

Marjory Stoneman Douglas

From Wikipedia:

Marjory Stoneman Douglas (April 7, 1890 – May 14, 1998) was an American journalist, author, women's suffrage advocate, and conservationist known for her staunch defense of the [Everglades](#) against efforts to drain it and reclaim land for development. Moving to Miami as a young woman to work for *The Miami Herald*, she became a [freelance writer](#), producing over a hundred [short stories](#) that were published in popular magazines. Her most influential work was the book *The Everglades: River of Grass* (1947), which redefined the popular conception of the Everglades as a treasured river instead of a worthless swamp. Its impact has been compared to that of [Rachel Carson's](#) influential book *Silent Spring* (1962). Her books, stories, and journalism career brought her influence in Miami, enabling her to advance her causes.

As a young woman Douglas was outspoken and politically conscious of the [women's suffrage](#) and [civil rights](#) movements. She was called upon to take a central role in the protection of the Everglades when she was 79 years old. For the remaining 29 years of her life she was "a relentless reporter and fearless crusader" for the natural preservation and restoration of South Florida.^[1] Her tireless efforts earned her several variations of the nickname "Grande Dame of the Everglades"^[2] as well as the hostility of agricultural and business interests looking to benefit from land development in Florida. She received numerous awards, including the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), and was inducted into several halls of fame.

Douglas lived to 108, working until nearly the end of her life for Everglades restoration. Upon her death, an obituary in *The Independent* in London stated, "In the history of the American environmental movement, there have been few more remarkable figures than Marjory Stoneman Douglas."^[3]

Activism

Women's suffrage was an early interest of Douglas, and although she tended to shy away from polemics in her early work at *The Miami Herald*, on her third day as a society columnist, she chose suffrage and began to focus on writing about women in leadership positions.^[48] In 1917, she traveled with Mary Baird Bryan, [William Jennings Bryan's](#) wife, and two other women to Tallahassee to speak in support of women's right to vote. Douglas was not impressed with the reception the group got from the Florida Legislature. She wrote about her experience later: "All four of us spoke to a joint committee wearing our best hats. Talking to them was like talking to [graven images](#). They never paid attention to us at all."^[49] Douglas was able to vote for the first time after she returned from Europe in 1920.

Using her influence at *The Miami Herald*, Douglas wrote columns about poverty:

You can have the most beautiful city in the world as appearance goes, the streets may be clean and shining, the avenues broad and tree lined, the public buildings dignified, adequate and well kept ... but if you have a weak or inadequate health department, or a public opinion lax on the subject, all the splendors of your city will have not value.^[50]

In 1948 Douglas served on the Coconut Grove Slum Clearance Committee, with a friend of hers named Elizabeth Virrick, who was horrified to learn that no running water or [sewers](#) were connected to the [racially segregated](#) part of Coconut Grove. They helped pass a law requiring all homes in Miami to have toilets and bathtubs. In the two years it took them to get the [referendum](#) passed, they worked to set up a loan operation for the black residents of Coconut Grove, who borrowed the money interest-free to pay for the plumbing work. Douglas noted that all of the money loaned was repaid.^[51]

Everglades work

Stoneman Douglas became involved in the Everglades in the 1920s, when she joined the board of the Everglades Tropical National Park Committee, a group led by [Ernest F. Coe](#) and dedicated to the idea of making a national park in the Everglades. By the 1960s, the Everglades were in imminent danger of disappearing forever because of gross mismanagement in the name of progress and real estate and agricultural development. Encouraged to get involved by the leaders of environmental groups, in 1969—at the age of 79—Douglas founded [Friends of the Everglades](#) to protest the construction of a [jetport in the Big Cypress](#) portion of the Everglades. She justified her involvement saying, "It is a woman's business to be interested in the environment. It's an extended form of housekeeping."^[23]

She toured the state giving "hundreds of ringing denunciations" of the airport project,^[52] and increased membership of Friends of the Everglades to 3,000 within three years. She ran the public information operation full-time from her home and encountered hostility from the jetport's developers and backers, who called her a "damn butterfly chaser".^[53] President [Richard Nixon](#), however, scrapped funding for the project due to the efforts of many Everglades watchdog groups.

Douglas continued her activism and focused her efforts on [restoring the Everglades](#) after declaring that "Conservation is now a dead word... You can't conserve what you haven't got."^[54] Her criticism was directed at two entities she considered were doing the most damage to the Everglades. A coalition of [sugarcane](#) growers, named Big Sugar, she accused of polluting [Lake Okeechobee](#) by pumping water tainted with chemicals, human waste, and garbage back into the lake, which served as the fresh water source for the [Miami metropolitan area](#).^[55] She compared Florida sugarcane agriculture to sugarcane grown in the [West Indies](#), which, she claimed, was more environmentally sound, had a longer harvest cycle less harmful to soil nutrients, and was less expensive for consumers due to the higher sugar content.^[56]

Besides Big Sugar, Douglas spoke about the damage the [Army Corps of Engineers](#) was doing to the Everglades by diverting the natural flow of water. The Corps was responsible for constructing more than 1,400 miles (2,300 km) of canals to divert water away from the Everglades after 1947. When the Central & South Florida Project (C&SF), run by former members of the Corps of Engineers, was proposed to assist the Everglades, Douglas initially gave it her approval, as it promised to deliver much-needed water to the shrinking Everglades. However, in application, the project instead diverted more water away from the Everglades, changed water schedules to meet sugarcane farmers' irrigation needs, and flat-out refused to release water to Everglades National Park, until much of the land was unrecognizable.^{[53][57]} "What a liar I turned out to be!" remarked Douglas, then suggested the motivation behind all the digging and diversion in saying, "Their mummies obviously never let them play with mud pies, so now they take it out on us by playing with cement".^[58]

Douglas was giving a speech addressing the harmful practices of the Army Corps of Engineers when the [colonel](#) in attendance dropped his pen on the floor. As he was stooping to pick it up, Douglas stopped her speech and said to him, "Colonel! You can crawl under that table and hide, but you can't get away from me!"^[59]

In 1973, Douglas attended a meeting addressing conservation of the Everglades in [Everglades City](#), and was observed by John Rothchild:

Mrs. Douglas was half the size of her fellow speakers and she wore huge dark glasses, which along with the huge floppy hat made her look like [Scarlett O'Hara](#) as played by [Igor Stravinsky](#). When she spoke, everybody stopped slapping mosquitoes and more or less came to order. She reminded us all of our responsibility to nature and I don't remember what else. Her voice had the sobering effect of a one-room schoolmarm's. The tone itself seemed to tame the rowdiest of the local stone crabbers, plus the developers, and the lawyers on both sides. I wonder if it didn't also intimidate the mosquitoes ... The request for a Corps of Engineers permit was eventually turned down. This was no surprise to those of us who'd heard her speak.^[13]

Douglas was not well received by some audiences. She opposed the drainage of a suburb in [Dade County](#) named East Everglades. After the county approved building permits in the Everglades, the land flooded as it had for centuries. When homeowners demanded the Army Corps of Engineers drain their neighborhoods, she was the only opposing voice. At the hearing in 1983, she was booed, jeered, and shouted at by the audience of residents. "Can't you boo any louder than that?" she chided, eventually making them laugh. "Look. I'm an old lady. I've been here since eight o'clock. It's now eleven. I've got all night, and I'm used to the heat," she told them.^[60] Later, she wrote, "They're all good souls—they just shouldn't be out there."^[61] Dade County commissioners eventually decided not to drain.

Florida Governor [Lawton Chiles](#) explained her impact, saying, "Marjory was the first voice to really wake a lot of us up to what we were doing to our quality of life. She was not just a pioneer of the environmental movement, she was a prophet, calling out to us to save the environment for our children and our grandchildren."^[23]

Other causes^[edit]

Douglas also served as a charter member of the first [American Civil Liberties Union](#) chapter organized in the South in the 1950s.^[53] She lent her support to the [Equal Rights Amendment](#), speaking to the legislature in Tallahassee urging them to ratify it. In the 1980s Douglas lent her support to the Florida Rural Legal Services, a group that worked to protect [migrant farm workers](#) who were centered on [Belle Glade](#), and who were primarily employed by the sugarcane industry. She wrote to Governor [Bob Graham](#) in 1985 to encourage him to assess the conditions the migrant workers endured.^[53] The same year, Douglas approached the Dade County School Board and insisted that the Biscayne Nature Center, which had been housed in hot dog stands, needed a building of its own. The center received a portable building until 1991 when the Florida Department of Education endowed \$1.8 million for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center in [Crandon Park](#).^[62] Douglas co-founded the Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Libraries with her longtime friend Helen Muir, and served as its first president.^[63]

Stoneman Douglas High School shooting

On the afternoon of February 14, 2018, a [mass shooting](#) occurred at [Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School](#) in [Parkland, Florida](#). Seventeen people were killed and fourteen more were taken to hospitals, making it one of the world's [deadliest school massacres](#).^{[2][3]} The suspected perpetrator, 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz, was identified by witnesses and arrested shortly afterward. He confessed, according to the [Broward County Sheriff's Office](#) (BSO).^[4] He was charged with 17 counts of [premeditated murder](#).

The BSO received [tips](#) in 2016 and 2017 about Cruz's threats to carry out a school shooting. The FBI received a tip in September 2017 that a YouTube user called "nikolas cruz" wanted "to be a professional school shooter". In January 2018, the FBI's hotline received another tip, which alleged that Cruz had made a death threat and could potentially shoot up a school.

Police and prosecutors have not yet established a motive and are investigating "a pattern of disciplinary issues and unnerving behavior".^[5] Some of the students who survived the shooting became [gun control](#) activists and founded the advocacy group [Never Again MSD](#)





Former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords said the shooting should “strike fear into all Americans,” while calling on Congress to enact stricter gun control legislation. “Is it safe to send our kids to school? Are we safe in our homes and communities?” the former Congresswoman, who survived a shooting in 2011 wrote on Twitter.

[14 Feb](#)



[Gabrielle Giffords](#)

[Replying to @GabbyGiffords](#)

Defenders of the status quo - advocates of the gun industry & the politicians paid to defend it - will tell you that events like these are virtual acts of nature, products of mental illness or bad parenting, beyond our ability to control. This couldn't be further from the truth.



[Gabrielle Giffords](#)

Every day we fail to take action, we chose this fate. We tolerate politicians who fail to acknowledge this crisis and vote against our safety. We let our gun violence epidemic continue day after deadly day.

[6:13 PM - Feb 14, 2018](#)

March For Our Lives

Mission Statement

Not one more. We cannot allow one more child to be shot at school. We cannot allow one more teacher to make a choice to jump in front of a firing assault rifle to save the lives of students. We cannot allow one more family to wait for a call or text that never comes. Our schools are unsafe. Our children and teachers are dying. We must make it our top priority to save these lives.

March For Our Lives is created by, inspired by, and led by students across the country who will no longer risk their lives waiting for someone else to take action to stop the epidemic of mass school shootings that has become all too familiar. In the tragic wake of the seventeen lives brutally cut short in Florida, politicians are telling us that now is not the time to talk about guns. March For Our Lives believes the time is now.

On March 24, the kids and families of March For Our Lives will take to the streets of Washington, DC to demand that their lives and safety become a priority. The collective voices of the March For Our Lives movement will be heard.

School safety is not a political issue. There cannot be two sides to doing everything in our power to ensure the lives and futures of children who are at risk of dying when they should be learning, playing, and growing. The mission and focus of March For Our Lives is to demand that a comprehensive and effective bill be immediately brought before Congress to address these gun issues. No special interest group, no political agenda is more critical than timely passage of legislation to effectively address the gun violence issues that are rampant in our country.

Every kid in this country now goes to school wondering if this day might be their last. We live in fear.

It doesn't have to be this way. Change is coming. And it starts now, inspired by and led by the kids who are our hope for the future. Their young voices will be heard.

Stand with us on March 24. Refuse to allow one more needless death.

MARCH FOR OUR LIVES!

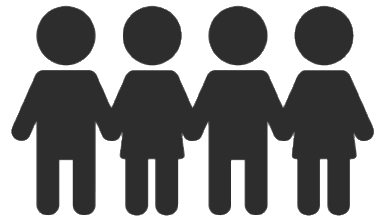
On March 24, the kids and families of March For Our Lives will take to the streets of Washington DC to demand that their lives and safety become a priority and that we end this epidemic of mass school shootings. The collective voices of the March For Our Lives movement will be heard. Join us in DC or march in your own community.

www.marchforourlives.com

MARCH

FOR OUR

LIVES



Survivors of the shooting demand gun control

The teenagers who survived the shooting at their school have called on the nation's leaders to immediately work to enact stricter gun control laws to prevent another massacre from occurring in the United States.

In the days after surviving the horrific event, students participated in a protest demanding gun control and more than 100 of them are planning on visiting the state capital in Tallahassee to speak with state lawmakers. On Sunday, students announced their upcoming "March for Our Lives" in Washington, D.C., and at other cities around the country on March 24.

"My message for the people in office is this: You're either with us or against us," Cameron Kasky, a junior at the high school, told CNN. "We are losing our lives while the adults are playing around."

Students like Emma Gonzalez, who gave an impassioned speech Saturday that made waves around the country, have criticized politicians like President Donald Trump, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Florida Gov. Rick Scott for accepting donations from the National Rifle Association. Part of the upcoming march, the students have said, is to raise awareness about the lawmakers who have received donations from the NRA and hold them accountable for the mass shootings in the U.S.

TIME

By [LISA MARIE SEGARRA](#), [KATIE REILLY](#), [ELI MEIXLER](#), and [JENNIFER CALFAS](#)

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