



CHIME THROUGH THE YEARS

“FAST AND FURTHER” BY CHRISTINA NIELSEN

CHIME FOR CHANGE Through the Years: The Female Fabric is a series curated by CHIME Managing Editor Mariane Pearl featuring stories from the CHIME journalism platform archives by women around the world.



My name is Christina Nielsen and I'm a 27-year-old professional race-car pilot sports car driver from Denmark and I am making history as a woman. In 2016 when the team and I won the IMSA WeatherTech Championship I became the first woman to ever win a major full-season sports car championship in North America and I won again in 2017.

For the last 13 years, I have been fighting against the odds to prove that your gender should never stop you from achieving your goals. It has cost me blood, sweat and tears but it has all been worth it.

Inspired by my father who is also an acclaimed racer, my journey began with a small go-kart track in Denmark where **I fell in love with the speed, adrenaline kick and intense competition.** 4 years later, I moved to cars, formula Ford and Porsches before having my current car; The Aston Martin Vantage with a sweet sounding V12 engine. I have grown used to racing against men and being the only female driver on the track creates a lot of attention from the media and spectators – but that doesn't intimidate me. I want to compete on equal terms with the boys and most importantly of all, I want to beat them. To prepare me as much as he could for my life as a pro-driver, my father encouraged me to participate in championships all over the world. As a female driver, I soon realised it would take longer to win people's respect than for my male colleagues. Thus, continuously racing in new environments was another limit to overcome each time I entered a new contest. **The Middle East was particularly challenging and I will never forget the day I wasn't allowed to race at a championship round in Saudi-Arabia because females were just not allowed to drive cars there.** I was disappointed that I wasn't able to show the female audience there that we can compete equally with men, we can compete and we can also beat them.

From the start, I have decided that I'm not a female who's a race driver, I'm a race driver who's a female... in a men's world. I was pushed down and had to fight ten times harder. I have been doing this since I was 14 years old. **It gets tough from time to time but the fight never wears me out. I look at it as the fuel to my fire. Yet, staying strong, with the amount of pressure we athletes are subjected to can be overwhelming. I confront my doubts and insecurities. Of course, I do. To make it in a tough environment, you must be able to fight your personal battles as well as stand your ground.** However, as a racer, I am lucky to have two families supporting me. One back home only a phone call away that provides relentless support and comfort.

