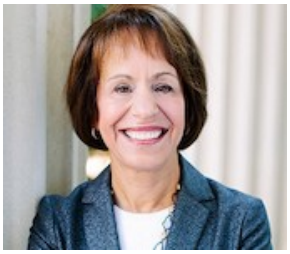
Celebrating Women's History Month

ITS Communications <its-news@usc.edu>
Fri 3/22/2019 3:43 PM
To: Clara Asuncion <asuncion@usc.edu>

Dear Colleagues,



The USC Board of Trustees recently announced that noted life scientist, teacher, and academic leader Carol L. Folt will become USC's 12th president. Given the historical significance of Dr. Folt becoming the first woman president in USC's 139-year history, I am proud that this announcement came during Women's History Month.

Last March, we celebrated the contributions of women to the field of information technology by recognizing the achievements of Radia Perlman, Marie Van Brittan Brown, and Grace Hopper, three innovators whose work ranges from the spanning tree protocol to closed-circuit home security systems to the COBOL programming language.

This year, in recognition of Women's History Month, I am happy to share with you the achievements of four more technologists and IT leaders. These women have made a lasting impact in technology, from their efforts toward gender parity in the field to their contributions to hybrid vehicle batteries, video games, and ARM processors. Please join me in honoring these four innovators whose work continues to influence the IT field today.

Sincerely,

Doug

Douglas Shook, PhD
Chief Information Officer
University of Southern California

Annie Easley: In 1955, Easley went to work as a "human computer" doing computations for researchers at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, which eventually became NASA. Easley's career evolved as technology evolved, and she later became a computer programmer. Throughout her career, Easley developed and implemented code that was used in research to analyze alternative power technologies, including batteries that powered early electric utility vehicles.

Carol Shaw: While Shaw was earning her master's degree in computer science at the University of California, Berkeley, she was hired at Atari as a microprocessor software engineer. In 1978, Shaw completed her first project, a polo-themed video game for a Ralph Lauren campaign. Though it was never released, that game is documented as the first video game designed and programmed by a woman. Shaw later went on to work for Activision, where she was the company's first female designer. At Activision, Shaw produced River Raid, a successful, award-winning game.

Reshma Saujani: In 2010, Saujani became the first Indian American woman to run for Congress. During the political race, she visited local schools in New York,

where she witnessed the gender gap in computer classes. She went on to found the nonprofit organization Girls Who Code, which is dedicated to closing the gender gap in technology. By the end of the academic year in 2018, the organization's efforts to educate girls in computer science skills had reached nearly 90,000 girls across the United States. Saujani is also the author of Girls Who Code: Learn to Code and Change the World.

Sophie Wilson: While Wilson was studying computer science at the University of Cambridge, she created her first embedded system, which farmers used to automate cow feeding. This project led to her developing the Acorn System 1, the first computer commercially sold by Acorn Computers. In 1983, Wilson designed the instruction set for the Acorn RISC Machine (ARM). The ARM processor core is now used in over half of the consumer electronics in the world, including mobile phones, digital televisions, and video games.