gift was sharing her family treasures as a permanent reminder of Santa Rosa's vanished Chinatown
- **Essie Parrish**, Kashia Pomo Leader
- **May Grace**, founder of the Santa Rosa unit of the American Women's Voluntary Services
- **Dalia (Dale) Messick**, *Brenda Starr*, Reporter comic strip artist

- **Hansel Mieth**, photographer and the second woman staff photographer to be hired by LIFE Magazine
- **Alice Gray**, one of the founders of Sonoma County NAACP
- **Helen Putnam**, first woman mayor of Petaluma, later a member of the county Board of Supervisors, and the first woman to preside over the League of California cities
- **Helen Rudee**, first woman elected to Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
- **Doris Sloan**, Bodega Bay power plant opponent and geologist
- **Molly MacGregor**, founder of the National Women's History Project
- **Alicia Sanchez**, prominent figure in organizing and acclimating Sonoma County's immigrant labor force and many others
- **Lynn Woolsey**, former member of the U.S. House representing California's 6th Congressional District from 1993 to 2013
- **Judy Sakaki**, President of Sonoma State University, first Japanese-American woman in the country to lead a four-year university.
- **Jill Ravitch**, first woman to serve as District Attorney in Sonoma County

The story told in the exhibition is not one of simple, steady advancement. “While many milestones in the exhibition point to great progress, others, such as the women’s march protest symbols and signs, serve as a reminder that there is much work yet to be done,” says Eric Stanley, the Museum’s Curator of History. “The story of suffrage to #MeToo is important because it reveals an underlying reality: that suffrage was a great victory, but the issue of women’s rights and inclusion remains unfinished business. I hope that visitors come away both inspired with the stories of the women highlighted in the exhibition and impressed with the long march toward rights and inclusion.”

The exhibition is part of a yearlong celebration of the centennial of the 19th amendment, presented in coordination with the Sonoma County Library, the National Women’s History Alliance, and the Sonoma County 2020 Women’s Suffrage Project. A joint statement from the latter organization’s steering committee (Berenice Espinoza, Leslie Graves, and Kristen Long) states, “The Sonoma County 2020 Women’s suffrage Project is a yearlong project dedicated to celebrating the centennial of the 19th Amendment throughout 2020 with events and programs that honor this triumphant milestone in Women's History while addressing the inequities in the continuous fight for all people’s right to vote. Among our many proud collaborations with local organizations is that with the Museum of Sonoma County and their upcoming exhibit *From Suffrage to #MeToo: Groundbreaking Women in Sonoma County*. We recognize that uncovering and sharing the complexity of our history is of utmost importance in creating true representation for all womxn [sic] and people in our society as we move forward together.”

The Museum, whose Board of Directors will move into the new year led by newly elected all-female officers, will also be presenting *Waves: Feminism, Art, and Power*, an art exhibition presented in collaboration with the Feminist Art Project. *Waves* will open in

August to coincide with the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment ratification date and will run through the general election in November. “2020 is a year full of celebrations, with the centennial of the ratification of women’s suffrage, the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Museum, and the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Historic Santa Rosa Post Office and Federal Building,” says Jeff Nathanson, the Museum’s Executive Director. “It’s going to be a fantastic year and we can’t wait to share it with our community.”

This exhibition is generously supported by Liz Uribe, Realtor, On Fire, Patisserie Angelica, and Pisenti and Brinker.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://museumsc.org/suffrage-metoo/>

### Programs and Events

#### **Opening Reception**

Friday, January 24, 2020

5:00-7:00pm

Free for members; non-members \$7-10

#### **No Longer Just a Man’s Game: Sonoma County Women in Sports and Journalism**

Saturday, April 11, 2020

2:00-3:30pm

Free for members; non-members \$10 prepay, \$15 at the door

Panel discussion with **Amy G**, sports journalist and San Francisco Giants reporter for NBC Sports Bay Area; **Kerry Benefield**, Prep Sports columnist for the Press Democrat; and **Deanne Fitzmaurice**, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer who has photographed on assignment for publications including Sports Illustrated, ESPN, and National Geographic.

Additional programs and events to be announced shortly: <https://museumsc.org/events>

### About the Museum of Sonoma County

Located in Downtown Santa Rosa on Seventh Street between A and B Streets, the Museum of Sonoma County (MSC) presents exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and local and regional history. MSC is open year-round with changing exhibitions, public programs, school tours, and special events. MSC preserves and manages a regional art and history collection of over 18,000 objects, the region’s largest object documentation of Sonoma County’s history and culture.

#### **Mission**

The Museum of Sonoma County engages and inspires our diverse community with art and history exhibitions, collections, and public programs that are inclusive, educational, and relevant.

### **Smithsonian Affiliate**

The Museum of Sonoma County has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since 2009. Smithsonian Affiliations establishes long-term partnerships with museums, education and cultural organizations to facilitate the loan of Smithsonian artifacts and traveling exhibitions, as well as to develop innovative educational collaborations locally and nationally. Created in 1996 by an act of the Smithsonian Board of Regents, the program is overseen by the Smithsonian's Assistant Secretary for Education and Access and is one of the pillars of the Institution's national outreach efforts. There are more than 200 Smithsonian Affiliates in nearly every state, Puerto Rico and Panama. Affiliates represent the diversity of America's museum community—size, location and subject—and serve all audiences. More than 8,000 Smithsonian artifacts have been displayed at Affiliate locations for the past 20 years.

### **Museum of Sonoma County**

425 Seventh Street  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
707-579-1500  
[www.museumsc.org](http://www.museumsc.org)

### **Admission**

Adults: \$10.00  
Seniors, Students, Disabled: \$7.00  
Museum Members: FREE  
Children 12 and under: FREE

### **Museum Hours**

Open: Tuesday through Sunday, 11:00am-5:00pm

Closed: Mondays

Closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, President's Day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas; please visit our website for additional closures

## Images

Additional images or high-resolution images available upon request



Doris Sloan, Bodega Bay power plant opponent and geologist



Helen Rudee, first woman elected to Sonoma County Board of Supervisors



2017 Santa Rosa Women's March, image courtesy Jeff Kan Lee