

Women's Movement

During the 1960s and 1970s, the women's movement made considerable progress in elevating public awareness of inequalities between the sexes. A central player in the movement was the National Organization for Women (NOW), it was formed in 1966 by Betty Friedan and other like-minded activists to promote women's rights through legislation. In the late 1960s NOW helped to secure support for Title IX of the Education Amendments Act. According to the Act, colleges are required to guarantee equal opportunities for women. Also, the Equal Rights Amendment was passed by Congress but subsequently failed in the ratification process. The organization also sought the legalization of abortion, a goal achieved with the Supreme Court's decision in the Roe vs, Wade case of 1973.

In addition to its political achievements, the women's movement also helped to forge a new sense of identity and shared experiences among women. An important part of this process was the creation of publications specifically for women, such as Ms., a feminist magazine was founded in 1970 and it provided a forum for women's issues. Other publications, such as the influential book *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, helped many women to feel more comfortable about their bodies and encouraged them to discuss formerly taboo topics such as birth control, lesbianism, and rape. In addition, schools and universities began to offer courses in women's issues; by 1974 nearly 80 institutions offered women's studies programs.

