



Gloria Steinem attends the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017 in Washington, DC.
(Photo by Noam Galai/WireImage)

Honor Life of Gloria Steinem (1934-2026) 'By Organizing' for Rights, Equality, and Freedom

"Thank you, Gloria, for showing the world what it means to speak up for women's equality."

By Jon Queally,
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Progressive advocates, lawmakers, veteran journalists, labor leaders, and champions of feminism on Thursday are mourning the death of trailblazing women's rights activist and author Gloria Steinem, who has passed away at the age of 92.

Steinem, regarded as an icon of the second-wave feminism that emerged in the 1960s and 70s and co-founder of *Ms. Magazine*, was known for decades as a leading voice on reproductive rights, women's equality at work, and gender equity across society.

According to her representatives, Steinem died Wednesday at her home in New York City, surrounded by loved ones. An exact cause of death was not given.

"It is a moment of remembrance and celebration of this extraordinary woman. And it is, too, a moment of reflection." —Agnes Callamard, *Amnesty International*

Gloria's near-century on earth was years well-lived, and she continued working for equality until the very end," read a message posted to her *Instagram* account.

"Gloria's greatest gift was her ability to listen to

others, to make others feel seen and heard," the message continued. "Her words, actions, and example gave people permission to be their truest selves. Gloria lived true to her independent spirit, always with curiosity and a great sense of humor."

"Oh no," declared Agnes Callamard, secretary general of *Amnesty International*, upon learning of Steinem's passing.

"It is a moment of remembrance and celebration of this extraordinary woman. And it is, too, a moment of reflection," Callamard said. "The fight for gender justice and women's equality is at a critical juncture. The advancements of the last decades are attacked, threatened, mocked. We resist, fight back, build anew."

The progressive advocacy group *Our Revolution* said that Gloria Steinem "understood that liberation is not something handed down from the powerful. It is something ordinary people organize and fight for."

For more than 50 years, the group added, "she fought for women to have power over our bodies, our work,

our lives and our futures. And she understood that the struggle for women's liberation could never be separated from the struggles for racial justice, economic justice and human dignity. At a moment when women's rights and fundamental freedoms are once again under attack, the best way we can honor Gloria is not simply by remembering her. It is by organizing. Rest in power, Gloria Steinem."

According to the *New York Times*: Steinem helped usher in sweeping cultural transformations across virtually every facet of American life, from the boardroom to the courtroom to the bedroom.

For more than half a century, she personified the women's movement and became its most enduring symbol; her tinted aviator glasses and curtain of streaked-blond hair parted in the center made her one of the most recognizable women in the world.

A prolific writer, Steinem started her career as a journalist in the 60s and in 1972 she co-founded *Ms. Magazine*, a publication focused on women's issues with the idea of translating "a movement into a magazine."

Steinem, wrote *CNN*'s chief international anchor Christiane Amanpour, "will go down in history as one of the most important activists of all time, leading a movement for the equality of half the world: its women."

"She lived a long and passionate life dedicated to this vital and basic cause," Amanpour continued. "She did it with intellectual precision, emotional awareness, humor and beauty. May she rest in peace and may the cause thrive."

In a video posted to social media, Rep. Becca Balint (D-Vt.) said that Steinem "always understood that gender equality was absolutely bound up with economic equality and racial justice and that has to continue to be our North Star."

In 2017, after the first election of President Donald Trump, Steinem was one of the key leaders behind the *Women's March*, which kicked off opposition to the far-right Republican, with marches in cities nationwide that helped galvanize resistance to the destructive policies to come.

At the time, Steinem warned that Trump's arrival in the White House represented "disaster and a danger," but added that the upside of his ascendancy could be the force brought together to galvanize against him.

"He's made us see that everything is connected," she said. "I'm a hope-aholic, nonetheless. I feel we're beginning to approach the end of one structure and the beginning of another. It's a time of both danger and possibilities."

As the Associated Press reports: On Jan. 21, 2017, when hundreds of thousands of women gathered in Washington in their pink "pussy hats" for the historic *Women's March*, it surprised nobody that the keynote speaker, and the most rousing, was Steinem.

"We are linked," she told the crowd. "And this is a day that will change us forever because we are together."

For many women, Steinem was the galvanizing voice that day. She would go on to advocate fiercely. But, though many saw her as a singular figure in history, she often liked to say that if she hadn't come along, someone else would have accomplished the same things.

By the same token, she said, it was less important that younger people listen to her, and more important that they listen to themselves.

"The primary thing is not that they know who I am," she said, "but that they know who THEY are."

As news of Steinem's passing spread on Thursday, others offered their reflections on her life and accomplishments.

"Thank you, Gloria, for showing the world what it means to speak up for women's equality," said the *National Organization for Women (NOW)* in a statement. "Thank you for fighting for our rights so that every woman and every person can live with dignity, freedom, and equality."

Democratic New York State Rep. Jessica Ramos said Steinem "spent her life refusing to accept a world where women were expected to settle for less."

"She organized, challenged power, and helped turn women's equality into a movement that changed America," Ramos said. "We honor her legacy by refusing to go backward."

"Gloria Steinem did not simply advocate for women; she changed what women believed was possible," said Victoria Mancinelli, a member of the labor movement in Canada, in response to news of Steinem's death.

"She confronted a world that expected women to remain quiet, accept less, and wait patiently for progress. Gloria refused. Through her journalism, activism, and unrelenting pursuit of equality, she helped transform deeply personal struggles into a powerful collective movement and forced institutions to recognize women as leaders, decision-makers, and agents of change."



BIO: Jon Queally is managing editor of *Common Dreams* whose work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.