

The Battle of Flowers® Association is proud to present the topic for the 98th Annual Oratorical Contest\*:

## 2023 ORATORICAL CONTEST TOPIC DESCRIPTION



Independent. Optimistic. Determined. Tenacious. Courageous. Daring.

All words that can describe the many Texas women who have shaped our great state, whether native-born Texans or Texans by choice. In differing roles, Texas women have been an undeniable force leading the way in and altering the landscape of Texas history. Some trailblazers served as a voice to document the very battles that brought about the Republic of Texas while others heroically worked to save the sacred sites of those battles for future generations so none would forget.

These women stand at the forefront of change, many of them also the first or among the first women to work or serve in areas previously seen as open only to men. There were Texas women whose business acumen enabled them such success that they went on to be key in the establishment of Texas towns and larger cities.

Many trailblazing ladies broke through preconceived societal ideas of a woman's role during their respective eras of our state's past. Often facing opposition and raising the eyebrows of their contemporaries, some Texas women pursued vocations—such as medicine, aviation, banking—seen during their lifetime as inappropriate or unattainable. Other women saw areas of need and took action to address them—support for mental wellness, preservation of endangered animals, expansion of educational opportunities, support for the humanities and the arts to enrich the lives of Texans. Others still, like suffragettes, used their voices and actions to forge new paths for women that didn't exist previously.

Whether in education, philanthropy, politics, art, business, or other spheres, countless Trailblazing Texas Women have indelibly changed this state for the better, its people, and far beyond. Some are more widely known and acknowledged for their impact, but each trailblazer's stories deserve to be shared. You may even have some in your family tree.

The Oratorical Committee encourages you to delve into one individual's life, or in some instances a group of women's lives, researching their background, their efforts, how they forged a place in history, positively impacting our state and even beyond. What defined them and made them extraordinary? What made her life, actions or achievements trailblazing in comparison with the lives of fellow Texans of the day? Were there limitations on or opportunities for women during your chosen subject's lifetime that would have impacted their trailblazing choices? How did their Texas heritage and experience help them blaze their trail through Texas history? It is our hope that the topic provides an opportunity for exploration into the personalities that shaped Texas.

A list of Texas women follows; however, you are not limited to only these individuals. You may select another historical woman, as long as she/they meet the criteria and their lifespan and/or their significant achievements occurred **at least 50 years ago, that is, prior to 1973.**



### List of Suggested Texas Trailblazing Women:

Maria Hinojosa de Balli  
Susana Dickinson  
Angelina Peyton Eberly  
Clara Driscoll  
Adina DeZavala  
Ima Hogg  
Emma Tenayuca  
Bessie Coleman  
Katherine Stinson  
Edith Whatley McKenna  
Miriam "Ma" Ferguson  
Margie Neal  
Oveta Culp Hobby  
Barbara Jordan  
Hortense Sparks Ward  
Caro Crawford Brown  
Louise Raggio  
Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson  
Frances Emery Allen  
Dr. Sophie Herzog  
Lulu Belle Madison White

Sarah Horton Cockrell  
Anna Henriette Menus Martin  
Jovita Perez  
The Sisters of Charity of The Incarnate Word  
Mattie H. White  
Minnie Fisher Cunningham  
Jovita Idar Juárez  
Margarita Muñoz Simon  
Jane Y. McCallum  
The Petticoat Lobby  
Jovita González de Mireles  
Jennie Scott Scheube  
Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias  
Wilhelmina Elizabet Ney  
Margaret Heffernan Borlan  
Mary Ann Dyer Goodnight  
Emily Perry  
Lizzie Johnson Williams  
Ellen Schultz Quillin  
Rosita Fernandez

\*In 1891, a group of women began a now-beloved San Antonio tradition when they decided to hold a parade to honor the heroes of the Alamo and the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto. Beginning as a modest local celebration, this event has grown into the largest parade in the United States run entirely by women. Although the parade is a fun and festive event, all participants are asked to lay a floral tribute on the front lawn of the Alamo as the parade passes by this UNESCO World Heritage Site as a way to honor and remember the bravery and sacrifice of our forefathers. The mission of The Battle of Flowers® Association is: "to teach the history of our state and to keep alive the patriotic traditions of Texas and San Antonio." In keeping with this tradition, the Oratorical Contest, established in 1926, creates awareness and fosters appreciation of our Texas heritage, while providing Texas college and university students a unique and highly-prized forum in forensic competition.