

This Day in History... September 22, 1949

American Business Women's Association

The American Business Women's Association was founded on September 22, 1949, to bring together business women from all occupations to help each other. Since 1983, this date has been celebrated as American Business Women's Day.

During World War II, women were encouraged more than ever to join the workforce. Posters and propaganda were meant to convince women that it was their patriotic duty to contribute to the war effort by taking on the jobs left by the men who went off to fight in the war. After the war ended, many of these women lost their jobs.



*from the Celebrate the Century
– 1940s sheet*

In 1949, Kansas City businessman Hilary Bufton Jr. recognized the situation these women faced and acknowledged the benefits expanding women's opportunities in the workforce. On September 22, 1949, he met with business women Shirley Cupp, Irma Beisel, and Frances Stuckey at a local coffee shop. Together they established the American Business Women's Association. Bufton later wrote, "it was my feeling all women were seeking and deserved equal business opportunities. They had gained tremendous knowledge during World War II, through necessity, and I felt a new organization for all businesswomen was needed."

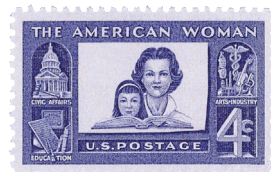
It was uncommon and at the time for women to pursue full-time careers or join such an association. Bufton later recalled, "In many ways, the first generation of ABWA members were the breaking tradition... Without even knowing it, I guess they were paving the way for today's women."

The association's first chapter, dubbed the "Pioneer Chapter" was created on November 21, 1949. Four years later, the organization established the Stephen Bufton memorial Education Fund, to help women meet their professional goals with the aid of grants and interest-free loans. Local chapters, individual members, and other people and corporations support this fund. To date, the fund has given out more than \$7.5 million in loans and grants. The association also established the President's Scholarship for its 20th anniversary in 1969. Each year, this \$3,000 scholarship is awarded for graduate study in a discipline specified by the board of trustees. Two more scholarships were introduced in 1986, which are both valued at \$10,000.



*From the Celebrate the Century
– 1970s sheet*

In 1983, the first American Business Women's Day was celebrated on September 22. It was then recognized by a Congressional resolution and presidential proclamation in 1986, and has been celebrated annually ever since. American Business Women's Day celebrates the legacy and contributions of more than 68 million working women and 7.7 million women business owners. It's also a chance to local chapters and business women to share their accomplishments with their communities and beyond.



*Stamp paid tribute to American
women and their accomplishments.*



*From the World War II 1942: Into
the Battle sheet*

The mission of the association is "to bring together businesswomen of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership; education, networking support and national recognition." The organization is open to women in all stages of their careers and all professions – including teachers, administrative assistants, small business owners, and more. There are currently 15,000 members across the country in 400 chapters in all 50 states and over 20 different industries.

This Day in History... September 22, 1949

American Business Women's Association

The American Business Women's Association was founded on September 22, 1949, to bring together business women from all occupations to help each other. Since 1983, this date has been celebrated as American Business Women's Day.

During World War II, women were encouraged more than ever to join the workforce. Posters and propaganda were meant to convince women that it was their patriotic duty to contribute to the war effort by taking on the jobs left by the men who went off to fight in the war. After the war ended, many of these women lost their jobs.



*from the Celebrate the Century
– 1940s sheet*

In 1949, Kansas City businessman Hilary Bufton Jr. recognized the situation these women faced and acknowledged the benefits expanding women's opportunities in the workforce. On September 22, 1949, he met with business women Shirley Cupp, Irma Beisel, and Frances Stuckey at a local coffee shop. Together they established the American Business Women's Association. Bufton later wrote, "it was my feeling all women were seeking and deserved equal business opportunities. They had gained tremendous knowledge during World War II, through necessity, and I felt a new organization for all businesswomen was needed."

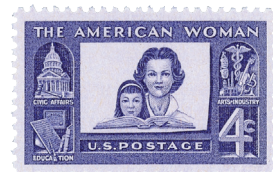
It was uncommon and at the time for women to pursue full-time careers or join such an association. Bufton later recalled, "In many ways, the first generation of ABWA members were the breaking tradition... Without even knowing it, I guess they were paving the way for today's women."

The association's first chapter, dubbed the "Pioneer Chapter" was created on November 21, 1949. Four years later, the organization established the Stephen Bufton memorial Education Fund, to help women meet their professional goals with the aid of grants and interest-free loans. Local chapters, individual members, and other people and corporations support this fund. To date, the fund has given out more than \$7.5 million in loans and grants. The association also established the President's Scholarship for its 20th anniversary in 1969. Each year, this \$3,000 scholarship is awarded for graduate study in a discipline specified by the board of trustees. Two more scholarships were introduced in 1986, which are both valued at \$10,000.



*From the Celebrate the Century
– 1970s sheet*

In 1983, the first American Business Women's Day was celebrated on September 22. It was then recognized by a Congressional resolution and presidential proclamation in 1986, and has been celebrated annually ever since. American Business Women's Day celebrates the legacy and contributions of more than 68 million working women and 7.7 million women business owners. It's also a chance to local chapters and business women to share their accomplishments with their communities and beyond.



*Stamp paid tribute to American
women and their accomplishments.*



*From the World War II 1942: Into
the Battle sheet*

The mission of the association is "to bring together businesswomen of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership; education, networking support and national recognition." The organization is open to women in all stages of their careers and all professions – including teachers, administrative assistants, small business owners, and more. There are currently 15,000 members across the country in 400 chapters in all 50 states and over 20 different industries.