

Women's History Month tribute: Shirley Chisholm



JPAYE

Some may already know that this Brooklyn native is the first black woman elected to Congress. Others may perused the Shirley Chisholm Center for Research on Women at Brooklyn College. Before people were hashtagging #ImWithHer, there was another woman who ran for president: Shirley Chisholm. In 1972, Chisholm won approximately 10 percent of votes in the primaries as the [first black woman to run for president](#). Although America still has not seen a female president, Chisholm's legacy lives on. Here are 10 fun facts about her.

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1. In Chisholm's college years, she ran a day care center and helped to create childhood education programs. (Source: Haymarket Books "[101 Changemakers](#)")
2. Chisholm was the only member of Congress to call for activist Angela Davis to be released when the Black Panther member was facing murder charges. Davis was considered a suspect during the August 7, 1970 prison incident involving Jonathan Jackson, the younger brother of George Jackson, who was on trial in the Marin County Courthouse. (Sources: [BlackPast.org](#), Haymarket Books "[101 Changemakers](#)")
3. Chisholm helped to form a group called African-American Women for Reproductive Freedom that would fight for African-American women to have an easier time accessing birth control and abortion. (Sources: Haymarket Books "[101 Changemakers](#)," [Planned Parenthood Action](#))
4. President Barack H. Obama gave Chisholm a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, in 2015 for her educational achievements, political work and activism. Chisholm passed away at the age of 80 on New Year's Day in 2005. (Sources: [Mount Holyoke College: College Street Journal](#), Haymarket Books "[101 Changemakers](#)," [Obama White House Archives](#))
5. She served seven terms in the House of Representatives from 1968 to 1985. After she finished serving her last term, she went on to become a college professor at Mount Holyoke College. (Sources: Haymarket Books "[101 Changemakers](#)," [Obama White House Archives](#))

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6. After graduating from Brooklyn College in 1946, Chisholm also earned a master's degree in elementary education from Columbia University. (Source: [Biography.com](https://www.biography.com))

7. Chisholm became one of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1969. (Source: [Biography.com](https://www.biography.com))

8. She is the author of two books: "Unbought and Unbossed" (1970) and "The Good Fight" (1973). (Source: [Biography.com](https://www.biography.com))

9. Chisholm was vehemently against the draft and advocated for a reduction in defense spending. (Source:

9. Chisholm was vehemently against the draft and advocated for a reduction in defense spending. (Source: [History.com](#), [National Women's Hall of Fame](#))

10. Media, supporters and even her foes were reportedly perplexed when she visited segregationist George Wallace in the hospital after he was shot during a campaign appearance in Laurel, Maryland. Chisholm rationalized her visit as a form of democracy and being able to respect opposing opinions. (Source: [The Atlantic](#))

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Shamontiel L. Vaughn compiled this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).

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