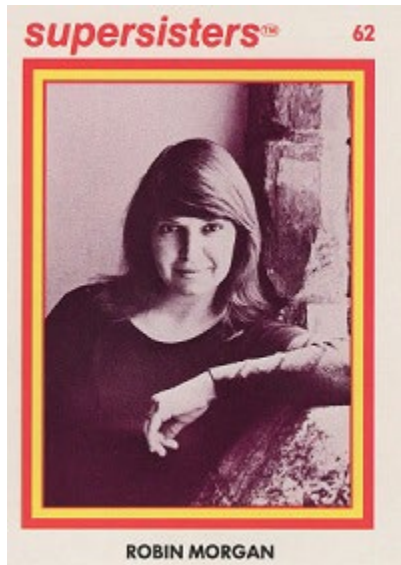


September 10, 2026

Robin Morgan: A Woman For All Seasons



In the middle of the night, last night, another feminist icon and friend, Robin Morgan, was lost to the world. I learned of her death second hand, from a report that a TV broadcaster, who while discussing the death of Gloria Steinem only days earlier, mentioned in passing—the passing of Robin.

This almost felt like a throwaway fact, an asterisk--and I took it personally. Because Robin Morgan was no asterisk! She was one of the most consequential, indispensable pillars of the modern women's movement, especially during its early formation. Her contributions were inestimable right from the beginning and they continued until her death.

She coined the word, “herstory” and created the feminist logo—a circle above a cross, filling it with a raised red fist; co-organized the Miss America pageant protests; was the Editor-in-Chief of Ms Magazine; co-founded the Women's Media Center with Jane Fonda and Gloria Steinem; co-founded the Sisterhood is Global Institute with Simone de Beauvoir; wrote the *Sisterhood is Powerful*, *Global and Forever* anthologies and much, much more. She also tutored us early feminists on how to deal with the media because she herself was so media savvy and experienced.

On hearing the news about Robin, I was caught off guard for the second time this week. I was reminded of our ancestors and how they must have felt upon learning that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson had both died on the same day.

Robin was a precocious baby, talking and reading at an early age. Although she never attended college as a matriculated student or ever graduated, she took only a scattering of

courses at Columbia University when she was 16. Her mother never allowed her to go to college.

This same mother enrolled her in baby contests when she was less than a year old. Because of her outsized vocabulary, Robin was also enlisted as a fashion commentator at runway shows. By age 3 she was modeling and the sole support of her mother and aunt. This financial pressure and responsibility defined her childhood and she resented it. By age 5, she had her own nationally syndicated radio program, called, “The Little Robin Morgan Show.” Then she was cast as a regular panelist on, “Juvenile Jury,” and started to appear on TV. At age 7, she landed a role as Dagmar in the popular show, “Mama,” (as in “I remember Mama”) and by age 8 she was a confirmed child star.

The National Federation of Women’s Clubs named her, “the ideal American girl,” which amused Robin. Less amusing was the wildly popular Robin Morgan doll, a replica of herself which freaked her out whenever she looked at it. She secretly dubbed it, “the creature.” In a steady, upward career trajectory, young Robin went on to be cast regularly in television roles and then theatrically. She was a seasoned and widely known actress by the time she reached her majority.

Robin’s background and expertise with the media became one of our movement’s secret weapons. It was among the many gifts Robin offered to our nascent group—coaching and encouraging us to do well before the cameras as increasingly those cameras sought us out.

During my many discussions with Robin about Second Wave veterans, she stoutly refused to be cited as one; she insisted the “wave” was permanent and she was “still on duty.” As indeed, she was! But she was only toying with me, being playful, messing with the meaning of words, as she always did. Whether she admitted it or not, Robin Morgan was, without question, one of the trailblazers of that remarkable cohort of Second Wave veterans!

Over the years she invited me many times to come to her apartment on Charles Street in Greenwich Village, to sit in her garden and drink iced tea. I always ducked these invites for the most shallow of reasons: I hate ice tea and I was too polite to say so.

A million regrets, Robin! One day, in the world to come, I will sit with you in a lovely garden and drink gallons of ice tea, if that’s what you want...

The only time I ever saw Robin emotionally shattered was when a love interest ended their longtime relationship. She had been traveling to New Zealand and staying there for six months of every year to spend time with this person who was a member of the New Zealand Parliament.

Upon learning about the rupture, Kate Millett and I rushed to her apartment and immediately took her off to Chinatown where we tried to comfort her with a meal that was in our estimation, the ultimate comfort food. But this time Chinese food did not do the trick as Robin sat staring at her plate and weeping, tears dripping into the noodles and egg roll. She was utterly gutted and heartbroken. It was a version of her that I had never seen before.

But Robin was Robin and ultimately, she roused herself sufficiently to turn her feelings into a poem—which is what she was always wont to do, treating experiences and feelings as writer's gold. Robin was an alchemist and she poured it all into poetry, which is how she defined herself—as a poet. I once asked her which was her truest identity: activist, feminist or writer/poet. She said that without a doubt, “poet”, was the clear answer. “But the others come in as a close second,” she added hastily.

Robin was short in stature. She was cute/pretty—a fiery warrior with a splash of blond hair, exploding with brains and mischief. Her name, Robin, was androgynous, as she was.

And what a wonderful wordsmith! Her command of language and the erudition and style with which she shaped her sentences blew me away. Ever a sucker for those who had this facility, Robin had me right from the jump by writing and speaking the King's English with eloquence, delivered in that dramatic, actress-y voice of hers. It was not just about style, but content too. In truth, she scared me a little with her formidable, intimidating intelligence when we discussed ideas, triggering a natural anxiety in me to hold up my end of the discourse. But during those conversations, challenging as they often were, I became smarter than I actually am.

Robin worried constantly about the universe; others thought she wanted to blow it up. She was not just a radical feminist; but also a contradiction, a unicorn. Dystopian, but also a “hopeholic,” as Gloria Steinem would say of her, Robin was everywhere, all at once....

I remember her remarkable, powerful piece, “*Goodbye to All That*,” written and circulated in Spring 1970, in which she skewers and renounces the male far left. It was early days in our movement. We were all volunteers then, very small in number and we had available to us only the crudest technology. In my mind's eye, I still see us with our staplers and piles of cheap copy paper at the ready, hand cranking an unwieldy contraption called a Rexograph machine as we reproduced Robin's article which had set us on fire. It was what we did with other writings we deemed important, taking what were essentially pamphlets and becoming our own version of Thomas Paine.

Robin came to feminism, as many of our group did, from the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements. Eventually, she took aim at the female far left too.

Robin and Gloria are gone now. Most of my sister comrades and pioneers too. Almost all have left the stage. But once upon a time we were all *there*, groping towards progress. I was privileged to be in the company of the best minds of our generation, some of us damaged, many of us self-righteous and judgmental, most of us altruistic. Never mind that we were—all of us—also outlaws taking on the world.

They are only now a parade of shadows as these beloved—now departed—friends invade my thoughts, calling to me in pain and pleasure, whispering distant memories of them in the full bloom of their promise and power.

I still see and hear their young, hopeful faces and voices as they pass into eternity and into the beating heart of history.

Robin Morgan's story is published in our archives and website (Veteranfeministsofamerica.org) under our Pioneer Histories Project. [Click here](#) to access her story in our Collection.

Eleanor Pam, President

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