

## The Influence of Hedy Lamarr

There was an unspoken tradition at my grandparents' house: every time I spent the night, after dinner, we always had to watch an older film, preferably black and white, or at least anything before 1960. Cary Grant, Marilyn Monroe, Vera-Ellen, they all starred in some of my favorites. But the actress that left me starstruck was Hedy Lamarr. She was beautiful, talented, and always dressed impeccably. But it was not until I was older that I understood how far her talents went - talents that were hidden away for years.

When I reached middle school, I was fascinated by history, and began reading books about World War II and the years leading up to it and after. These books were filled with names, but I stumbled across one that sounded familiar - Hedy Lamarr. Wasn't she just an actress in those old films I grew up watching? I began researching her and uncovered the overlooked contributions she made that are still used today. During World War II, she continued to film movies, but between takes and after hours, she began creating something that would become known as frequency hopping. Radio signals are transmitted by changing their carrier frequency at high speeds, controlled by the transmitter and receiver: a concept that is still used in today's technology, including phones and airplanes. When Lamarr attempted to bring her idea to use, she was rejected by the US Navy, and told to sell war bonds with her fame. But the US Navy took her idea in the 1960s and began using it, without giving her recognition. It would not be until the 1990s, only a few years before her death, that she was given the credit she deserved.

Because of her gender and status, Lamarr was greatly overlooked, yet she continued to do work that has lasted for years. There are countless historical figures who have inspired me, but the story of the woman behind today's technology has always stood out. The work she did and the breadth of her talents inspires and impresses me, and her endurance of being overlooked for

her accomplishments stirs great respect. Her life has taught me that even when the world sets expectations, I can defy them, following my passions and ideas. As a woman, I face roadblocks, and while they may not be the same as hers, it is her story that inspires me to persevere. Though she was told it was not her place to be an inventor, Lamarr pursued her idea, and created a lasting legacy. Her ideas are still in place today, and while she is rarely given credit for them, it is her genius behind the bluetooth in our phones and the Wi-Fi used to connect to the world.

Lamarr's story saddens me, as the work she did is still in effect today, yet she never earned the recognition she truly deserves. It inspired my interest in history and archeology, as I hope to uncover stories such as hers, and give credit where it is due. These untold or lesser known stories have a special place in my heart, as they often are the root of great inspiration. In pursuing a major in archeology, it is my goal to bring these stories and encouragement to others.