

Remarks by Maddie Thomas (Class of 2022)
Raising of the Peace Flag, April 22, 2022 (Earth Day)

During my freshman year, I took a class about the peace through law movement. It was the first class on CMU's campus and my nerves did not diverge from those of a typical freshman. I was nervous but excited to start my undergraduate journey. I was excited to start learning.

One thing I did not expect while walking to my first ever college class; however, was that a month later I would be walking that same route in the CMU Homecoming Parade but dressed up as none other than abolitionist, and women's rights activist, Lucretia Mott.

To give a bit of context, a week before homecoming, my professor, Hope May, had asked this "peace through law class" to participate in the parade as any historical peace figure of our choosing. Although we had the option to pick anyone we wanted, nobody came to mind. At the time, I did not know a single peace activist.

After a quick "women's rights activist" Google search, I found Lucretia. Born on January 3, 1793, in Massachusetts. She was raised Quaker, a religion that strongly stressed the equality of all people. Early in her life, Mott become involved in the anti-slavery movement. In 1833, Mott was one of the founders of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society and during World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, Mott met Elizabeth Cady Stanton with whom she formed a long and prolific friendship and bond.

In 1848, Mott, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the Seneca Falls Convention in New York, which is credited as one of the first women's rights conventions in the United States. When the National Woman's Party introduced the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, it was nicknamed the "Lucretia Mott Amendment". She is one of the three women portrayed in the "Portrait Monument" sculpture that is rightfully displayed in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington D.C.

It is strange that despite having access to copious amounts of information and twelve years of public education, the stories of people like Lucretia Mott still fall through the cracks. E.C. Warriner, a former CMU president asked "what can teachers do to aid the peace cause? He stressed that we need to praise heroes of peace.

Without this praise, heroes are lost, stories are forgotten, inscriptions are erased, and the positive history is never told. I know it is unrealistic to think we can know it all but, I think we can at least try.

Education is not just about what we learn in the classroom. Education is the conversations we have, the people we meet, and the stories we read. As students of the world, as educators, and scholars, we have a responsibility to learn.

Learning gives us inspiration, intelligence, and strength. Education allows us to here to stories of folks who dedicated their lives to changing the world. Learning gives us hope.

A couple of months ago my sister called me—very worried. She is a senior in high school and a writer for her school's newspaper. She was writing a column for women's history month. She was frantic on the phone because she did not know who to write about. After telling her to take a few deep breaths, I calmly said, "Katelyn, let me tell you about Lucretia Mott.