

# The Badass

These tough, outspoken, compassionate women are unstoppable in their pursuit of a better world



NAOMI WADLER



HANNAH GADSBY



MICHELLE OBAMA



SEN. MAZIE HIRONO



STELLA MCCARTNEY



ARIANA GRANDE

“I used to care way too much what others thought of me. Now I don’t give a hoot.”

—NAOMI WADLER



SIMONE BILES

SYLVIA ACEVEDO



DR. CHRISTINE BLASEY FORD



ANNE DE CARBUCCIA

### 1. MICHELLE OBAMA

With her memoir, *Becoming* (the best-selling book of 2018), still flying off the shelves and the Obama Foundation’s Global Girls Alliance supporting girls’ education, the former first lady is wielding her influence to empower us all. “My hope is that this book will inspire everyone to tap into their own journeys of becoming,” she said to a crowd on her book tour.

### 2. HANNAH GADSBY

“There is nothing stronger than a broken woman who has rebuilt

herself,” says the comedian in her Netflix special, *Nonette*, in which she subverts traditional stand-up by tackling traumatic events in her life while rejecting self-deprecating humor. Gadsby is a champion of everyone who has experienced homophobia, sexual violence, or misogyny.

### 3. NAOMI WADLER

At age 10, Wadler organized a walkout at her elementary school one month after the February 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Fla. She was then tapped to give a speech at the March for Our Lives rally in Washington, D.C. “That was the bravest thing I’ve ever done,” she says. “I used to care way too

much what others thought of me. Now I don’t give a hoot.”

### 4. DR. CHRISTINE BLASEY FORD

Her courage while testifying against Judge Brett Kavanaugh at his Supreme Court confirmation hearings ignited a global show of support from sexual-assault survivors and their allies. Now she plans to donate a portion of the more than \$647,000 raised for her on GoFundMe to organizations that support trauma survivors.

### 5. ANNE DE CARBUCCIA

The globe-trotting artist documents human-caused environmental issues by making

and photographing “time shrines.” She says, “You can communicate better through beauty and art than with harsh words and difficult images. It’s about telling a story and finding the keys to people’s hearts.”

### 6. SIMONE BILES

The gymnast made history as the first woman to win four all-around world championships. “When I compete, I give it my all and leave everything out on the floor,” says the 21-year-old, who also took home four gold medals at the 2016 Olympics. “It’s an incredible feeling to see all of my dreams come true.”

### 7. SYLVIA ACEVEDO

As a commissioner on the White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanics and the CEO of the Girl Scouts of the United States, the former rocket scientist advocates for young women. “Our Girl Scout programming gives girls a safe space to try, fail, and try again,” she says. “Having these important experiences early in life is the key to success.”

**8. ARIANA GRANDE**  
The 25-year-old pop star has had a tumultuous few years—the devastating bombing at her concert in Manchester, U.K.; the death of her ex, Mac Miller, last September; and a very public breakup with SNL’s Pete Davidson. With each hardship she’s responded with acts of kindness: a free benefit raising \$29 million for the Manchester victims, tributes to Miller, and defending Davidson from trolls. Her fourth album, *Sweetener*, which shot to No. 1 on iTunes, showcases her burgeoning confidence and maturity.

**9. STELLA MCCARTNEY**  
Long before banning fur was trending, the designer refused to use animal skins or PVC. “When I started my brand [in 2001], this was unheard of,” she says. Now she is helping to lead the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action in hopes of reducing global waste by 30 percent by 2030.

**10. GITANJALI RAO**  
Following the water crisis in Flint, Mich., Rao, then 11, invented a low-cost device that detects

lead in water, earning her the title of America’s Top Young Scientist. Her advice? “If you have an idea, go for it and have fun. Don’t be afraid to fail, because that’s just another step toward success.”

**11. SEN. MAZIE HIRONO**  
As she has spoken out over the past year about immigration, judicial nominees, and the treatment of Dr. Ford, the senator from Hawaii’s reputation for politeness has evolved into what NPR called a “quiet rage.” Said the Japan-born senator, the only immigrant in the chamber, “I’ve been a fighter all my life. I just don’t look like one.”

**12. DR. LEANA WEN**  
As immigrants without means, she and her family were patients at Planned Parenthood, so for the nonprofit’s new president, its mission to provide essential

health care is personal. “You have to be grounded in your beliefs and persistent in defending them,” says the former ER physician.

**13. REBECCA TRAISTER**  
The best-selling feminist author’s *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women’s Anger* was released amid the Kavanaugh hearings, when women needed it most. She says her inspirations are former California senator Barbara Boxer and Shirley Chisholm, the first black congresswoman: “My favorite thing Chisholm said was, ‘The law cannot do it for us. We must do it for ourselves. Women in this country must become revolutionaries.’ That’s badass.”

**14. ANGELA DAVIS**  
The civil rights activist has called for political and social reform to protect minorities from abuses of power in the criminal justice system since the ‘60s. Among her notable quotes: “You have to act as

she says. “I want to build a girls’ network so women have an even playing field.”

**16. WANURI KAHIU**  
When the release of the Kenyan director’s film *Rafiki* was prohibited by her government for promoting “lesbianism,” she went to court and won a lift on the ban. “I’ve learned that I’m stubborn,” she says. “And that freedom of expression is worth fighting for.”

**17. LYDIA VILLA-KOMAROFF**  
“We’ll make better decisions as a society if we take science seriously,” says the biologist, whose breakthrough discovery



A badass is someone confident enough to always lift other people up along the way with her.”

—PADMA LAKSHMI

is how bacteria can generate insulin. As one of the first Mexican-Americans to earn a science doctorate, she also co-founded the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science.

**18. EMILY SIOMA**  
The Miss America contestant from Michigan stole the show when she used her airtime to spotlight the water crisis in Flint. “I’m from the state with 84 percent of the U.S.’s fresh water but none for its residents to drink,” she said.

**19. TOLULOPE LEWIS-TAMOKA**  
The Africa program adviser for U.N. Women was instrumental in developing *Nia*, the first female character from Africa

on the animated children’s series *Thomas & Friends*. “[*Nia*] will push a new understanding of diversity, universal-ity, and gender equality, which is important for future global citizens,” she says.

**20. KAYLA MORRIS**  
By taking a knee during the national anthem at a game against the New York Giants, the San Francisco 49ers cheerleader boldly proclaimed her support of the NFL players who are protesting police brutality and racial injustice.

**21. NADIA MURAD**  
After escaping rape and torture by Islamic State militants, Murad has campaigned to bring to justice those who use sexual violence as a weapon of war. Now the Nobel Peace Prize laureate is donating all her

**23. ALY WAGNER**  
The sportscaster made history last summer as the first woman to call the men’s FIFA World Cup games on U.S. TV (she will be back at it this June when the women take the pitch). “If I hadn’t spoken up, no one would have thought to put a woman in my role,” she says. “You have to know who you are, where you want to go, and be brave.”

**24. GAYLE KING**  
Sure, she can count Oprah Winfrey and Michelle



MEHER TATNA

“I’m grateful to have a seat at the table where I know that we can make a difference.”

—GAYLE KING

prize money to help rebuild Sinjar, the Yazidi homeland in northern Iraq, which remains largely uninhabitable.

**22. MEHER TATNA**  
The President of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) is shining a bright light on the organization’s good deeds, like donating \$300,000 to help those affected by the Thousand Oaks shooting and California wildfires. “Everybody knows the Golden Globes, but nobody really knows the HFPA,” she says. “We are entertainment journalists year-round, and we’ve also given away \$33 million over the past 25 years.”

Obama as her closest friends, but King’s trajectory has been all her own. Starting off as a cub reporter in Kansas City, Mo., she went on to be a news anchor for 18 years in Connecticut. Now she co-hosts *CBS This Morning*. “It certainly is satisfying [having an impact]. That’s why when I hear ‘fake news,’ it makes me want to gnash my teeth to powder. I know everything to do with CBS is not fake news.”

**25. ANA MARIA ARCHILA**  
Last September the sexual-violence survivor confronted Sen. Jeff Flake in an elevator on live TV moments before he was



ELIZABETH COLOMBA

AARON PHILIP

NINA SHAW

the runway, paving the way for future models.

**27. FREIDA PINTO**  
From donating uneaten food from Oscars parties to the homeless to being an ambassador for Plan International, which addresses children’s rights, the actress-activist, who co-stars in the sex-trafficking drama *Love Sonia*, knows no bounds.

**28. ELIZABETH COLOMBA**  
“Don’t wait for encouragement, inspiration, or a muse. Show up to your easel, page, or instrument, and start,” says the Harlem-based artist, whose paintings look as if they were created during the Dutch Golden Age except the subjects are black women. “I reshape narratives so a

black individual in a period setting is no longer synonymous with subservience,” she has said.

**29. NINA SHAW**  
The power lawyer was essential in soliciting donations for the *Time’s Up* Legal Defense Fund, but she also closes big deals for her clients (like Ava DuVernay’s reported \$100 million deal with Warner Bros. TV). “When I started, there were very few lawyers of color, and I do believe my being who I am and being such a competitive person opened the door for many other people like me.”



GAYLE KING



KAYLA MORRIS (center)



ANGELA DAVIS



PADMA LAKSHMI



WANURI KAHIU

if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”

**15. PADMA LAKSHMI**  
Since writing a *New York Times* op-ed about being sexually abused, the *Top Chef* host has devoted her platform to lifting girls up through *Time’s Up* and beyond. “There’s always been this old boys’ network,”



EMILY SIOMA



GITANJALI RAO



VICTORIA  
TSAI



VIOLA  
DAVIS



KIM  
PETRAS



WHITNEY  
WOLFE HERD

“If I inspire one person to be happy or to not give up, that would make me really proud.”  
—KIM PETRAS

### 30. JACINDA ARDERN

The prime minister of New Zealand (and youngest female world leader) has been a solid role model for working mothers, becoming the first to breast-feed an infant at the U.N. General Assembly.

### 31. VICTORIA TSAI

Before her skin-care brand, Tatcha, was profitable, Tsai made a commitment that for every product sold, the company would fund a full day of school for girls around the world in partnership with Room to Read. “This is baked into the DNA of our brand,” she says. “To date we’ve [provided] over two million days of school.”

### 32. VIOLA DAVIS

Whether she’s pulling off a high-stakes heist or bringing a class-action lawsuit to the

Supreme Court, no one plays a badass better than Davis. Behind the scenes she highlights diversity. “I started my production company, JuVee Productions, with my husband because I got tired of always celebrating movies that didn’t have ‘me’ in it,” she said in an awards speech. “And I don’t mean ‘me’ as Viola, I mean ‘me’ as a black woman.”

### 33. NADYA OKAMOTO

At 16, she founded Period, an NGO that aims to destigmatize menstruation and eradicate period poverty (not being able to afford sanitary products and resorting to using unsafe materials). Now 20, she is taking a break from Harvard to continue her crusade because, she says, “menstrual hygiene isn’t a privilege; it’s a right.”

### 34. BLYTHE HILL

Since launching her fashion-centered nonprofit, DresseMber, in 2013, Hill has raised over \$5 million for human-trafficking victims. “A badass woman has a vision and goes for it,” she says. “She also doesn’t take shit from anyone.”

### 35. WHITNEY WOLFE HERD

She changed the dating game with her Bumble app, where women reach out first. Now her empire includes female-first professional networking (Bumble Bizz) and friend finding (Bumble BFF), with more than 43 million users. “A badass has an unwillingness to

built the commands that communicate with InSight, the first spacecraft studying Mars’s deep interior. “As a young woman of color, it was hard to feel like I deserved a seat at the table, but I learned to trust my judgment and to find allies who gave me a voice,” she says. “Now I literally get to talk to a robot on another planet!”

### 38. KIM PETRAS

When President Trump released a memo targeting the transgender community, the German pop star (who underwent gender confirmation surgery at age 16) penned a moving essay in support of LGBTQIA rights. “If I inspire one person to be happy or to not give up, that would make me really proud,” she says.



DR. MICHELLE  
OAKLEY

be held back,” she says. “And total confidence in making the first move.”

### 36. LYNZY LAB

After her original song “A Scary Time (for Boys),” which parodied President Trump’s comments on the Kavanaugh hearings, went viral, she landed on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. She says, “Playing my song on national TV just four days after writing it was the most badass thing I’ve ever done.”

### 37. FARAH ALIBAY

The NASA systems engineer

### 39. DR. MICHELLE OAKLEY

The veterinarian and star of *Dr. Oakley, Yukon Vet*, a series on National Geographic Wild, treats all species, including 1,200-pound Kodiak bears and majestic bald eagles. She’s also developed widely used wildlife-conservation methods and is looking to start a nonprofit for animals. “What’s happening in the world is not just polar bears getting skinny,” she says. “There’s a huge domino effect to [climate change]. We have to wake up.”

## 40. 1<sup>ST</sup> LT. MARINA HIERL

Hierl not only passed the Marine Corps' grueling 13-week infantry officer course in Quantico, Va. (the second woman to do so), but at 24, she also became the first woman to lead an infantry platoon of over 30 men.

## 41. BETTY WHITE

In addition to being recognized as the first woman to produce a national sitcom, the 97-year-old has had the longest acting career in TV history, spanning over seven decades. When she was honored for this at the 2018 Emmys, she proved she's still got it. "It's incredible that you can stay in a career

## 43. HELEN MIRREN

She won an Oscar for her spot-on portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in the 2006 drama *The Queen*. Now Mirren will step into the shoes of yet another powerful female monarch, Catherine the Great, for a four-part miniseries on HBO. They don't call her dame for nothing.

## 44. RACHEL MADDOW

With a goal to "increase the amount of useful information in the world," the MSNBC host has become a voice of reason for many Americans in the politically volatile Trump era. Last year her self-titled

## 46. LUCY MCBATH

After her 17-year-old son, Jordan Davis, was shot and killed in 2012, the former Delta flight attendant became a national figure as a gun-sense advocate and leaned deeply into politics. In November she won the election to become the first Democrat to represent Georgia's Sixth District since 1979. "Since the very beginning I had people tell me that I shouldn't run for office," says McBeth, the first woman of color in this position. "I had them tell me I would never win. But I knew that I had to run to stand up for my neighbors."

## 47. PAT MCGRATH

For the past two decades this makeup artist has logged hundreds of runway shows and editorials, all while consulting for big-time cosmetics companies like CoverGirl. In 2015 she released her own product line, Pat McGrath Labs. Its glistening highlighters and eye shadows were instant hits, quickly lifting her business's valuation to more than \$1 billion.

## 48. NICOLE MAINES

"Everyone deserves to see themselves as a superhero, and

transgender people are no different," says Maines, 21, who suited up to become TV's first-ever trans superhero, Dreamer, on the latest season of *Supergirl*. Turns out she's just as heroic offscreen. In 2014 she sued her school district—and won—after she was denied access to the girls' restroom.

## 49. JANE WEST

Dubbed the Martha Stewart of Marijuana, West founded the cannabis industry's largest professional female networking organization, Women Grow, in 2014. She says she "fought tooth and nail" to raise funding in the male-dominated venture-capital world. "I was asking people to invest not just in a woman but a woman working in cannabis," she adds. "It was maddeningly difficult at times."

## 50. ALINA MORSE

At 7 years old, Morse dreamed up the idea for a lollipop that is good for your teeth. Now 13, she balances running a multimillion-dollar company, Zolli Candy, with middle school. "People didn't take me seriously as a businesswoman," she says. "But I have definitely shown what I am capable of."



"I hope to change the way people think about entrepreneurs."  
—ALINA MORSE



this long and still have people put up with you," she joked.

## 42. SAMANTHA FARR

After leaving her job at an advertising technology start-up in N.Y.C., Farr founded Women Who Weld, a Detroit-based nonprofit that trains women for full-time welding careers, in 2014. Securing funds remains a constant challenge, but Farr describes it as "a rewarding experience" that ultimately "helps lessen the gender gap" in the male-centric field.

## 45. NATALIE MASNET

When she started Net-a-Porter in 2000, Massenet changed the way we shop, making hot-off-the-runway looks available with just a click. Now she's supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs with Imaginary Ventures, which invests in forward-thinking fashion companies like Everlane and Reformation.

