



March 4, 2024

Dear UMB Community,

March is Women's History Month. At the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), we celebrate the impressive accomplishments and contributions of women throughout history and in our lives, and we honor trailblazers, innovators, and leaders who have inspired us by their examples of perseverance, courage, and brilliance.

We recognize women such as Verda Mae Freeman Welcome, who was a community activist, politician, civil rights advocate, and educator who taught in Baltimore City public schools for 11 years. In 1958, she became the first Black woman elected to the Maryland House of Delegates. Welcome was awarded honorary degrees from Howard University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. We celebrate Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and leader who advocated for civil rights and women's rights, earning a visit with President Abraham Lincoln and a place in history. We also recognize leaders such as Sylvia Rivera, the pioneering LGBTQ activist and tireless advocate who fought for trans rights, LGBTQ people, and the homeless.

Women's History Month also is about us — our communities, families, and influential women who may never be in the public spotlight or grace the headlines or front pages, but whose daily work and sacrifice build our communities and our society at-large. They are our special "sheroes" and leaders. In many cases, we can say, "We are because they are."

Maya Angelou said, "Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women." This message is especially important as we find ourselves in a challenging moment in our democracy around the rights and roles of women in our society.

At UMB, we stand up for women by working to promote and advance women's efforts and careers across the University. Organizations such as the UMBrella Group, the President's Council for Women, and Women in Medicine and Science highlight and promote the growth of all women at UMB, as do popular events such as our fifth annual UMBrella Women's History Month Symposium on Wednesday, March 6.

This Women's History Month, we affirm our commitment to support and advance the development of women, celebrate their achievements, and continue to collaborate to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse UMB.

In partnership and collaboration,

**Diane Forbes Berthoud, PhD, MA**

*Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer and Vice President, UMB  
Professor, Graduate School*

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This note was authorized for distribution to the University of Maryland, Baltimore community by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

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