

Trailblazers

Titles about trailblazers from all walks of life. Celebrating the bravery to take the first step.

226: How I Became the First Blind Person to Kayak the Grand Canyon by Lonnie Bedwell

[DBC12182](#)

A personal chronicle of the life of Indiana veteran Lonnie Bedwell as he takes on a variety of life challenges after being blinded in a hunting accident to the culmination of his becoming the first blind person to kayak the Grand Canyon.

The Woman They Could Not Silence by Kate Moore

[DB108016](#)

The story of Elizabeth Packard, a housewife whose husband falsely committed her to an insane asylum. Elizabeth encountered other sane women confined to the institution with stories similar to hers. Moore explores how the events that followed sparked lasting change for women's rights. Nonfiction.

Brave the Wild River: The Untold Story of Two Women Who Mapped the Botany of the Grand Canyon by Melissa L. Sevigny

[DB116384](#)

The riveting tale of two pioneering botanists and their historic boat trip down the Colorado River and through the Grand Canyon. Through the vibrant letters and diaries of the two women, science journalist Melissa L. Sevigny traces their daring forty-three-day journey down the river, during which they meticulously cataloged the thorny plants that thrived in the Grand Canyon's secret nooks and crannies. Clover and Jotter's plant list, including four new cactus species, would one day become vital for efforts to protect and restore the river ecosystem. Brave the Wild River is a spellbinding adventure of two women who risked their lives to make an unprecedented botanical survey of a defining landscape in the American West, at a time when human influences had begun to change it forever. Nonfiction.

Wise Gals: the Spies Who Built the CIA and Changed the Future of Espionage by Nathalia Holt

[DB113006](#)

In the wake of World War II, four agents were critical in helping build a new organization that we now know as the CIA. Adelaide Hawkins, Mary Hutchison, Eloise Page, and Elizabeth Sudmeier, called the "wise gals" by their

male colleagues because of their sharp sense of humor and even quicker intelligence, were not the stereotypical femme fatale of spy novels. They were smart, courageous, and groundbreaking agents at the top of their class, instrumental in both developing innovative tools for intelligence gathering-and insisting (in their own unique ways) that they receive the credit and pay their expertise deserved. Nonfiction.

Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist by Judith Heumann

[DB100399](#)

Disability rights activist recounts her lifelong battle to achieve acceptance and inclusion after being paralyzed from polio as a child. She describes the difficulties she faced seeking education and work, as well as her many efforts to seek protections that helped lead to the creation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Nonfiction.

Sally Ride: America's First Woman in Space by Lynn Sherr

[DB079670](#)

Journalist examines the life of Sally Ride (1951-2012), the first American woman astronaut to go to space. Details Ride's childhood and early life in California, her selection as an astronaut, and post-mission endeavors to encourage girls' interest in science fields. Discusses Ride's private life and relationships. Nonfiction.

The New Guys: The Historic Class of Astronauts that Broke Barriers and Changed the Face of Space Travel by Meredith E. Bagby

[DB117403](#)

The never-before-told story of the barrier-breaking NASA class of 1978, which for the first time consisted of a diverse crew of women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and more, and their triumphs and tragedies working on the newly launched space shuttle program, with the exclusive cooperation of five astronauts. Nonfiction.

We Could Not Fail: The First African American's in the Space Program by Richard Paul

[DB081859](#)

The Space Age began just as the struggle for civil rights forced Americans to confront the long and bitter legacy of slavery, discrimination, and violence against African Americans. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson utilized the space program as an agent for social change, using federal equal employment opportunity laws to open workplaces at NASA and NASA contractors to African Americans while creating thousands of research and technology jobs in the Deep South to ameliorate poverty. *We Could Not Fail* tells the inspiring, largely unknown story of how shooting for the stars helped to overcome segregation on earth. Richard Paul and Steven Moss profile ten

pioneer African American space workers whose stories illustrate the role NASA and the space program played in promoting civil rights. They recount how these technicians, mathematicians, engineers, and an astronaut candidate surmounted barriers to move, in some cases literally, from the cotton fields to the launching pad. The authors vividly describe what it was like to be the sole African American in a NASA work group and how these brave and determined men also helped to transform Southern society by integrating colleges, patenting new inventions, holding elective office, and reviving and governing defunct towns. Adding new names to the roster of civil rights heroes and a new chapter to the story of space exploration, *We Could Not Fail* demonstrates how African Americans broke the color barrier by competing successfully at the highest level of American intellectual and technological achievement. Nonfiction.

Appealing for Justice one Colorado Lawyer, Four Decades, and the Landmark Gay Rights Case: *Romer v. Evans* by Susan Casey

[DBC03264](#)

This is the true story of Jean Dubofsky, who made history in 1979 when she was the first woman appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court, then made history again in 1996 at the U.S. Supreme Court when she argued and won the landmark gay rights case, *Romer v. Evans*. Dubofsky's journey from helping to shape and implement the strategy that led to the passage of the 1968 Civil Rights Act, to bringing the first slavery lawsuit since the Civil War, and finally

winning at the U.S. Supreme Court is not simply her story, it also is the a story of an entire generation. Nonfiction.

Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone, the First Woman to Play Professional Baseball in the Negro League

by Martha Ackman

[DB097982](#)

A journalist presents a biography of the first woman to play professional baseball on men's teams. It chronicles her baseball career, which included years in the semi-pro circuit and a stint in the Negro Leagues in the 1950s. It also details her experiences of racial and gender descrimination. Some strong language. Nonfiction.