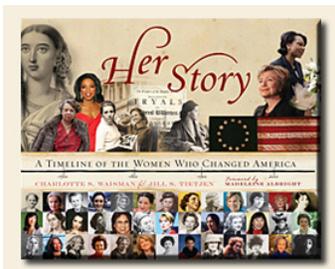


Women in Leadership Seminar Highlights

March 27, 2012

Topic: Her Story- Women Who Changed America with Jill S. Tietjen



Professional Engineer and author Jill S. Tietjen spoke this month at WIL.

Tietjen was a part of the 3rd class at the University of Virginia to accept women and the first year that the admission of women wasn't capped. She entered as a math major. No one recommended that this daughter of a NASA engineer become an engineer herself. When she had made her decision, she made a collect call home to her parents from a pay phone to tell them the news. They thought she must have bad news, but it was worse than they thought: she was going into engineering!

Tietjen was one of the first 10 women to graduate with a degree in engineering. After completing her degree, Tietjen moved to Charlotte. She took a position at Duke Power where she served as an expert witness and consulted with power plants. She then completed her MBA at UNC-Charlotte. After finding the [Society of Women Engineers \(SWE\)](#) at a career fair, Tietjen realized she had found some kindred spirits.

Later in her career, Jill developed the idea for her book [Her Story: Women Who Changed America](#) from a leadership class. She also found the perfect co-author - Charlotte Waisman. Together they were determined to ensure that "the women on whose shoulders we stand" would not be forgotten. With a timeline from the 1500's to the present, the book contains hundreds of vignettes that highlight incredible and diverse women who have led the way for all who have followed. According to Tietjen, "Three key commonalities exist among these extraordinary class of women: passion, determination, and persistence."

Here are a few highlights that Jill shared with us:

- Admiral Hopper (1945) – developed the idea of machine-independent programming languages, which led to the development of one of the first modern programming languages.
- Sojourner Truth and Harriett Tubman – freed more than 300 people from slavery (never lost one!) Tubman was often armed, and often mistaken for a man because of her courage.
 - Sojourner Truth became a women's rights advocate
- Wilma Rudolph – fastest woman in the world
 - 20th or 22 children
 - Suffered from Polio

- Madam CJ Walker – First female self-made millionaire
 - Provided an opportunity for other women to have economic independence
- Catherine Ferguson (1793) – integrated Sunday school
- Shirley Chisholm – 1st black woman elected to Congress
- Jeannette Rankin – first woman elected to Congress in 1916
 - “We’re half the people; we should be half the Congress.”

- Eliza Lucas – By age 14, was running three plantations
 - Developed commercialization for Indigo
 - George Washington was a pallbearer at her funeral
- Becky Shroder – had her first patent by age 12
- Mary Ingle Pendleton (late 1800s) – patent standards for food safety
 - Developed the egg carton