FIRST TO ADVANCE

A celebration and photography exhibit featuring women faculty trailblazers at the University of Maryland
“I was one of seven women in an MBA cohort of 98 people over three decades ago. We’ve come a long way since then! I feel honored to be among some early women in STEM disciplines, trained in mathematics and computer science before coming to business. If I can inspire young women and junior colleagues to not be constrained by stereotypes and strike out to follow their passion, I would be gratified.”

RITU AGARWAL
PROFESSOR & SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN
DECISION, OPERATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES DEPARTMENT
ROBERT H. SMITH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

First woman to be named Distinguished University Professor at the Robert H. Smith School of Business
“After being a member of the Department of Economics at Maryland for 32 years, it was both a challenge and a privilege to be the first female Chair of the department. I would like to thank the faculty and staff of the department for their support and also my colleagues in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. I could not have done this without them.”

MAUREEN CROPPER
DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR & CHAIR
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL & SOCIAL SCIENCES

First woman Chair of the Department of Economics
"Early in my career, I worked in two fields—journalism and law—where women in leadership positions were rare. But I always sought mentors—both women and men. I never tried to be ‘first’ in anything. I just focused on the work and tried to appreciate the strengths of everyone I worked with. I’m proud that our faculty works hard to support our female students.”

LUCY DALGLISH
PROFESSOR & DEAN
PHILIP MERRILL COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM
First non-interim woman Dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism

ADVANCE
Investing in Cultures of Inclusive Excellence
“Throughout my career, I sought out female role models, who followed passion and talent and in doing so, crossed boundaries and carved wider paths for themselves and others. Mid-Century designer Ruth Adler Schnee knew she would never be hired as an architect and, instead, became a world-renowned textile artist. Sculptor Mary Miss did an end run around the gallery system, blurring boundaries and expanding the definition of art, by siting her work in the public realm. The creative efforts of these women and others enabled, supported, and inspired my own journey and motivate me to mentor and expand opportunities for younger female colleagues and students.”

RONIT EISENBACK
PROFESSOR
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & PRESERVATION

First woman to achieve Full Professor in the Architecture Program
“Growing up African American, low-income, in the South, and in the 1960s, I had to overcome numerous obstacles to reach where I am today. I was blessed with a mother who loved and sacrificed for her children, and three older brothers who set a great example for me in terms of hard work, educational achievement, and breaking barriers. Although I was almost always the only African American and one of few women in most of my classes at Stanford and MIT, I never wasted time doubting my abilities. I remained focused and put in the time needed to excel. I hope to inspire others, especially Black women, to believe in themselves and break more barriers.”

CAROL ESPY-WILSON
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL & COMPUTER ENGINEERING
A. JAMES CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

First African American woman in the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering to achieve tenure and be promoted to Full Professor

ADVANCE
Investing in Cultures of Inclusive Excellence
“I truly value my role and responsibility as a woman faculty of color in 4-H Youth Development. Representation matters, and it is important for youth and faculty to see themselves represented in positions of tenure and leadership. I am honored and humbled to be the first African American woman to achieve Principal Agent (Full Professor equivalent) within the UME 4-H Youth Development Program. I look forward to an even more diverse future in our department, where these moments are no longer anomalies, but have become the norm.”

NIA IMANI FIELDS
PRINCIPAL AGENT
MARYLAND 4-H CENTER
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

First African American woman to achieve Full Principal Agent in the UMD Extension 4-H Youth Development
“I am proud to be the first woman to receive the NASA Early Career Public Achievement Medal in my department. This is a recognition of my first ten years of my research career while I became the mother of two girls. I wish it could encourage women to pursue a scientific career despite the struggle to achieve a balance between personal and professional lives.”

Belen Franch
Associate Research Professor
Department of Geographical Sciences
Behavioral & Social Sciences College

First woman in BSOS to win the NASA Early Career Public Achievement Medal
It was a surprise to learn that I am the first African American female promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor to Full Professor in the College of Education. Holding this position in the history of the College, and the University, is an honor. I am certainly looking forward to more women of color being tenured and promoted in the College. While I encountered challenges in my journey to Full Professor, there was always more light than darkness, and I had the support of countless individuals.

SHARON FRIES-BRITT
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING, HIGHER EDUCATION, & SPECIAL EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

First African American woman to rise through the ranks of Assistant Professor to Associate Professor to Full Professor in the College of Education
"As a kid growing up in a farming community, I saw men running the farms, heading businesses, and leading organizations. When I started teaching here, there were many times I was the only female in the classroom. It’s changing now, and about 35% of our students are women. I hope I can inspire these women to take leadership roles in ag-related fields. Breaking traditions is tough, but it’s happening."

GLORI HYMAN
LECTURER & DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF APPLIED AGRICULTURE
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

First woman Director of the Institute of Applied Agriculture
“I received a lot of advice from both male and female colleagues on ‘how to fit in’ in order to be successful. I was just too stubborn to follow all the advice, and this risk gave me a lot of anxiety. Earning tenure gave me confidence in being myself and demonstrated that the traditional professor model is becoming more inclusive.”

LINDA SCHMIDT
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
A. JAMES CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

First woman to receive tenure in the Department of Mechanical Engineering
LAURA STAPLETON
PROFESSOR & ASSOCIATE DEAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT &
QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

First woman to reach the rank of Professor in the Measurement, Statistics & Evaluation Program

“I think it is quite telling of the current culture of the Measurement, Statistics and Evaluation Program that, until this nomination, I had not even realized that I was the first female to be promoted to the rank of Professor. The support that I have received from my mentor and colleagues in the department made it an easy and, more important, enjoyable journey.”
I am pleased to have an opportunity to bring new perspectives and experiences to the leadership of the College of Arts and Humanities and am grateful to the many people who have contributed to my journey. Their guidance, support, encouragement, and confidence in my ability to handle the challenges and hyper-visibility that comes with being a 'first' have been gratifying. One of my goals is to help develop more leaders who will bring even greater diversity to the University of Maryland and to higher education across the United States.”
“I have experienced the evolution of what it means to be a faculty member and professor on the University of Maryland campus. At the time of my original appointment, Clinical Faculty positions did not exist on the UMD campus. The adoption of Clinical Professor appointments, as well as guidelines for promotion, allowed me to highlight my accomplishments in the areas of teaching, service, and scholarship. Moreover, the promotion process provided validation of those contributions at the department, college and campus levels. As the only (full) Clinical professor (male or female) in my College, I am now in the position of serving as a mentor for junior faculty, which makes this trajectory even more meaningful.”

CHRISTY TIRRELL-CORBIN
CLINICAL PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

First woman to reach level of Clinical Professor in the College of Education
“I am proud of being the first Asian woman to be promoted with the full professorship in my department. I had excellent male and female role models, and I could see how achieving this position has paved the way for others in my department and college. Being first could mean challenge, but it was also exciting and rewarding.”

MIN WANG
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

First Asian woman to become a Full Professor in the Department of Human Development & Quantitative Methodology