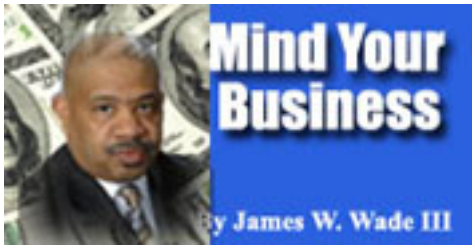

Are you Minding your Business?

Women in 'business' history

As we enter in the month of March, it's time to honor Women History Month. So many women have made huge contributions to our everyday life including my mother.

Even with her not being a high profile person in the public's eyes, she was the rock and teacher in my life. So if you realize your mother was there for you, through thick and thin, make sure you honor her not only this month but every day.

Women's History Month, celebrated annually worldwide, highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. It is celebrated during March in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, corresponding with International Women's Day on March 8.

Women's History Month had its origins as a national celebration in 1981 when Congress passed Pub. L. 97-28 which authorized and requested the president to proclaim the week beginning March 7, 1982 as Women's History Week.

Throughout the next five years, Congress continued to pass joint resolutions designating a week in March as Women's History Week. In 1987, after being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, Congress passed Pub. L. 100-9 which designated the month of March 1987 as Women's History Month. Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the president to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month.

Since 1995, Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama have issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as “Women’s History Month.”

Doing some research, I learned that interest in women’s issues and history blossomed in the 1960s.

By the 1970s, there was a growing sense by many women that history as taught in school and especially in grade school and high school was incomplete in telling “her story” as well. In theUnited States, calls for inclusion of Black Americans and Native Americans helped some women realize they were invisible in most history courses.

And so in the 1970s, many universities began to include the fields of women’s history and the broader field of women’s studies.

In 1978, inCalifornia, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women began a Women’s History Week celebration. The response was positive. Schools began to host their own Women’s History Week programs. The next year, leaders from theCaliforniagroup shared their project at a Women’s History Institute atSarahLawrenceCollege. Other participants not only determined to begin their own local Women’s History Week projects but agreed to support an effort to have Congress declare a national Women’s History Week.

The purpose of Women’s History Month is to increase consciousness and knowledge of women’s history, to take one month of the year to remember the contributions of notable and ordinary women, in hopes that the day will soon come when it’s impossible to teach or learn history without remembering these contributions.

Everyday at work, I see Connie Harper, a legend for all she has done in making the paper run. But I have to give credit to Rhonda Crowder, who each week gives the paper that grammatical touch.

The enterprising spirit of Black women remains to be a scope we should praises. From the turn of the 20th century, to present day, Black women have made great strides in the business world taking their place in history throughout the business world.

Today, while we have so many great hair care business owners and stylists, how could we not think about Madame C.J. Walker?

Even with many talking about Madame CJ Walker in Black History Month, I can't help but to say something about her in Women's History Month in the business section. Madam C.J.Walker was an American entrepreneur and philanthropist , regarded as the first female self made millionaire inAmerica. She made her fortune by developing and marketing a successful line of beauty and hair products for Black women under the company she founded, Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company.

Now compared to her in this day and age would be Oprah Winfrey. **Winfrey** is among the top women entrepreneurs as well as one of the top talk show hosts. Even with her own network, she's in demand. Since 1986, she has transformed
Harpo Inc.
into a multimedia conglomerate with footprints in television, print, radio, and film. As a result, this dynamo represents one of the few Black billionaires inAmerica.

Money is not the defining factor in taking your place in Women's History for me. Just having certain skill sets can have you rise to the top of what you do in the world. It's not about a title, it's about knowledge.

The old saying knowledge is power, not control. It takes courage and knowledge to achieve the dream of becoming CEO of a top company like Xerox. Ursula Burns has achieved that role when, in 2009, she was named CEO and assumed the role of chairman in May.

Burns has become the first African American woman to lead one of the nation's largest publicly traded companies. She's now taking the $22 billion company to the next level by integrating its largest acquisition, Affiliated Computer Services, into the Xerox fold.

Rosalind Brewer became Sam's Club's CEO and president, breaking the glass ceiling among Black Women. I will close by saying how proud I am of my first lady the now 48-year-old Michelle Obama, once Michelle Robinson, growing up to marry the first Black president of the United States.

Women has always had their place in history now matter how you look at it and I salute all women for making life possible.

Follow me on twitter @JimmyWadeIII

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Comments and questions are welcome but, because of the volume of mail, personal responses are not always possible. Please note that comments or questions may be used in a future column.