



Danika Juhl

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Essay Winner 7th-9th grades

Inspired by trailblazer Gladys Pyle

Hi, my name is Danika Juhl and I want to tell you about one woman in history that helped change the world dramatically and made the world a better place for women in the future and past. But before I do, I just want to say that no matter your age, race, or gender, you have the right to be yourself and stand up for what is right. You don't know what could happen if you stood up for what is right. You could change things in the future just like Gladys Pyle did.

Now let me tell you how she changed history for women. Gladys Pyle was destined to blaze trails. Born to politically active parents – a father who served as state attorney general and a suffragist mother, Mamie – Pyle followed in her mother's footsteps, helping women win the right to vote in South Dakota in 1918 and with passage of the 19th Amendment, giving women the vote nationally in 1920.

She then proceeded to set firsts: First woman elected to the South Dakota Legislature in 1922; first secretary of state in 1926; the first woman allowed on the floor of New York Curb Market – later renamed the American Stock Exchange – while serving as the secretary of the South Dakota Securities Commission; and in 1938, the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate without previously having been appointed and the first Republican ever. During her brief spell in the Senate – she served until January 1939, to fill the remaining term of Peter Norbeck, who died in office – she persuaded Norwegian officials to have the crown prince and princess of Norway visit South Dakota in 1939.

In 1940, Pyle became the first woman to nominate a presidential candidate during the Republican convention in Philadelphia. And in 1947, she joined five other women to become the first jurors in South Dakota history. This proves my point that women anywhere in the world can move history and make it a better place to be a woman. There are many more women who have changed the lives of many, but Gladys Pyle stuck out the most to me.

I wanted to tell you about her because she can teach many young women that you are powerful and to stand up for what you believe in and fight for the right of every woman. We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, so passionate they can be rational, and so disciplined they can be free.

I believe that girls are capable of doing everything men are capable to do. Sometimes they have more imagination than men. That is why if all women join together than can change the world and make it a better place so everyone, no matter your race, or gender, can be free. I am not saying that I wish women have more power than men, but what I am wishing is that women of all ages and women all around the world realize that you are powerful enough to be the best of the best. You just gotta take a jump and go for it.