

Presidents' Day

Jessica Wade

Two of the most important US Presidents celebrated their birthdays in February: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Each year, the third Monday in February (February 16th 2015) is a national federal holiday to celebrate the birthdays of these two great Presidents.

There is a lot of confusion regarding Presidents' Day. The true name of the holiday and the president(s) it actually honors often generate disagreement. If you ask a few Americans about this holiday, you could very well get a different explanation from each person.

The holiday is commonly called Presidents' Day. You will see this name on calendars, on sales promotions at all kinds of shopping outlets, and in the news. The [US government's list of official national federal holidays](#), however, refers to it as Washington's Birthday. George Washington's true birthday, February 22, was designated a federal holiday in 1885. So where does the term Presidents' Day come from? And why is it not on February 22nd?

Washington's Birthday was celebrated on Feb. 22 for many years, until 1968, when the US Congress passed the [Monday Holiday Law](#). This law was intended to create the same yearly observances of various holidays. Congress members wanted to create 3-day weekends (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday) to provide families more time together and also for economic reasons. They thought 3 consecutive days would provide time to take vacations. When this law was passed, the Washington's Birthday holiday was moved to the 3rd Monday in February—every year, regardless of the date.

So the date was changed in 1968, but the name was not changed. So why call it Presidents' Day? Abraham Lincoln's birthday is February 12. His birthday is an official holiday in some states, including Illinois, but it was never officially designated a national holiday in the US. Many people and various organizations considered the 3rd Monday in February to be an ideal time to honor President Lincoln, so for this reason, Washington's Birthday gradually became known as Presidents' Day in an effort to honor both of these important American presidents.

Keep in mind that on Presidents' Day, most banks, all federal administrative offices, and the US Post Office is closed.

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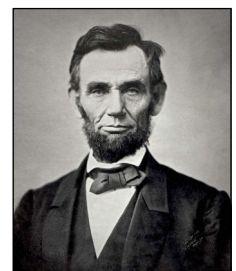
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A Bit About Lincoln

Jessica Wade

President Lincoln grew up in Illinois, and Illinois is called "[The Land of Lincoln](#)." His birthday is an official state holiday in Illinois. All Illinois state offices are closed on February 12.

If you are interested in learning more about Lincoln, there are numerous places in Illinois that one can visit. In Springfield, you can visit the [Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum](#) and the [Lincoln Home](#), the only home he owned. This year is the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's assassination, and many [special events](#) will take place during the year in Springfield.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Nick Dunn

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is one of the great modern American traditions. Our only national holiday for a person who was never president, it celebrates the life and ongoing legacy of Dr. King, who was assassinated in 1968 after over a decade of bold leadership at the forefront of the fight for civil rights for African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s.

A native of Atlanta, Georgia in the American South, King experienced and saw racial discrimination and oppression his whole life. Like so many other African Americans, he was deeply opposed to this oppression, and worked tirelessly for freedom. Though never elected to any public office, King was influential in the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and in ending much segregation in the US.

What explains Dr. King's and the Civil Rights Movement's successes? Certainly one factor was the clarity of his vision of civil rights for all people and the powerful rhetoric with which he expressed it. Read, watch, or listen to some of his great works:

[Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)

[1964 Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech](#)

[I Have a Dream speech - text and video](#)



As you read or listen to his speeches, books, and letters, you may be struck by King's unique ability to draw together very different influences: He was a Baptist minister who quoted the Old Testament and Jewish theologians right alongside the New Testament and Christian thinkers. He was an African American who believed he was carrying on the liberating tradition of Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, white men with mixed records on civil rights and violence. He was a proud American who also took great pride in introducing millions of Americans to the non-violent life and methods of Gandhi. In short, he was a man who would link arms with anyone, regardless of their differences, who was willing to walk with him toward liberty and justice for all people.

Will you join Dr. King in that walk? Don't let Monday just be a day off from work or school. Attend a celebration of King's birthday. Volunteer on this national day of service. Join with other people of good will to make the world a better place for everyone.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—Events

Nick Dunn

MLK Day Campaign, Urbana, and Campus Events Calendar:

Short version:

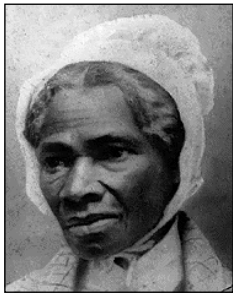
- Friday, 1/16/2015, 4p-6p: 14th Annual Countywide MLK, Jr. Celebration
- Sunday, 1/18/2015, 5p-7p: 30th Anniversary Event – Advocacy for Justice – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Celebration
- Monday 1/19/2015, 830-1030: 30th Annual Unity Breakfast
- Monday 1/19/2015, 1p-3p: MLK Day of Service – UIUC Office of Volunteer Programs (just show up, or sign up [HERE](#))
- Wednesday 1/21/2015, 7p-9p: Realizing the Dream – Illinois Students' stories from the Civil Rights Pilgrimage
- Saturday 1/24/2015, 10a-12p: MLK, Jr. Community Celebration at Krannert Center

Celebrating Strong Women: Women's History Month

Jennie Avery

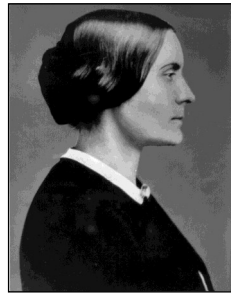
"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights." - Gloria Steinem

March is Women's History Month in the United States and March 8, 2015 is International Women's Day. In honor of all of the individuals who have fought for women's rights around the world and throughout history, ISSS would like to introduce you to a few famous American women who made great contributions to the struggle for equal rights for women in the United States:



Sojourner Truth (1797-1893) was born into slavery, but escaped in 1826. As a free woman, she became a human rights activist who fought for the abolition of slavery as well as women's rights. In 1851 she spoke at the Ohio Women's

Rights Convention, and her speech, which was later titled "Ain't I a Woman," became her best-known speech on gender inequality. You can see the speech performed by Kerry Washington at this [link](#).



Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) is arguably the best-known figure in the history of the Women's Suffrage Movement (the movement to obtain voting rights for women) in the United States. Anthony worked closely with Elizabeth Cady

Stanton, another women's and civil rights activist, to found a number of organizations with the goal of obtaining equal rights for women and African Americans, including the American Equal Rights Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association. Their work led to the addition of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920 – which gave women the right to vote.



Betty Goldstein Friedan (1921-2006), born in nearby Peoria, Illinois, is credited with catalyzing a second wave of feminism in the United States with the publication of her book, "The Feminine Mystique." The book brought to light what Friedan saw as general

unhappiness of women in the United States at that time, and in it she advocated for women to find fulfillment outside of the home and the traditional roles of wife and mother. Her work and activism started a discussion about redefining feminism that continues until today.



Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-) was the first Jewish woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court. She has focused much of her career on advocating for women's rights. Along the way, she co-founded the first law journal in the United States to

deal entirely with women's rights, the "Women's Rights Law Reporter." Later, as the first tenured woman at Columbia University, she co-authored the first casebook on sexual discrimination. In the field of law, Ginsburg's work has been credited with greatly contributing to the struggle to end gender discrimination.

For information on Women's History Month events, please refer to the UIUC Women's Center [website](#)!



The SUPERBOWL with Martin

Martin McFarlane



Thanksgiving is often considered the American 'eating' holiday, as copious amounts of turkey, stuffing, potatoes, and other tasty treats are consumed. However there is another, more unofficial holiday to rival that. One on which over 1.25 billion chicken wings will be eaten. One on which the three biggest pizza chains will combine to sell 4.5 million pizzas. One on which Americans will dip 28 million pounds of potato chips into 8 million pounds of guacamole while staring at the television, watching sport and commercials in equal measure.

Welcome to Superbowl Sunday.

The Superbowl is like no other sporting event in the US. Firstly, American Football is far and away the number one sport in the US regardless of what metric you care to use. Viewing figures, game attendance, merchandise sold- the NFL reigns supreme, so it makes sense that the culmination of the season would be one of the most watched sporting events. But more than this, the NFL is the only one of the four major American sports that concludes its season with a one off game. Baseball, basketball, and ice hockey all use a "best of" series format, giving them no opportunity to build the end of their season around one particular day.

The NFL and Superbowl Sunday have become American traditions unlike any other. Households that usually don't care about sports will often have the game on, just because that's what people do. The adverts have become big budget affairs, and watching the game 'for the commercials' is almost as popular as watching the game itself as companies seek to outdo each other with bigger and more elaborate spots. A 30 second Superbowl commercial costs a staggering \$4 million, but companies are lining up to pay this knowing that over 100 million viewers- almost a third of the entire population of the US- will be watching. In 2014, the Superbowl gathered 111.34 million viewers, making it the most watched show in the history of US television.

And "show" is the right word, because in addition to the game and the commercials, a big part of Superbowl is the half time show. A short concert by a popular music act is normally held during an extended half time break in the middle of the game. In 2004, the half time show gained notoriety when singer Janet Jackson revealed her breast on live TV for approximately half a second. The outrage in America was incredible, and provided a bemused international audience with some insight into an American culture that was fine with commercials showing guns and violence but went into uproar at the slightest hint of nudity on a 'family' show. Since then, half time shows have gotten bigger and longer, but are closely scrutinized to make sure nothing deemed "offensive" can possibly occur.

This year, the Superbowl will see one of four heavyweights compete. This weekend, the defending champion Seattle Seahawks will try to return to the Superbowl when they take on the Green Bay Packers, the third oldest team in the NFL, founded back in 1919. The other 'semi final' (known as a conference championship) sees the New England Patriots take on the Indianapolis Colts, two teams who have combined to play in eight of the past thirteen Superbowls. The Seahawks are currently the Bookmakers' favorite to win it all, but in central Illinois you'll probably find more Packers fans. There are at least two within the ISSS office alone.

So what should you do on Superbowl Sunday? Easy. Get together with some friends, eat some food that's loaded with calories, comment that the adverts weren't very good this year, and watch the first half of the game before slumping into a bit of a food coma. It's tradition!



ISSS Romantic Movie Picks



In honor of Valentine's Day, celebrated in the United States each year on February 14, the ISSS staff has shared their favorite cinematic love stories. So, grab some popcorn, get comfy, and prepare for a heart-warming movie-watching experience:

Afroza: *Up* (2009) - The story of a widower's ode to his dead wife, fulfilling his final promise to her: to have the adventure of a lifetime. Along way, he rediscovers the child within and develops an unlikely friendship with a fellow, albeit much younger, adventurer.

Briaunna: *Love & Other Drugs* (2010) - I love this movie because it shows how relationships can be affected by so many outside factors but as long as the love is true and strong, it can withstand anything.

Carol: *Return to Me* (2000) - with Minnie Driver and David Duchovny - It was filmed in Chicago and a lot of the story takes place at Lincoln Park Zoo. It's sweet and funny with a great soundtrack of classic songs and a very cozy feel. Without giving too much away, it involves an Irish/Italian restaurant, gorillas, and a heart transplant.

Cheryl: *The Princess Bride* (1987) - It's funny and sweet and has tons of quotable lines. And since it's not a "kissing book," the whole family can watch it together!

Guaxara: *Emma* (1996) - A film based on wonderful Jane Austen's novel of the same name. It is the story of a young, pretty and smart lady who wants to play the role of Eros and help other young women to find a husband and she accidentally falls in love with one of the candidates.

Jennie: *Before Sunrise* (1995), *Before Sunset* (2004), *Before Midnight* (2013) - It's impossible to choose just one. The trilogy follows the main characters through their first encounter in Vienna, their reunion in Paris 10 years later, and finally finds them again, another ten years later in Greece. Throughout the films, seemingly mundane conversations and interactions beautifully illustrate complex underlying emotions. Each movie leaves you wondering what will happen next, and hoping that love will find a way.

Julie: *A Guy Named Joe* (1943) - starring Spencer Tracy, Irene Dunne and Van Johnson - This movie was made during the height of World War II and tells the story of Army pilot Pete and his ferry pilot girlfriend Dorinda. When Pete is killed in action he goes on to become a guardian angel for pilot-in-training Ted. Ted meets Dorinda and poor Pete is at odds between his love for Dorinda and his duty to Ted. This movie has one of my favorite final lines, and Dorinda's strong female lead makes this one of my all-time favorites.

Lily: *Once* (2007) - A film about friendship and a mutual love for music that never quite manifests into a romantic love, complete with a hauntingly beautiful and emotionally charged soundtrack including the Oscar winning "Falling Slowly."

Nancy: *Casablanca* (1942) - I like movies where the couple is prevented from living happily ever after, but instead live with their undying love in secret, in silence, and forever in separation.

It's more heart wrenching and romantic than at the end of most films where one is relieved to see the couple live happily ever after. Because life is not Paradise and happily ever after for a couple is not really the best description for what's really going to happen for them even if it will be positive for the most part (we hope).

I feel like in *Casablanca* the Ultimate true love is preserved in the fact that they separate at the height of their romantic years, when they are still young and beautiful, and in tumultuous circumstances that they cannot change.

Martin: *Groundhog Day* (1993) - This movie accomplishes an incredibly rare feat- a romantic comedy that doesn't forget the comedy. A genuinely funny classic with a unique story.

Nick: *Philadelphia Story* (1940) - This is a hilarious, five-laughs-per-minute romantic comedy with surprisingly deep and relevant themes: economics, class, privacy vs. TMZ-style shock journalism, and whether a person can really change. Can lost love be regained? Can we find love where we least expect it? I know this: you'll find love and lots of laughs in this classic.

Stephanie: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) - It's one of my favorite movies because it shows that even if a relationship ends badly, the pain is usually worth it, because of the love.

