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NEWS

'I learned something today': Quincy remembers its ladies at Women's History Month event



Hongyu Liu

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QUINCY – First lady Abigail Adams famously told her husband, John Adams, to "remember the ladies" in matters of political and economic rights. Abigail and other history-making Quincy women were celebrated Saturday at the aptly titled "Remember the Ladies," a two-hour Women's History Month event.

"We stand on their shoulders," said host Joyce Kulhawik, a local journalist and president of the Boston Theater Critics Association.

About 150 people gathered in the Adams Lecture Hall at Quincy High School, 100 Coddington St., to hear about the courage, character and commitment of Quincy's historic women, such as Abigail Adams, Louisa Catherine Adams and Anne Hutchinson.

'Cyrano': Peter Dinklage gives a performance to fall in love with

Ginny Rainsford Karlis, a professor at UMass-Boston, pointed out the letters of Abigail Adams not only showed her writing skills but also how ordinary people reacted to the change of policy during her time.

"Abigail provided us something that we have never had," she said.

Louisa Catherine Adams, Abigail's daughter-in-law and the wife of President John Quincy Adams, was one of the best liked and most respected first ladies, said Amanda Norton, the digital production editor for the Adams Paper Editorial Project at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Louisa's social skills played a significant role in her husband's success.

Alexandra Elliot, curator at the Quincy Historical Society, started her speech with the 1637 trial of Anne Hutchinson when she was charged by magistrates of the Massachusetts Bay

Colony for "spreading erroneous opinions regarding religious belief and practice."

Hutchinson is considered one of the earliest American feminists. She challenged traditional gender roles through preaching to both women and men and questioning Puritan teachings about salvation.

Elliot said she enjoys sharing Hutchinson's story because she is lesser known by the public despite having a great influence on future generations.

"Her theory, her thoughts, really made an influence years later. But she doesn't get talked about a lot," Elliot said. "That's why I like to talk about her. I want to spread her words."

Touching tribute: Massachusetts' Amy Poehler captures love story of 'Lucy and Desi'

Tea and snacks were served after the presentations. While sipping and chatting, attendees browsed through stories posted on boards in the lobby of eight other Quincy women, from Hollywood stars such as Ruth Gordon and Lee Remick to politicians and athletes such as Mary Pratt. Three Quincy Symphony Orchestra musicians played during the session.

Janet Marnell, of Quincy, attended the event with three of her friends. She said she enjoyed the diversified range of women, including Pratt, who spent five summers pitching in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, made famous in the 1992 movie "A League of Their Own." Pratt went on to teach physical education in Quincy and Braintree and advocate for girls in sports.

"I learned something today," Marnell said.

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Reach Hongyu Liu at HLiu@patriotledger.com.