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# ROCK ON

**Power,  
Sex &  
Money  
after  
60**

**STELLA FOSSE**



**2025 Was a Year,**

# Not a Project.

*(And by the way... What Do **You** Remember about the 1950s? See below.)*

2025 was the year I had the privilege of downsizing. 2025 was also the year that I had the privilege of access to surgery. 2025 was the year when I stood in protest with sister Crones outside our state capitol. And this was the year when Project 2025 started taking our country back to the 1950s. But we Crones remember the 1950s and we must tell the tale of what that decade was really like.

For example: Here's what I remember about the 1950s and why I refuse to go back.

- In the 1950s a neighbor woman told me why men should get preference in hiring. "They have families to provide for," she said brightly. I was maybe eight and already got why this was stupid. "Not all men have families," I said. "And some women with children are widows." She had no answer.
- In the 1950s the school secretary explained why I couldn't be a crossing guard. "There's only one changing room," she said. "And it's for the boys." "But we could take turns," I said. "No," she said, smiling, "That won't work."
- In the 1950s my parents bought a house in San Diego for \$10,500 with a loan guaranteed by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). The [FHA policy manual](#) explicitly gave preference to white suburban families, creating not just segregation but also a wealth gap that has lasted generations. Today that little house is worth a million dollars.
- In the 1950s we used to drive north from San Diego to visit my grandparents in Los Angeles. Around the time we passed Disneyland the sky changed from blue to grey and the air didn't feel good to breathe. You could only see the outlines of the closest buildings. [Smog](#), they called it, a mixture of smoke and fog.
- In the 1950s our neighborhood was all white, and I remember the men especially used vile words to describe people of color, unmarried women, Jews, Catholics. The men spoke approvingly of

"[Operation Wetback](#)," the Eisenhower Administration program that deported hundreds of thousands of Mexican immigrants, including some legal residents and US citizens.

There was more going on in the Fifties, of course; things I didn't know as a child but learned later. FDA had no authority over clinical trials until after Thalidomide in 1962. Access to newly developing birth control methods was restricted, as was abortion. Jim Crow flourished in the 1950s South; in North Carolina, where I lived much later, the [Eugenics Board](#) was in full swing, involuntarily sterilizing Black women by the thousands.

There is particular power in the details we remember firsthand, like the benevolent smile on the face of the school secretary as she explained why a girl like me could not be a crossing guard. And each of us Crones who lived through that era has our own set of memories. Let's create our own Project for 2026: Let's share our stories of the 1950s. Let's tell exactly what it was like to be a girl or a woman, a Jew or a person of color back then. So many younger Americans only know what they see in reruns of [Leave it to Beaver](#).

2026 will be a busy year. In 2026 we'll have the chance to support free and fair elections, to get behind candidates at the local level who pledge to use state law to revive the rule of law. We can support national candidates who pledge to stand up for the balance of power. We can encourage candidates to place the needs of voters first, for healthcare, for education, for clean air and water, and for the rights guaranteed by our Constitution.

But meanwhile we Crones who lived through the 1950s can give the special gift of reality. We who have been there and done that can tell in granular detail just what it was like to live with dirty air and overt discrimination. Please share your stories with your family and friends. And with me, if you'd like: Send me your 1950s stories and I'll put them together and share them in my blog and on my platform.

We lived through the 1950s once. We don't need to do it again.



Keep the pen moving, or the keys clicking.

All the best,

Stella,

[stella@stellafosse.com](mailto:stella@stellafosse.com)

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# This Month's Blogs



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## When Zebras Meet

**Stella Fosse**

[Managing Under-Researched Conditions](#)

I've written [before](#) about the old medical school mantra, "When you hear hoofbeats, look for

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## It's Our Time

**Kisane Slaney, PhD**

[Women 50 & Beyond Need Our Own Mature-Age College Pathway](#)

Older women in Australia, the UK and the US came of age when women had limited access to

horses, not zebras." In other words, consider the common diagnoses first. Sounds reasonable; but keep in mind that the saying originated back when medical school was a white guys' club. In practice, "Horses, not zebras," too often translates as, "Focus on conditions that are common to male Caucasians." Illnesses that primarily affect women (such as migraines, autoimmune disorders and endometriosis) are more likely to be considered zebras, to be misdiagnosed and [poorly understood](#).

It's not uncommon for a woman to experience more than one of these neglected medical conditions, especially as we age. And just as [medications can interact](#) in unpredictable ways, medical conditions can affect each other during treatment. Even working with an enlightened physician can't make up for the absence of research.

Learning and self-advocacy can help deal with this reality. Let's start with an example.

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higher education (thus limiting our access to higher paid careers). Providing a ready pathway to complete our education could address the [financial](#) and [social](#) challenges we now face.

## How We Got Here

It took from the 1960s to 2024 for women to go from 27 percent of the university student population in Australia, 25 percent in the UK, and 35 percent in the US, to Australian female students being 62 percent of the commencing Australian cohort, 57 percent of all students in the UK, and 57 percent of all students in the US.

So how did this happen? And what do we want now? Let's begin with what facilitated the rise of female university students through the decades.

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Stella Fosse



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