

# Hedy Lamarr: Not Just a Pretty Face

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Junior Division

Group Website

Website contains 1,108 student-composed words, Process Paper contains 498.

“Frontiers in History” was this year's History day topic. This could be about people, places, or even ideas. Just as long as it was someone or something that did something groundbreaking, that dared to change the complex and wild world we live in. This is what Hedy Lamarr did. She was a woman who didn't let anything stop her from doing what she wanted to do in a misogynistic old Hollywood existence. She pursued acting and inventing, which was very rare for women in the 1940's. Lamarr made it more accessible for other women to be who they wanted to be without a care in the world. She additionally pioneered the technology that created Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. These are the vindications that made Lamarr stand out so much to me and my partner. We wanted to choose a topic that wouldn't be your run of the mill choice and Hedy Lamarr definitely meets that criteria.

Researching Lamarr was a whole different game. She received little credit for her inventions, so most sources we came across focused solely on her prosperous acting career. After checking several libraries, we were able to find enough information to manage, but not enough to satisfy. Thus, the vast majority of our information was found online. *Hedy's Folly: The Life and Breakthrough Inventions of Hedy Lamarr, the Most Beautiful Woman in the World* by Richard Rhodes was a very helpful source. Alongside that, we were fortunate enough to conduct an interview with professor Tracey Deutsch, who specializes in old Hollywood and had a great deal of information on Lamarr.

We chose to present our work in the form of a website, as we felt this would be the best way to organize our information and pictures. Neither of us have previous History Day experience, which doubtlessly would have made navigating the software easier. We had our struggles at first, but adapted quickly. It wasn't a near easy process but if presented the opportunity I would undoubtedly choose a website again.

I believe our project fits the theme "Frontiers in history" or more reasons than I have words to type. Hedy Lamarr was one of the most distinguished old Hollywood actresses, and not only that, she pioneered a path through misogyny and gender stereotypes and became undoubtedly one of the most valuable inventors of her time, even if she was never recognized as such. Unlike being considered "groundbreaking" and "iconic" as she would be today, she was considered brainless and scandalous, far too ostentatious for her time. She created an entirely new frontier in science and technology and was given zero credit for it by the cruel and unjust men of the 1940s. That is the point at which me and my partner became exasperated. We believe credit belongs where credit is due, and in this case it's not the Navy or an all-powerful man. Credit belongs to one of the most incredible women I have ever had the pleasure of learning about, Hedy Lamarr.