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The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters

Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins

1 VOLUME

On February 14, 2020, the League of Women Voters of the United States will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. Although women of color have always made significant contributions to women's suffrage and the women's movements, their contributions, particularly as they relate to the League of Women Voters (LWV), have been marginalized and relegated to the footnotes of the organization's history.

This 100th anniversary milestone provides a unique opportunity to move the story of these courageous women out of the footnotes and into the main narrative to provide a comprehensive history of this grassroots membership organization and its role in the women's movement and beyond.

Conversations around the universal themes of race and gender and how organizations reconcile their action or inaction regarding these issues are more important now than ever. *The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters* adds a new dimension to these conversations.

The book is structured to show the progression of the relationship between the League of Women Voters and its members of color as manifested in changes to its policies, practices, symbols, and messaging. It begins with the suffrage movement and continues until the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the League and uses actual correspondence, convention minutes, existing League histories, and personal accounts to tell the League story. Chapter titles disclose the philosophical shifts in attitude at each stage of the organization's evolution.

FEATURES

Celebrates the 100-year history of the League of Women Voters and the contributions of women of color

Provides an accurate, comprehensive account of history in this grassroots membership organization

Explores the unique challenges that women of color faced in the United States and in its mainstream organizations

Argues that the League must learn from the past and make intentional decisions to change for the future to remain relevant in the next phase of its history

Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, PhD, served two terms as the 15th President of the League of Women Voters of the United States and Chair of the League of Women Voters Education (1998–2002). Her career in public school and higher education spanned more than 40 years, and she continues to be an activist for civil rights and social justice, advocating for educational excellence and stronger citizen participation in the electoral process for underrepresented populations. She is currently adjunct assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.