



CALIFORNIA
National Organization for Women

Working to advance the women & girls of California



March 7, 2011

Visitors per month: 8,150

Women in Sports History



During Women's History Month, we'll be featuring a post each week from [America Comes Alive!](#) on little-known American women's history.

Kitty O'Neil (1947-) O'Neil was the first woman to be accepted into Stunts Unlimited (1976), an organization of Hollywood's top stunt people.

O'Neil was an incredible athlete who swam competitively but then began to specialize in diving; she finished twelfth in the U.S. team trials for the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, but she contracted spinal meningitis which ended her Olympic dreams. She went on to race boats, cars, and motorcycles, setting many speed records. Several of her stunts also set records: In 1977 she completed the longest fall for a woman and the highest attempted fall while afire in a protective suit.

O'Neil accomplished all this despite being totally deaf. She had suffered measles, mumps, and chicken pox at the age of four months, which caused profound hearing loss. Her mother was determined that Kitty would get an education and grow up normally, and she did that and more.

*In celebration of March and Women's History Month, **America Comes Alive!** will feature "**30 Under 30**"— women who have made contributions to the society we live in. Check back here every Monday to see this week's theme and featured woman, and visit AmericaComesAlive.com daily in March to see each day's featured woman.*

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