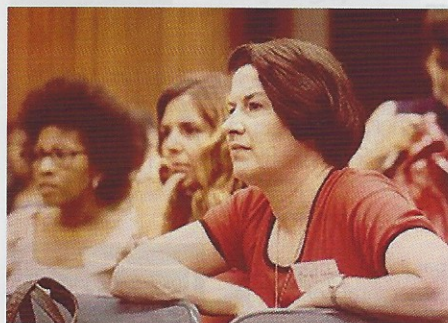


VETERAN FEMINISTS of America

By Muriel Fox

They never heard of Betty Friedan. They can't believe that newspaper ads ever said "Help Wanted Male" and "Help Wanted Female." They doubt that it was possible for women to change the world. They consider feminism "old-hat." Sometimes I want to scream with frustration at the educated young people who are unmoved by the miracles that were hard-won by tens of thousands of devoted feminists — energized by the birth of the National Organization for Women (NOW) on October 29, 1966.

Before our revolution, for many thousands of years, males held overpowering mastery over their females. They expected us to dedicate our lives primarily to bearing and raising new offspring, and

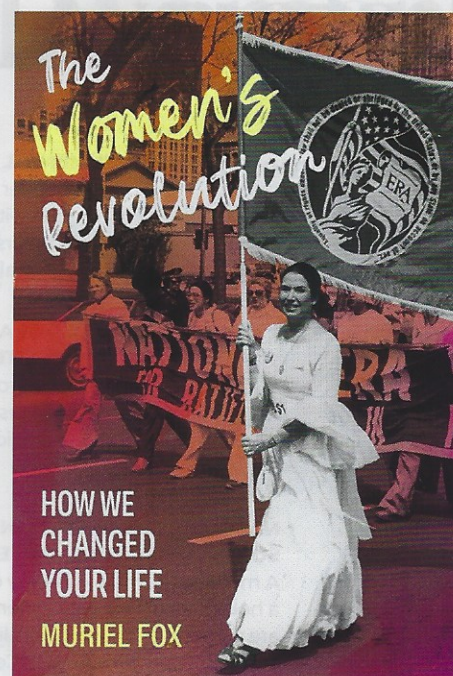


Jacqui Ceballos, co-founder of Veteran Feminists of America, with Connie Comer and Tina Santi in Seneca Falls 1971

to find our meaning and satisfaction in doing this. Within our lifetime, our feminist movement changed this forever. We transformed lives and attitudes through consciousness raising, new laws, audacious lawsuits, and hard-won victories over all the traditions that said, "That's how it's always been." Let's celebrate; let's never forget. It's our responsibility to continue reminding future generations of all that can be accomplished.

Our responsibility is to pass the torch to new fighters who will reverse our recent losses and mobilize activists for all the work that still lies ahead. In the United States, our focus must be on justice, equality and diversity. The lives of all females and males of all races are better today because of our victories in what is known as "The Second Wave" of feminism, but many people still suffer. The vast percentage of Americans in poverty today are women and their dependent children. People are still persecuted because they don't conform to gender stereotypes. Women have lost the freedom to decide whether they'll bear and raise a child. So much remains to be done!

Our movement must recruit new allies to win the political power necessary to overcome remaining injustices. In 1966, through energetic communications, we rapidly informed the world about our new movement; today we still need to spread the word. Women's history organizations play an influential role. So do hundreds of professional and educational organizations. Veteran Feminists of America, which I chair, works to assist all those who tell the story. We're compiling many hundreds of oral histories and biographies of feminists who have made a difference. This year there's been a blossoming of new books



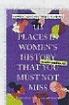
Muriel Fox writes from the important perspective of a woman born in 1928 who became a feminist, activist, co-founder of the National Organization of Women (NOW). She has served as Chair of the Board of Veteran Feminists of America since 1993.

and articles about feminism. New Village Press will publish my own memoir, *The Women's Revolution: How We Changed Your Life*, on June 18. I list 29 women and one man whom history should remember, plus the historic changes they brought about.

Let's not be reticent in boasting about what we've accomplished. It's unfair for some detractors — discouraged by the inequities that still remain — to pooh-poo our work and claim that it helped only privileged middle-class white women. That isn't true! Our revolution overwhelmingly influenced the lives of all women, men and children. Everywhere in the world. Forever. Let's celebrate that, and let's build upon it for the changes that lie ahead. ■

A TOUR OF HER OWN

WASHINGTON, DC
TOURS



info@atourofherown.com | www.atourofherown.com



WOMEN'S VOICES

Thursdays at 9 a.m. • kpfz.org • Lakeport, California

A weekly talk show giving women the opportunity to speak out about issues of importance to them. Men are encouraged and welcome to participate.

Contact Aqeela El-Amin Markowski • aqeelaw@aol.com