

# Access America

## Women of Influence

JEANNETTE RANKIN WAS THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO THE U.S. CONGRESS ON APRIL 2, 1917



*Jeannette Rankin addresses a rally at Union Square, New York, September 1924. (FPG/Getty Images)*

Jeannette Rankin took her seat in the U.S. House of Representatives as the first woman to be elected

to either chamber - on April 2, 1917. It would be another three years before women throughout the United States earned the right to vote.

Rankin, born in Montana, was an energetic young woman with a zest for politics and a lifelong devotion to feminist and pacifist causes. With a degree from the New York School of Philanthropy (later Columbia University's School of Social Work), she became a social worker in Seattle, in Washington State. To gain first-hand knowledge of her clients' condition, she worked for a while as a seamstress. Rankin joined

**"Men and women are like right and left hands; it doesn't make sense not to use both."**

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the 1910 suffrage drive in Washington and led the successful campaign in 1914 for women's suffrage in Montana. The new women voters in Montana helped Rankin become one of the few Republicans elected to Congress in 1916.

Seeing it as her "special duty" to speak for American women, she helped draft legislation helping women and children and supported a constitutional amendment

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### From the Ambassador

This month, as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "We pay tribute to women of courage around the world and hold them up as examples of hope, strength, and compassion." International Women's Day, March 8, reminds us that empowerment of women is intrinsic to promoting peace, equality and dignity for all.

In Tunisia, women have been responsible for much of the progress and prosperity of this country. As the U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia, I am pleased to serve in a country that has long sought to educate, encourage, and employ the female half of its population.

We dedicate this issue of ACCESS AMERICA to "our daughters and granddaughters" breaking that "marble ceiling," as our newly elected speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, declared when she convened the 110th Congress in January 2007. Her story and that of successful women throughout Tunisia and the United States serve as an inspiration to us all.

—Ambassador Robert F. Godec

## IRC Tips

IRC Director Khaled Ben Bhouzid and his team suggest these resources on Women's History Month, not to mention all the other resources in the IRC collection.

### Books

- *Food for our grandmothers : writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian feminists*, edited by Joanna Kadi, Boston, MA: South End Press, c1994.
- *Women's rights in the United States : a documentary history*, edited by Winston E. Langley and Vivian C. Fox, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.
- *Women's rights on trial : 101 historic trials from Anne Hutchinson to the Virginia Military Institute cadets*, Elizabeth Frost-Knappman and Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, Detroit, MI: Gale, c1997.

### Films

- *Women with Clout*  
English, 30', PAL, Hollywood Chronicles 112: 1995  
"From the very beginning the film business offered great opportunities for enterprising women..."
- *The speeches of famous women from suffragette to senator*  
English, 56' minutes, 1995  
"...Traces the progression of the women's movement from its earliest days to the present..."

### Reference databases

- *Twayne's Women Authors*  
"...Contains the complete text of 135 books on women authors, including novelists, short story writers, poets playwrights, critics, and essayists from the 17th century to the present."
- *Women in America*  
"...Features a host of primary source materials, images, letters, journals, maps, photographs, drawings, documents, essays, and audio clips of folk songs and speeches."
- *Women's Rights*  
"...Chronicles the struggle for equality through articles, captioned photographs, biographies, audio recordings, narration, and much more."

### Websites

- Sophia Smith Collection  
<http://www.smith.edu/libraries/ssc/home.html>
- The History of Women's Suffrage in America  
<http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/woman/main.html>
- Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1830-1930  
<http://womhist.binghamton.edu>

*Click to follow these links if you are reading the electronic version of this newsletter.*

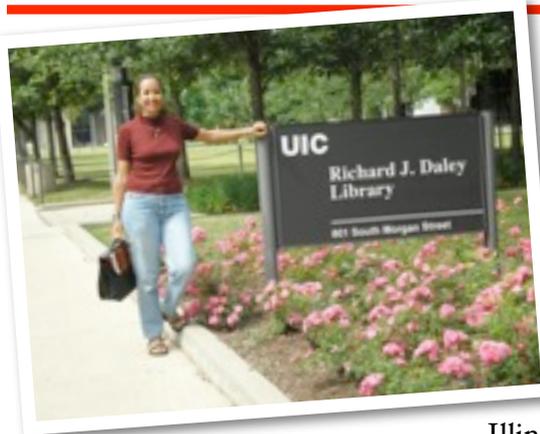
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to give women the right to vote. She did not stay in Congress long enough to see suffrage extended to all American women in 1920, however. Voters rejected her bid to become a senator in 1918, probably because of her vote against U.S. entry into the First World War a year earlier.

Rankin returned to social work and to reform organizations, such as the National Consumers' League, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and in 1919 - attended the Second International Congress of Women in Zurich. Re-elected to Congress in 1940, she cast the only vote in Congress against war on Japan after the attack on Pearl Harbor. With her political career ended by this unpopular vote, Rankin devoted the rest of her life to her favorite causes. At age 86, for instance, she participated in the March of Washington opposing the Vietnam War.

Jeannette Rankin understood the importance of engaging women's talents and expertise to build better societies. "Men and women are like right and left hands; it doesn't make sense not to use both," she said. In her will, she left money to ensure that women could get an education to help improve society. The Jeannette Rankin Foundation, one of the many legacies of this determined and committed American, has been providing educational opportunity to low-income women since it was chartered in 1976.

*Adapted from a publication by author Susan Ware titled *Women of Influence. The Washington File*, a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>.*



# Alumni Spotlight

**Name:** Raja Jendoubi

**Program:** Study of the United States Institute

**Duration:** 6 weeks

**City you're from in Tunisia:** Gammarth, Tunis

**City/state where you lived in the U.S.:** Chicago, Illinois

**Your fondest memory of the U.S.:** My fondest memories are of when I first arrived, the warm and well-organized welcome party at the Green Dolphin restaurant in Chicago, and the major league baseball game my colleagues and I attended where the Chicago White Sox took on the Philadelphia Phillies, and my visit to Durango, a small Western cowboy town in Colorado.

**The most important things you learned from your experience:** The most important thing I learned from my experience is how my colleagues and I (English teachers) have so much in common in every aspect of our lives even though we come from different places around the world with different cultures. I learned that as a teacher of English, you can never keep the language in isolation; the language is very much influenced by the culture and history of the people who speak it.

**Your advice for someone thinking about participating in the program:** My advice to any one thinking about joining this program is that they should not hesitate in applying. Passing on this great opportunity on would be a mistake. I benefited so much from it, not only as an instructor of the English language, but also as an individual seeking a wide range of knowledge, experience, and opportunities to better live my life and applying it towards the future of not only me but my students as well.

**What you will most miss about the U.S.:** I will truly miss the learning process and skills that a major American university has to offer. The University of Illinois at Chicago's faculty, staff, and students, too, I will never forget. The huge library at the university, I must say, I will especially miss the most. On a cultural and fun level, I will definitely miss going to the Green Mill, an upbeat jazz bar located in downtown Chicago and also eating Mexican food and drinking Tequilas during happy hour.

**Briefly describe your experience:** I spent 4 weeks in Chicago with 29 teachers from all around the world. We attended several different classes at the University of Illinois and participated in many extra-curricular activities. Every single day was exciting and new for me. We had so much fun on our two week tour of the "West". We started out in Albuquerque New Mexico and took Route 66 all the way to the highlight of our trip, the lights and casinos of Las Vegas Nevada. It was with all my heart, a rich, exciting, unbelievable, and unforgettable life time experience. The chance I was given not only improved my teaching skills but really left a positive image in my mind to remember forever.

## FSI Student Leads Roundtable on U.S. Media

On March 7, 2007, Foreign Service Officer Mark Schapiro, an Arabic-language student in Tunis, led a roundtable discussion on "U.S. Media and Current Challenges" with 27 students and faculty from the Higher Institute of Human Sciences of Tunis. Schapiro offered his insight into the emerging role of the "New Media" such as blogs and the Internet, which now serve as a continuous check and balance on the "Fourth Estate". Schapiro challenged the students to look at the media as corporations and adopt a critical mindset necessary to filter the news.



*Mark Schapiro leads the discussion.*

# “I have a dream”

ARS SPEAKER SHELDON AUSTIN ENGAGES STUDENTS ON THE LEGACY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.*

In celebration of African-American History month, ARS speaker Sheldon Austin engaged a group of fifty 4th year English students from the Higher Institute of Human Sciences of Tunis in a live Digital Video Conference discussion on Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech on February 28, 2007.

After giving a historical overview of the Civil Rights Movement, Austin

focused on aspects of King’s speech that sparked support for the Civil Rights legislation which later established the legal framework for racial equality in the United States. Austin answered students’ pointed questions on contemporary issues like affirmative action and the role of non-violent resistance, highlighting the crucial role which women like Rosa Parks played in advancing the Civil Rights Movement and the interconnected fortunes of African-Americans and women in their struggles for equality.

To participate in this program and for more information, or to suggest another possible

## March Events

*All these events take place at the American Corner*

### 14 Wednesday 11:00 AM

Open general orientation with a group of Yale students

### 21 Wednesday 2:00 PM

Special information session with Yale students

### 28 Wednesday 10:00 AM

Workshop: “How to write a Statement of Purpose”

### 28 Wednesday 5:00-6:00 PM

English story time for kids ages 6-9 (Permission slips to be signed by parents prior to the March 28)

### 30 Friday 2:00 PM

Screening of the film “Erin Brockovich” (2000) followed by discussion led by Cultural Affairs Officer Ellen Bienstock.

### All month

Fridays 3:30-3:30 PM

**Free English Fridays!** This month come chat with U.S. Embassy interns Antoine Sleiman and Ryan Farha.

*American Corner at AMIDEAST*

*22, rue Al Amine Al Abassi, Cité des Jardins, 1002 Tunis-Belvédère, tel. 71-790-563 ext. 106*

program, please contact English Teaching Program Assistant Sami Saaied at 71-107-259 or [saaieds@state.gov](mailto:saaieds@state.gov).

## Calling all Fulbright Alumni

Do you remember your Fulbright days? The Department of State does! If you participated in any of the following programs than we’re looking for you!

**Scholars in Residence (SIR) • Access to the Muslim World • American Studies Institutes Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship • Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA)**

Join us for a Fulbright Alumni Meeting on Wednesday, March 28, 2007 at 5:30 PM at the U.S. Embassy and become an active alumni member. We can’t wait to see you there! For more information please contact Faouzia Ben Khedher at 71-107-438 or [benkhedherf@state.gov](mailto:benkhedherf@state.gov)



### The American Center

U.S. Embassy Tunis, Public Affairs Section

Les Berges du Lac, 1053 TUNIS, Tunisia. tel. +216 71-107-000, fax +216 71-963-263

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