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American Masters Spotlights 26 Unsung Women Who Changed History with Unladylike2020

New multimedia series narrated by Emmy, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award-winner Julianna Margulies and Screen Actors Guild and Critics Choice Award-winner Lorraine Toussaint premieres Wednesday, March 4, 2020 on the American Masters YouTube channel

One-hour special premieres Summer 2020 as part of PBS’ celebration of female trailblazers in honor of the women’s vote centennial

Beginning this Women’s History Month, American Masters illuminates the inspiring stories of little-known American heroines from the early years of feminism and the women who now follow in their footsteps with Unladylike2020, an innovative multimedia series launching in honor of the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage. Narrated by Julianna Margulies (The Good Wife; ER; Billions) and Lorraine Toussaint (Selma; Orange is the New Black; The Glorias), American Masters – Unladylike2020 spotlights 26 diverse changemakers, in 26 documentary shorts premiering Wednesdays, beginning March 4 through August 26, Women’s Equality Day, on the American Masters YouTube channel. In addition, an hour-long American Masters – Unladylike2020 special will premiere as part of PBS’ summer-long celebration of female trailblazers.

Only a century ago, women in America did not have the right to vote, and had only recently won the right to own property or get divorced. They faced limited career and educational
choices, it was illegal for married women to work in some places, and women could even be arrested for wearing pants in public. Women who worked outside of the home were usually single, widowed, divorced, poor, or women of color who had to contend not only with sexism, but also severe racial discrimination. Despite that, intrepid women managed to break into new professions, step into leadership roles, and fight for suffrage and an end to discrimination – challenging expected behavior for “a lady.” Presenting history in a bold new way, *American Masters — Unladylike2020*, produced and directed by Charlotte Mangin, brings the incredible stories of these pioneering women to life through rare archival footage and interviews with descendants, historians and accomplished modern women who reflect upon their influence. Original artwork and animation created by visual artist Amelie Chabannes adds visual texture, infusing black and white images with captivating color and action. The focus on modern-day trailblazers also enriches the content with dynamic juxtapositions of past and present.

Some of the women featured include Bessie Coleman, the first African American to earn an international pilot's license; Susan La Flesche Picotte, the first Native American physician who also founded a hospital on the Omaha Reservation; Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress; Gertrude Ederle, the first woman to swim across the English Channel; Sissieretta Jones, the first African American to sing opera on the main stage at Carnegie Hall; and Lois Weber, the first woman to direct a feature-length film, among many others. To learn more about all the women featured in the series, visit pbs.org/unladylike2020.

U.S. history curriculum materials for grades 6-12, produced by WNET Kids’ Media and Education, will be available via PBS LearningMedia beginning in March. Unladylike Productions, LLC will also launch a nationwide community engagement and screening initiative in partnership with public television stations and community organizations.

*American Masters — Unladylike2020* is a production of Unladylike Productions, LLC in association with THIRTEEN’s *American Masters*. Executive Producers for *Unladylike2020* are Charlotte Mangin and Sandra Rattley. Executive Producer for *American Masters* is Michael Kantor.

Major funding for *American Masters — Unladylike2020* is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. Support is also provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Wyncote Foundation, California Humanities, HumanitiesDC, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, Made in New York: Women Film, TV, & Theater Fund, the Harnisch Foundation, Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Humanities Montana, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with New York State Council on the Arts, South Dakota Humanities, Virginia Humanities, the Economic Hardship Reporting Project, Utah Humanities, Ohio Humanities, South Carolina Humanities, Humanities New York, JetBlue Foundation, Awesome Without Borders, and IFP. Any views expressed in this series do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or other supporters.
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#Unladylike2020PBS #TrailblazersPBS

About PBS Trailblazers
In the summer of 2020, PBS is celebrating the women’s vote centennial with a slate of multiplatform content honoring and commemorating U.S. women’s suffrage, the feminist movement and modern-day changemakers. AMERICAN EXPERIENCE “The Vote” tells the story of the campaign to grant women the right to vote, a transformative cultural and political movement that resulted in the largest expansion of voting rights in U.S. history. AMERICAN MASTERS “Unladylike2020” is a multimedia series featuring courageous, little-known and diverse female trailblazers from the turn of the 20th century. “And She Could Be Next” (w.t.), a POV miniseries, follows women of color as political candidates and organizers who seek to expand the electorate, asking whether democracy itself can be preserved — and made stronger — by those most marginalized. And a two-part FIRING LINE WITH MARGARET HOOVER special documents what motivated several conservative women to run for office. Two fan-favorite PBS series will salute female changemakers: AMERICAN MASTERS with “Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am” and “Mae West: Dirty Blonde;” and GREAT PERFORMANCES with “Gloria: A Life,” about Gloria Steinem, and “Ann,” about Texas governor Ann Richards. ANTIQUES ROADSHOW spotlights outstanding contributions from female athletes, artists, activists and more in the all-new special “Women’s Work.” The lineup also features two new miniseries: PREHISTORIC ROAD TRIP, hosted by the Field Museum’s Emily Graslie, who embarks on an epic adventure through America’s fossil country; and BBC co-production ROYAL HISTORY’S MYTHS AND SECRETS WITH LUCY WORSLEY, who investigates notable women and their roles in historical events. In addition, PBS will encore the critically acclaimed and award-winning FRONLINE documentary “For Sama,” an intimate yet epic journey of one woman’s experience of the Syrian war.

About WNET
WNET is America’s flagship PBS station: parent company of New York’s THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV, the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new ALL ARTS multi-platform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend, and the nightly interview program Amanpour and Company. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

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