

From the Beginning of Time ... Outstanding Mothers in History

(MS) — Mother's Day is more than the celebration of the woman who brought you into this world. Throughout the course of history, some outstanding women, who also were mothers, left indelible effects on society, literature, education and politics. Mother's Day is the perfect opportunity to commend those 20th century women who, very often in the face of great social and economic adversity, managed not just their households, but their lives, as well.

Eleanor Roosevelt is perhaps most famous for her role as first lady during the 12 years that her husband, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was president. Due to her activism as a staunch defender of human rights, she held press conferences, gave radio broadcasts and pub-

lished newspaper columns, practically evolving the title of first lady into a position unto itself. When the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to allow black singer Marian Anderson to perform in Constitution Hall, Roosevelt resigned. She went on to serve on the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Before, during and after serving as a United Nations delegate (1945 to 1952, 1961 to 1962), as chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1946 to 1952) and as a contributing drafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, she authored a number of books, including an autobiography, before her death in 1962.

Mary McLeod Bethune was the first

black woman to head a federal office, directing the Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration from 1936 to 1944. The daughter of former slaves, Bethune graduated from the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, in 1895 and taught in Presbyterian mission schools in the eight years that followed. In 1904, she founded the Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls, which, after a merger with Cookman Institute in 1923, became Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune was president of the college until 1942, during which time she began service as a special assistant to the secretary of war during World War II and as special adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt (1935 to 1944).

Gabriela Mistral was a Chilean poet

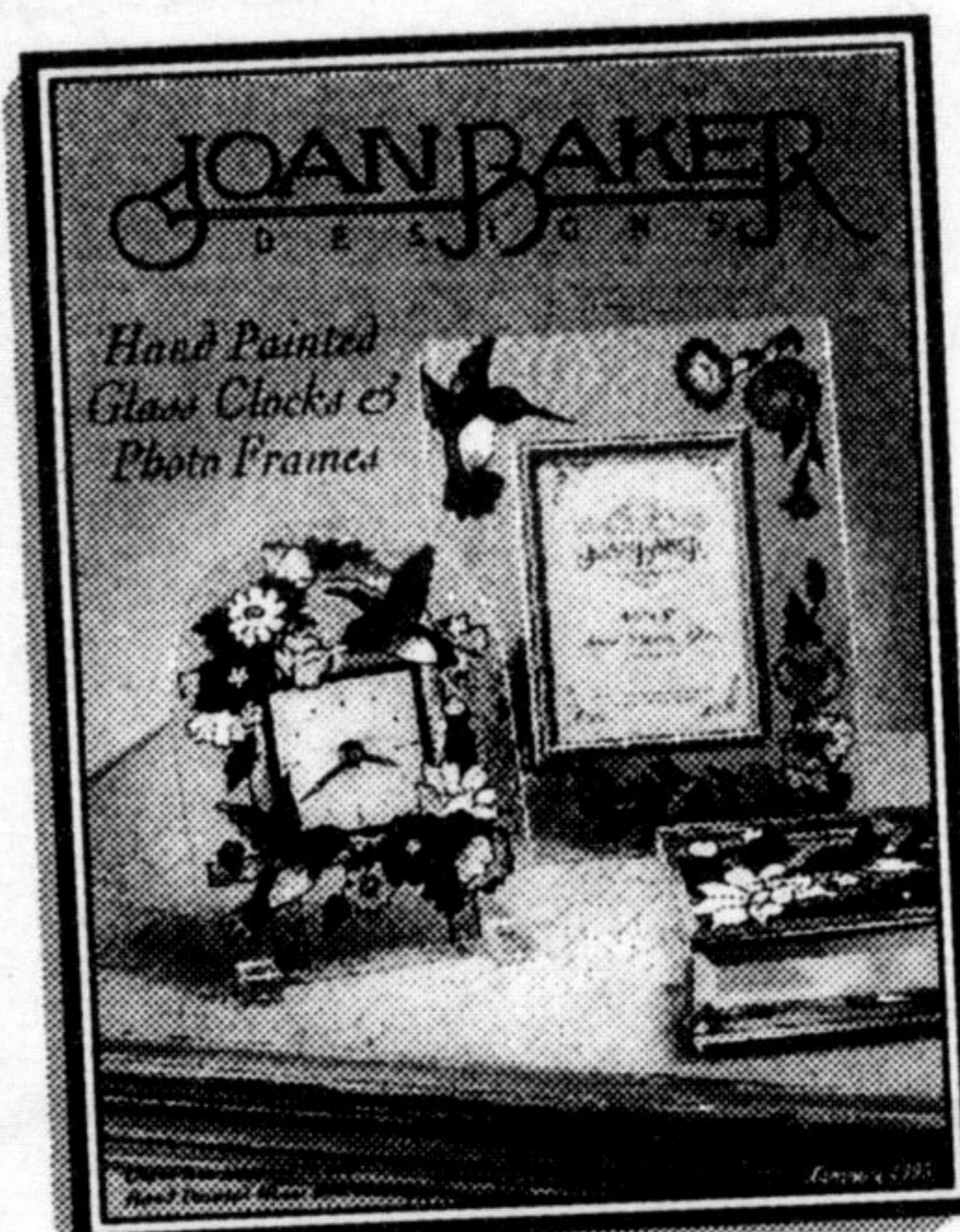
and the first Spanish-American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature (1945). A teacher, school administrator and later a diplomat, some of her works were inspired by the suicides of both a lover and her adopted son.

Maria Montessori was an Italian educator, physician and feminist. The first woman to receive a medical degree in Italy, she became famous for her educational theories, which emphasized offering children an environment where they could freely express themselves, a critical factor in learning. The first Montessori school was founded in Rome and served as the model for other schools that would be set up all over the world. MF986589

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