

Strength to strength



“Women must tell men always that they are the strong ones. They are the big, the strong, the wonderful. In truth, women are the strong ones.”  
Coco Chanel (1883-1971), designer



“I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others.”  
Amelia Earhart (1897-1937), aviation pioneer



“A woman with a voice is by definition a strong woman. But the search to find that voice can be remarkably difficult.”  
Melinda Gates (1964- ), businesswoman and philanthropist



RUN THE WORLD, GIRLS

From left to right: Beyoncé, Angelina Jolie, Amal Clooney, Joanna Lumley, Taylor Swift, Oprah Winfrey, Victoria Beckham and Emma Watson

Powerful and polished, Jackie Kennedy was a game-changer for women. **Alix O’Neill** lines up the leading ladies blazing a trail in the 21st century

When Beyoncé performed her new single, *Formation*, at last year’s Superbowl – a homage to Malcolm X and the Black Lives Matter movement – the world sat up and paid attention. Likewise, during her Mrs Carter tour in 2013, the singer belted out hits in front of a screen bearing the legend “feminist” in bold, unapologetic lettering. Few male performers can get away with politicising mainstream pop while retaining their global superstar status, but Beyoncé can bring contentious issues such as race and gender parity to the fore and still send us wild with a solitary line from *Single Ladies*. The Texan powerhouse isn’t the only female entertainer with serious clout. Country singer-turned-pop sensation Taylor Swift has introduced a whole new generation to girl power. Although some have dismissed Swift’s ever-present squad of celebrity girlfriends as feminism-lite,

the *Shake It Off* star’s ability to spark debate can’t be denied. Then there’s the ultimate influencer, Oprah Winfrey. Literature selected for the Oprah Book Club is guaranteed to receive a spike in sales (Oprah’s impact on business is estimated to be worth billions), a phenomenon described as the “Oprah effect”. In fact, it’s been posited that the media giant and talk show host’s endorsement of Barack Obama played a crucial role in his landing the presidency in 2008. Never before have women made such an impact on the world stage. You don’t need to look very far for examples of strong female leaders in every field, women who are steadily reshaping those fields. Over the past 50 years, the economic empowerment of women in the West has revolutionised societies. In the UK, women are now 35 per cent more likely than men to go to university, while the number of women on the boards of FTSE 100 companies has more than doubled since 2011.

“Around the world, patriarchy is losing ground

One area where women are making serious inroads is politics. In Britain, the SNP, Green Party, Plaid Cymru and DUP currently have a woman at the helm, and, of course, there’s our prime minister, Theresa May. German chancellor Angela Merkel continues to dominate European politics, and in Iceland female candidates recently won a record 30 of its parliament’s 63 seats (after the 2008 crash, it was women who stepped in to get the country back on its feet). Last year, the US had its first female presidential candidate. Around the world, patriarchy is losing ground. It’s a far cry from the days when women had to use stealth in order to get ahead, says Dr Christine Cheng, a lecturer at King’s College London, who has been researching women’s roles in politics. “The trend for women taking on more positions of power is a tremendous change because it creates a pathway for future generations of women to take up similarly influential positions. Part of what the

likes of Hillary Clinton are doing is demonstrating that it’s normal for women to hold these positions of power and to say yes, we can do this and do this well, and be strong role models for other potential female leaders.” Powerful women are also using their influence to effect meaningful change in humanitarian fields. Although a man was appointed the successor to Ban Ki Moon in last year’s UN secretary-general election, seven out of the 13 candidates were women. Meanwhile, some of the organisation’s most high-profile campaigners are female. In her role as a goodwill ambassador, Emma Watson has tackled gender inequality and the assault of women on university campuses. Another tireless human rights advocate is Angelina Jolie, who has raised awareness of many refugee crises. Victoria Beckham has used her celebrity to highlight the HIV and Aids epidemic in Africa. And Joanna Lumley’s campaigning was instrumental in the British government deciding to

allow Gurkha veterans to settle in Britain. And forget George – the only Clooney grabbing the headlines these days is Amal. The human rights lawyer has been involved in a string of high-profile international cases, representing the likes of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. The rise of women is all down to education, says Cheng. “As the female-to-male ratio for years of schooling has reached parity around the world, there’s been a gradual emancipation and empowerment of women. With a more educated population of female citizens, women are better able to demand their rights and fight for them. I’m of a generation where we didn’t talk about feminism – it was a dirty word. This isn’t the case in the same way any more. That’s a real sea change.” Of course, there’s plenty more work to be done – men continue to dominate boardrooms – but Cheng is sanguine. “When we show what successful female leadership looks like, we create new norms. This is a long-term trend.”

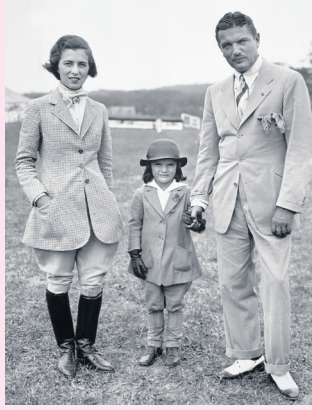
COVER ILLUSTRATION: NOMA BAR. THIS PAGE: GETTY, ALAMY, REX



A life less ordinary

Jackie Kennedy lived the heavenly highs and hellish lows of life in the full glare of the media spotlight, writes **Zoe Gibson**

Think of America’s First Ladies and chances are that, after Michelle Obama, the first one to spring to mind will be Jacqueline Kennedy. She was born on Long Island in 1929 to the socialite Janet Lee Bouvier and John Vernou Bouvier III, a stockbroker of French descent. After graduating from George Washington University, she took her first job as an “inquiring photographer” for the *Washington Times-Herald*. She met the aspiring congressman John Fitzgerald Kennedy at a dinner party. Neither lacked in looks or charm, and both came from powerful Catholic families. John proposed in 1953 and they married a year later – the wedding was the social event of the season. Jacqueline had a miscarriage and a stillbirth before her first child, Caroline Bouvier Kennedy, was born in 1957. John F Kennedy Jr followed just two weeks after his father won the presidency in 1960. To a nation in the throes of the Cold War, the Kennedys were a welcome distraction and Jackie was seen as the ideal woman – not only did she bring babies into the White House for the first time in half a century, she came with her own inimitable sense of culture and fashion. But tragedy struck again as Patrick Bouvier Kennedy was born five weeks premature in August 1963 and lived for just



Above: JFK and Jackie in 1953 after announcing their engagement. Left: with her parents as a young girl

“I kept bending over him, saying, ‘Jack, Jack, I love you, Jack’

39 hours. The loss of another child deeply affected Jackie, but she had little time to recover as, less than four months later, her husband was shot dead in the seat next to her in the presidential limousine. The image of Jackie, her pink Chanel suit spattered with blood, sent shockwaves around the world. Although her exact feelings at that moment are impossible to imagine, an interview for *Life* magazine gives us the inside track on her private thoughts. Jackie is in cinemas from January 20