

NOT JUST ANYBODY | Question 10: Who are some of the women that you consider to be among our most inspiring movers of great change and why?

Date: March 10, 2026 |

www.bartlettbiographies.com | community-sponsored stories by Pacifican Jean Bartlett, longtime Bay Area News Group writer

Bartlett's News Briefs



NOT JUST ANYBODY

community-sponsored stories

by Pacifican Jean Bartlett, longtime Bay Area News Group writer

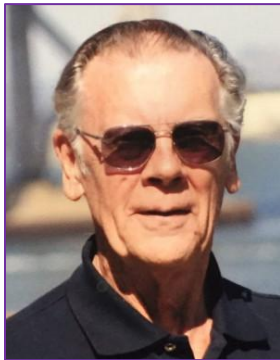
For 12 weeks in the New Year, five Pacificans, who all happen to be veterans (*with guest answers as needed*), answer a Question on the Street

Background: when I wrote features for the printed *Pacifica Tribune*, for many years that also included a question on the street – *Bartlett's Bullets*. It's interesting to hear what our neighbors think. I've asked five well-known community volunteers, all veterans and members of the Pacifica American Legion, to answer a question each week for 12 weeks. (*This week has a guest answerer.*) The purpose is not to stir up annoyed responses from people who are not part of this group, but to just have a listen to what someone else is willing to share. It is also to encourage community dialogue.

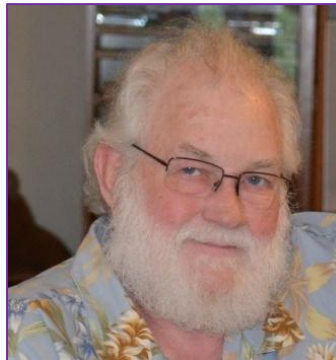
Date: March 10, 2026

Question 10: Who are some of the women that you consider to be among our most inspiring movers of great change and why?

Answerers:



Robert Biby



Ed Clements



Jay Crawford



Maxine Hines



Greg Stepanenko

Robert Biby. (Served: United States Marine Corps)

How long of an answer do I get? Hedy Lamarr is certainly on my list. She was a genius. She was famous as an actress but she was also an inventor. She co-invented frequency-hopping technology during the Second World War, a "Secret Communication System," which is responsible for our now having Bluetooth and Wi-Fi and GPS. Dorothy Day, she was jailed during World War I for protesting on behalf of a woman's right to vote. Suffragist Susan B. Anthony was earlier and she was pivotal in the women's movement, particularly a woman's right to vote. Sybil Ludington, she was only 16 when she rode twice as far as Paul Revere did to alert the colonial forces about a British attack on the town of Danbury, Connecticut. She rode 40 miles, at midnight and in the rain, and mustered up about 400 soldiers. A 40-mile ride on horseback, in one night, is not only a tribute to the stamina of the horse she was riding, but to her. Most people today couldn't even ride 20 miles in daylight. She has never gotten the credit she deserves. Sally Ride, she was a physicist and an astronaut and she was the first American woman in space. Field nurse Clara Barton took care of the Union wounded as well as Confederate wounded prisoners during the Civil War. She was also the founder of the American Red Cross. Florence Nightingale is the founder of modern nursing and she took care of wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. Jane Kendeigh, she was a Navy ensign during the Second World War and the first Navy flight nurse to land in an active combat zone, Iwo Jima. When she got off the plane, she started immediately delivering critical care. She also helped evacuate thousands of casualties while she was at Iwo Jima. The Hungarian biochemist Katalin Karikó. Her research led to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines and resulted in a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine which she shared with American doctor Drew Weissman.

Ed Clements. (Served: United States Navy)

First of all, I am inspired by my mother, Fern (Cook) Clements. She did everything I could ever want all her life. She always guided me. I am dyslexic so I was a handful in school. But she worked with me and we got it all done. She was a "Rosie the Riveter" during World War Two. She came out from Montana to work putting rivets in airplanes here in Los Angeles. I really appreciate and admire her. Another woman I have always been inspired by and admire was Eleanor Roosevelt for many reasons, but they include how she helped her husband Franklin Delano Roosevelt through his presidency. They had a strange relationship, their entire marriage. They weren't close and cuddly, but they stayed together, and they were there for each other, and she had to do a lot of work to take care of him after his polio diagnosis. One woman that I have grown to like better as she has aged is Hillary Rodham Clinton. There was a time when me and Mrs. Clinton didn't get along at all! But she has really mellowed, and most recently when she testified before Congress – her answers, how she handled the entire procedure – I thought she was immaculate. She is a very intelligent woman. I also admire her relationship with Bill Clinton. I call him, "Way Out Willie," because he can get there. He is a great orator and was a good president, but I think their relationship is special. I think that what she did for the country while she was the First Lady and before, and how she handled herself after her time in the White House, including her time as Secretary of State was admirable. I was at first really mad at her at how she handled the attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Libya, which killed four Americans. But when I really read up on it, there is nothing she could have done. First Ladies Michelle Obama and Laura Bush, I admire them both. I liked Laura Bush a lot. I think she is a real lady and how she handled her twin daughters while they were in the White House, particularly Jenna who was a bit of a handful, was very impressive. I like Michelle Obama because she stood beside President Obama but she did it in her own way. I do think the fact that she was put in the media spotlight because she is Black, is something that irritates me to no end. Why does it matter what the color of her skin is, she is her own person. This country is stuck on "color." It needs to get unstuck. Aren't we mature enough yet as a country, at almost 250 years of age, to have, without a problem, not only a Black president, but a woman president?

Jay Crawford. (Served: United States Army)

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a hero to both my wife and me. When we looked "out there" for inspiration and reassurance that there were intelligent people guiding us, we definitely agreed on her. First, Ruth Bader Ginsburg didn't come from wealth and she experienced some significant hardships growing up, yet she earned her bachelor's at Cornell University, got married and became a mom before starting law school at Harvard. The system essentially was set up against her: no money; "wrong" gender for those times; and she had a hell of a lot of responsibilities, which included not only raising her daughter, but she also took care of her husband while he dealt with cancer. All the while she continued her education, excelling in her legal studies no less; and she took notes for her ailing husband, because he was also at Harvard Law School. After she graduated, she got a coveted two-year clerkship for a prominent U.S. District Judge in New York. She next went on to be a Professor of Law at Rutgers. There is so much to her life résumé where she helps so many, especially litigating for gender equality. Then of course later in her career, she was appointed to the Supreme Court. She was intelligent and she was fair. She was not inhibited and she worked within the legal system to make needed change. She was marvelous. The only thing I would have changed was the timing of her retirement. I would have had her retire earlier so it was possible to find someone very similar to her, but younger. As it happened, the Court ended up unbalanced. Harriet Tubman is another woman and phenomenal change maker that I so admire. She put her life on the line to lead so many enslaved people to freedom on the Underground Railroad before the Civil War, and then, during the Civil War, she goes on to be a spy and scout for the North, freeing hundreds and hundreds of people. That's really putting your money where your mouth is! She bucked the system and both she and Ruth Bader Ginsburg had backbone. Eleanor Roosevelt is another inspiration and another woman with backbone. She did so much for human rights. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus and her quiet but incredibly brave act of defiance helped ignite the Civil Rights Movement. Rosa Parks had a lot of guts. Again, all of these women had a lot of backbone which is a quality I so admire because it creates needed change.

Maxine Hines (Pacifcan, photographer, videographer)

Let me just begin with something that feminist writer and activist Jo Freeman said. "Being a woman and having power is still somewhat oxymoronic in our society. It's better than it was 40 years ago. But a woman with power still makes people uncomfortable." Heather Cox Richardson is a top pick for me. She is a historian and she is currently a Professor of History at Boston College, teaching courses on: the American Civil War, the Reconstruction Era, the American West, and the Plains Indians. On the publishing platform Substack, she writes a newsletter, "Letters from an American," which is on the history of today's politics. I encourage anyone reading this to read her. I believe she is one of our most inspiring movers of great change because of her ability to discuss, explain and disseminate past and present events, which helps to intelligently navigate volatile, stressful times as well as understand new laws, and complex issues. I also feel that Fulton County, Georgia, District Attorney Fani Willis is one of our most inspiring movers of great change because of her integrity and her refusal to be intimidated by Donald Trump and others. She investigated the 2020 presidential election in Georgia and that resulted in indictments against Donald Trump and 18 others on charges of "knowingly and willfully joining a conspiracy to unlawfully change the outcome" of the 2020 Georgia presidential election results. She was disqualified from the case over improprieties and conflicts of interest, which in the end led to the dismissal of all conspiracy charges. Despite that dismissal, Georgia re-elected Fani Willis and she is currently serving her second term as the District Attorney for Fulton County. Another woman I feel is one of our most inspiring movers of great change is Letitia James. Like Fani Willis, she is a person of integrity and she also refused to be intimidated by Donald Trump and others. She is the first Black person to serve as New York Attorney General and the first Black woman to hold a statewide office in New York. She led a major civil fraud investigation against Donald Trump and others that resulted in a 2024 ruling that they were liable for business fraud, inflating asset values, and falsifying financial records to

obtain favorable loans and insurance. Subsequently, she was indicted on mortgage fraud charges following a Justice Department investigation which was urged on by the President. Those charges against her have twice been rejected by federal grand juries in Virginia and there are currently no active criminal charges against her. My next person is the late Dorothy "Ann" Richards, a Democrat, and the 45th Governor of Texas. I loved Ann Richards! I have so much respect for this fierce and fearless woman who never backed down to the good old boys. I feel she is one of our most inspiring movers of great change because she was feisty, fiery and unafraid. I also feel that Hillary Rodham Clinton is one of our most inspiring movers of great change for a million and one reasons. She's a politician, a diplomat, a lawyer and she is a combination of patience, integrity, beauty, brains and brass balls. She is another fierce and fearless woman who also never backed down to the good old boys. In fact, she continues to run circles around them as well as the young whippersnappers. Finally, because I know I only have so much room here, I am inspired by Elissa Blair Slotkin. She is a Democrat, a junior United States Senator from Michigan, she previously served in the U.S. House of Representatives and she was a former CIA intelligence analyst. She was one of six Democratic lawmakers, who all served in the military or the intelligence community, who released a video in November of 2025 which advised service members to refuse illegal orders. These six individuals emphasized the constitutional oath to duty over blind obedience to the President. To me, she is America's future and I believe she is making great change and will continue to make it because of her dedication to serving the country she loves.

Greg Stepanenko. (Served: United States Navy)

The first woman who comes to mind is Susan B. Anthony. She campaigned for women's rights, and along with Senator Aaron Sargent, she presented the amendment to Congress that led to a women's right to vote. Physicist and chemist Marie Curie also comes to mind. Her pioneering work in radioactivity, which revolutionized medicine, won her a Nobel Prize in each of her fields of study. Shirley Chisholm, she was the first Black woman elected to Congress. Kamala Harris, she is the first woman, first African American and first South Asian American to serve as Vice President of the United States. I also admire Malala Yousafzai. She was only 11 when she began advocating for the right for girls to be educated in her home country of Pakistan and she was shot by the Taliban when she was 15 for doing this. But she continued and is still continuing her activism for a girl's right to be educated, all over the world. She won the Nobel Peace Prize when she was 17. Rosa Parks is also someone I am inspired by. Because she wouldn't give up her seat to a white woman on a crowded, segregated bus, that act led to a Supreme Court ruling that declared bus segregation was unconstitutional. I have to say, it is hard to limit the number of women I admire for being inspiring movers of great change. There are so many.

* * *

By Jean Bartlett (March 10, 2026)

Writer Jean Bartlett was recognized by the Board of Supervisors, County of San Mateo, for "her writing that connects community and preserves local history." She can be contacted through her website, www.bartlettbiographies.com. This article was anonymously sponsored.