

The San José State University

**Departments of Political Science, History, Anthropology,
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The Spring 2002 Don Edwards Lecture

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Gloria Steinem

Feminist, Author, and Co-founder of Ms. Magazine

" 21st Century Feminism "

Wednesday, February 13, 2002

7:00 - 8:15 p.m.

Tonight's Speaker

Gloria Steinem

Feminist, Author, and Co-founder of Ms. Magazine

Gloria Steinem - feminist, writer and co-founder of Ms. Magazine - embodies the idea of equal rights for women. Gloria Steinem grew up quicker than most children -she was forced to. Born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1934 to a travelling antiques dealer dad and a chronically depressed mom, her parents divorced at a time when most couples stuck it out. When her father moved to California and her older sister went off to college, Steinem was left alone to care for an emotionally unstable mother.

Steinem found her escape through books and movies. She often read up to three books a night and visited the movie theater every weekend when she could scrounge up the pocket money.

As Steinem neared the end of her high school years, her sister at last realized the severity of their mother's condition and invited her younger sibling to live with her in Washington DC; their father agreed to care for their mother in Steinem's absence. Steinem flourished during her senior year of high school - it was the first time that she was able to focus on herself. Soon, she was off to Smith College. As a government major, activism became her passion.

When Steinem became pregnant during her junior year, she opted not to marry her fiancé and raise a family. Instead, she had an abortion abroad (the procedure was illegal in the United States) and broke off the wedding. She didn't want to make the mistake she believed her mother had made.

After the abortion, Steinem spent time travelling India. When she returned, she was ready to write about the female oppression and nonviolent protest she had witnessed. In 1959, she moved to New York City in pursuit of a reporting job, and quickly discovered that very few women were getting hired for such work. Eventually, she landed a job as an editorial assistant at *Help!* magazine, and then freelanced for *Esquire*, *Glamour* and *Show* magazines. She went undercover for the latter publication as a Playboy bunny for the famed story entitled "A Bunny Tale."

But it wasn't until 1968 that Steinem got to sink her teeth into a bona fide political story: the presidential campaign of Senator George McGovern. Her stories led to a position at *New York* magazine. Soon, she turned her full attention to the feminist movement: writing articles, raising funds and tirelessly touring the country, talking about women's liberation.

In 1972, Steinem co-founded *Ms.* magazine, the first publication for and by women that addressed women's issues in a serious way. Since then, she has founded several organizations, including the Ms. Foundation, the National Women's Political Caucus and the Coalition of Labor Union Women. She has also authored several best-selling books including, "Revolution From Within: A Book of Self-Esteem" and "Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions."

Although Steinem once shunned marriage and motherhood, in September 2000, at 66 years old, the most famous Ms. became a Mrs., marrying David Bale, 61.

(Source: www.lifetimetv.com)