

## Outstanding in Their Field

*by Suzy Hopkins*

The first elected female leader of South Korea is Park Geun-hye (last name is said first). She pledged to secure South Korea against the threat of an increasingly hostile North Korea with nuclear ambitions. She is the daughter of leaders who were assassinated by their staff members. She was attacked by a man at a political rally in 2006 that left an 11 centimeter wound across her cheek. Her country has one of the world's highest levels of gender inequality. Some Korean women feel her election is a step in the right direction for their futures.

The first female much respected Secretary of State of the United States was Madeline Albright. She was born in Czechoslovakia. Her Jewish family escaped when the Nazis invaded. Three of her relatives were killed during the holocaust. She performed her job with class and intelligence.

Africa's first female president is Liberian senior citizen Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. She started her second term in 2011 at the same time as she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work promoting reconciliation in civil-war-torn Liberia. She has been jailed and exiled and yet she wanted to make a difference in her country where all infrastructure including roads, the airport and the power plant had been destroyed. She has made small but important changes that made her countrymen's lives less bleak.

The first Catholic President of the United States was John F. Kennedy. The Irish were mafia-like and much feared and hated though powerful in Boston. He managed to convince enough Americans that he was going to work for them, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish in order to get elected.

As the first "Black" President of the U.S. Barak Obama was disliked by both the blacks and whites since he came from both worlds. To Blacks he was too white. To Whites he was too black. He convinced enough voters that his aim was to represent all Americans. He will be successful if the Congress stops their endless obstructionism.

These courageous, driven humans overcame prejudice, discrimination and the mistaken judgment of many critics to become successful in their own right. Let them be examples to all the people who think they must accept the criticisms of those who want them to fail.