

standing up for the right for girls to be educated, she started her university life at Oxford. Empower a girl and change the world.

There are girls who dare to dream to be rocket scientists, mathematicians and shipbuilders and, yes, prime minister.

There are young women who grasp that second chance and build something great. There are women who fought for those second chances.

And there are the mothers, the single moms who so often sacrifice their dreams, so their kids can live theirs.

They are all making a mark. Some make it quietly, others with breathtaking boldness.

Yes, it's 2017 and many of us thought the days of making firsts would be long behind us.

And yet we still count. We count because there are so many barriers still to be broken. Not broken for the one or two or three of us, but truly broken, shattered for all women and for all time.

But nearly every single day, we are reminded how fragile the gains made in the advancement of women's equality really are.

We were reminded when the federal Conservatives tried to install an anti-choice candidate as chair of the Parliamentary Committee on the Status of Women.

Let's be clear. The right to choose is fundamental to women's equality. Full stop. No caveats.

So yes, it's 2017 and a major political party in Canada still works to deny women reproductive rights.

And yes, every day, girls and boys are reminded of the sexism that still permeates every facet of life.

There is the blatant, in-your-face sexism of the kind employed by MP Gerry Ritz when he referred to the country's environment minister, Catherine McKenna, as "Climate Barbie."

There is the sometimes subtler, sometimes not-so-subtle sexism that women face at work.

And there is the sexism and violence girls see and internalize every day.

In 2012, the United Nations declared Oct. 11th the International Day of the Girl.