



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
RADCLIFFE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Press Announcement
October 5, 2002

**The Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library
and the National Heritage Museum
Announce the National Tour of**

Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business

October 5, 2002, through January 9, 2005

The Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and the National Heritage Museum in Lexington, Mass., announce a major national exhibition that reinterprets the history of American women and of American business. *Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business* tells the compelling story of American women in business from the colonial era to the present.

The exhibition premieres at the National Heritage Museum, October 5, 2002, through February 23, 2003, and then continues on a national tour to:

- 🕒 New-York Historical Society (March 25, 2003–June 1, 2003)
- 🕒 Atlanta History Center (July 4, 2003–Sept. 21, 2003)
- 🕒 National Museum of Women in the Arts (Oct. 24, 2003–Feb. 29, 2004)
(in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History)
- 🕒 Los Angeles Public Library (May 8, 2004–Sept. 19, 2004)
- 🕒 Detroit Historical Museum (Oct. 16, 2004–Jan. 9, 2005)

Note: The tour schedule is subject to change. For schedule details and additional information about the exhibit, please visit www.enterprisingwomenexhibit.org.

Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business is made possible by generous support from Ford Motor Company and AT&T. Additional support is provided by the Cabot Family Charitable Trust and in-kind support from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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Enterprising Women brings to life the stories of some 40 intriguing women who helped shape the landscape of American business. Artifacts and costumes, diaries and letters, business and legal documents, photographs and paper ephemera, audio recordings, and interactive technology reveal the trials and triumphs of this diverse group of inventors, innovators and trendsetters.

The exhibition tells a saga grand in sweep and rich in details. Organized into five historic sections and enhanced by interactive and evocative settings, such as an 18th-century print shop, a 19th-century dressmaking shop, a turn-of-the-century beauty parlor and a 20th-century corporate office, *Enterprising Women* illuminates and personalizes the nation's transformation from an agricultural and household economy to one influenced by industrialization, the rise of big business, the emergence of consumer culture and the communications-technology revolution. Along the way, the exhibition highlights the ways in which race, class, ethnicity, geography, generation and social upheaval infused the experiences of women in business.

"I am delighted that the Radcliffe Institute has organized this groundbreaking exhibition," said Drew Gilpin Faust, dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and professor of history at Harvard University. "*Enterprising Women* will transform understanding of American business history by presenting the experiences of women who overcame daunting obstacles to become entrepreneurs. These women of the past have left an important legacy for the American women of today, who own more than 7.7 million firms, representing 40 percent of businesses operating in the United States at the opening of the 21st century."

According to Jane Knowles, project director for *Enterprising Women* and archivist for the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library, "This exhibition is the first to combine the whole sweep of women's entrepreneurial activity from Mary Katharine Goddard, printer of the first copies of the Declaration of Independence with signatures included, to Katharine Graham, publisher of the Pentagon Papers and owner of *The Washington Post*."

"It is a distinct pleasure for the museum to team with the Radcliffe Institute in the development and realization of this innovative and important project," said John H. Ott, executive director of the National Heritage Museum. "This exhibition is steeped in the great themes of our country's history, and will present a wealth of material from period artifacts to state-of-the-art multimedia presentations. It is a privilege for us to premiere the exhibition and to collaborate with the Schlesinger Library on this exciting endeavor."

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"Ford Motor Company is honored to participate in this extraordinary celebration of the diversity of our country's proud tradition of entrepreneurship," said Sandra E. Ulsh, President, Ford Motor Company Fund. "At Ford, we are committed to preserving our country's social and cultural history for the education and enjoyment of generations to come. We are proud to partner with the Radcliffe Institute and the National Heritage Museum to bring this remarkable presentation of the little-known stories of the businesswomen of America to a wide national audience."

"The people of AT&T are delighted to recognize past and present enterprising women through our support of this major exhibition," said Connie Weaver, AT&T Executive Vice President and President of the AT&T Foundation. "By telling the story of women in American businesses from the Colonial Era to the Millennium, *Enterprising Women* will help to illustrate the role that women have played in business throughout our history. We congratulate the people of the Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study for bringing these important stories to millions of Americans."

An interactive Web site at [www.enterprisingwomenexhibit.org](http://www.enterprisingwomenexhibit.org) and an illustrated book, *Enterprising Women* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002) accompany the exhibition, as does a full range of educational and public programming, including lectures, teacher workshops, oral history initiatives and lesson plans for middle and high school students.

In recognition of the important new scholarship and research presented in *Enterprising Women*, a National Honorary Patrons Committee has been created to increase awareness of the exhibition's extraordinary story of American businesswomen.

### ***Enterprising Women Highlights:***

- 🕒 **Mary Katharine Goddard**, respected revolutionary war publisher and postmistress. Objects on display will include an original Declaration of Independence printed by Goddard (1777), broadsides and almanacs, her appointment as postmistress and copies of newspapers that she published.
- 🕒 **Eliza Lucas Pinckney**, who cultivated indigo into a major cash crop in colonial South Carolina and experimented with silk culture. Objects on display will include period costume items woven from silk cultivated on her plantations, period samples of indigo and 18<sup>th</sup>-century fabrics printed and dyed with indigo.
- 🕒 Victorian entrepreneurs like **Rebecca Webb Lukens**, who took over her deceased husband's iron works and became the only woman iron manufacturer of the era. Objects on display will include the portrait of Rebecca Lukens holding an account book in one hand and the proverbial "purse strings" in the other, a model of the Brandywine Iron Works, facsimiles of her letters and court documents showing how a young, widowed mother became an entrepreneur.
- 🕒 **Martha J. Coston**, inventor of the Pyrotechnic Night Signal. Using her late husband's experiments and scientific contacts, she perfected the night flare and sold it to the government, giving naval superiority to the North in the Civil War. Objects will include her patents, her biography, *A Signal Success*, an original Coston flare and *Leslie's Illustrated News* showing the flare used in the successful rescue of the crew of the ironclad *Monitor*.
- 🕒 **Lydia Pinkham**, who turned a private herbal recipe for "female complaints" into a thriving family business. A reconstructed pharmacy window will display medicine bottles, pills, potions and herbs Pinkham used to capitalize on women's desire to avoid doctors and take control of their own health.
- 🕒 Beauty and fashion pioneers like **Madam C. J. Walker**, **Elizabeth Arden** and **Hattie Carnegie**, each of whom went from rags to riches marketing cosmetics and clothing to an increasingly diverse consumer. Objects will include photographs of Madam C. J. Walker at the wheel of her Model-A Ford and her mansion at Irvington-on-Hudson, as well as curling irons, creams and powders. Elizabeth Arden will be represented by an array of cosmetics products, patents for devices to tone facial muscles and baggy eyes, ads and a sketch of how to cut Mamie Eisenhower's famous bangs. Carnegie's renowned "Little Carnegie suits," cocktail dresses and formal wear, hats and a Korean War-era WAC uniform will enhance this section on the beauty and cosmetics industries.
- 🕒 **Olive Ann Beech**, co-founder with her husband of Beech Aircraft, a pioneering airplane manufacturer spanning the decades from aviation's barnstorming infancy to the aero-space age. Objects will include a re-creation of her office with executive desk, furnishings, stationery and memos, aviation industry awards, model planes and a designer (Galanos) suit.
- 🕒 Polish immigrant **Ruth Handler**, co-founder of Mattel Toy Co., and Nearly Me, the firm Handler later established to market prostheses to fellow breast-cancer survivors. Objects on display will include "Barbie" and her accoutrements.
- 🕒 New economy leaders are well represented and include **Meg Whitman**, CEO of the on-line auction company eBay Inc., and the first woman to head an e-commerce site; **Oprah Winfrey**,

one of the most influential people in popular culture by virtue of her talk show and media empire; and **Linda G. Alvarado**, founder and CEO of a major construction company.

*Enterprising Women* showcases women's considerable contributions to the American success story. "Back in the 1920s when president Calvin Coolidge declared that the chief business of the American people is business, he was not thinking about women. But women's business has always been part of America's business," said Virginia G. Drachman, the Arthur Jr. and Lenore Stern Professor of American History at Tufts University, former Radcliffe fellow, and author of the book *Enterprising Women* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002), which accompanies the exhibition. "Whether they inherited or initiated their businesses, whether they marketed to women or to the general public, enterprising women have contributed to the vitality of the nation from its inception to the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

*Enterprising Women* marks the first time that major themes of women's history — work and family, gender and professional identity, femininity and women's "proper place," and sex discrimination — are woven into the fabric of business history. The exhibition will invite visitors to examine the change and continuity in the definitions and material symbols of womanhood, ownership and entrepreneurial success over time.

"As I have traveled across the country seeking artifacts and documents for *Enterprising Women*," said Edith Mayo, curator of the exhibition, "I have been greeted with great enthusiasm for the project. Over 75 museums, archives, libraries, private collectors and descendants have shown enormous generosity in lending their priceless collections. For the first time, all these materials will be brought together in one exhibition, and lenders are delighted that the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library and the National Heritage Museum are bringing the stories of these extraordinary women to national attention. *Enterprising Women* will dramatically alter the public perception of women's impact on the nation's economy."

Whether enterprising women excelled in the arena of male-dominated industry or carved out their own business sphere, they have been well-suited to lives of competition and capitalism. As Drachman writes, the *Enterprising Women* exhibition is

**...a story of women who understood the value of a good idea, found the capital to finance it, assembled the team to implement it, launched the advertising campaign to market it, and ultimately built a profitable enterprise. It is a story of women who negotiated with suppliers, sellers, and employees, who target-ed and cultivated their clientele, who kept up with the latest trends, and who were firmly planted in the world of business and finance. It is a story of women who believed in the power of individualism, ingenuity, and hard work; who were motivated by the promise of economic opportunity and up-ward mobility; who were willing to take a risk; and who believed that success was possible for anyone with creativity, ambition, courage, and commitment. It is a story of the possibilities and the limits of the American dream. It is America's story.**

## Organizing Institutions

**The Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University**, the primary organizer of *Enterprising Women*, is a national resource open to all. Established in 1943, the Schlesinger is well known for its collections on the history of American women, possessing 70,000 volumes and 13,000 feet of manuscripts and attracting scholars from all over the world. The Library's holdings of published and unpublished sources document the range of issues, organizations and activities — from social reform movements through culinary history — in which women have been central since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For more information, visit [www.radcliffe.edu/schles](http://www.radcliffe.edu/schles)

**The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University**, formed in 1999 when Radcliffe College merged with Harvard University, is a scholarly community dedicated to the creation, dissemination and support of new knowledge. At the Radcliffe Institute, individuals pursue advanced work across a wide range of academic disciplines, professions and creative arts. Within this broad purpose, the Radcliffe Institute sustains a continuing commitment to the study of women, gender and society. For more information, visit [www.radcliffe.edu](http://www.radcliffe.edu).

**The National Heritage Museum** is dedicated to presenting exhibitions on a wide variety of topics in American history and popular culture. The museum is supported by the Scottish Rite Freemasons in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States. The National Heritage Museum is located at 33 Marrett Road in Lexington, at the corner of Route 2A and Massachusetts Avenue. Hours are Monday through Saturday, from 10 am–5 pm, and Sunday, noon–5 pm. Admission and parking are free. For further information contact the museum at 781-861-6559 or visit [www.monh.org](http://www.monh.org).

## Sponsors

**Ford Motor Company's** support of *Enterprising Women* is part of the company's longstanding commitment to the arts. Ford is committed to creating opportunities that stimulate creativity and promote cultural diversity, and since its founding in 1903, has been supporting programs that enhance and enrich the communities where its employees live and work nationwide. In 2002, Ford is supporting numerous exhibitions that celebrate the diversity of roles women have undertaken throughout the centuries, including *Women Who Ruled: Queens, Goddesses, Amazons 1500–1650* at the University of Michigan Museum of Art; *Places of their Own: Emily Carr, Georgia O'Keeffe and Frida Kahlo* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts; and the national tour of *Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business*. Ford is dedicated to supporting exhibitions that recognize the contributions women have made to our culture and our communities throughout our country's history. For more information on *Enterprising Women* and other exhibitions and programs funded by Ford, visit [www.ford.com](http://www.ford.com).

For more than 125 years, **AT&T** (NYSE "T") has been known for unparalleled quality and reliability in communications. Backed by the research and development capabilities of AT&T Labs, the company is a global leader in local, long distance, Internet and transaction-based voice and data services. For more information about AT&T, visit [www.att.com](http://www.att.com).

**The Cabot Family Charitable Trust** addresses issues related to the problems of over-population in the world, environmental quality in selected areas of New England, the education of inner-city youth particularly in non-school hours, and certain other organizations in the cultural and scientific arena.

**The U.S. Small Business Administration**, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, in addition to a venture capital portfolio of \$13 billion, SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.

**The Enterprising Women National Honorary Patrons Committee** was organized to build greater public awareness of the project and includes members of the Congressional Women's Caucus, the United States Supreme Court and other federal and state officials, business owners, corporate and professional women, as well as national women's organizations such as the National Association of Women Business Owners, the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, the Girl Scouts of America, and *Enterprising Women Magazine*. The support of these enterprising women of today guarantees that *Enterprising Women* will inspire tens of thousands of visitors as it travels the country.

## **Project Team**

**Hilary Anderson**, director of collections and exhibitions at the National Heritage Museum, **Barbara Fahs Charles**, designer and principal, Staples & Charles; **Alison Cornyn**, multimedia designer, Picture Projects; **Virginia G. Drachman**, Arthur Jr. and Lenore Stern Professor of American History at Tufts University, former Radcliffe fellow and author of *Enterprising Women* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002); **Jane Knowles**, project manager and archivist, Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; **Edith Mayo**, exhibit curator and curator emeritus in political history at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and **Brenda McCarthy**, multimedia designer, Picture Projects.

Special thanks to project consultants **Joshua Basseches**, executive director, Harvard Museum of Natural History, and **Janis C. Sacco**, head of exhibition planning and interpretation, Harvard Museum of Natural History.

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**> A full press kit with artwork is available.**

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