



LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS® of VIRGINIA

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS Of VIRGINIA PUBLISHES *VIRGINIA WOMEN & THE VOTE 1909-2009* A 100-Year History of The Equal Suffrage League & The League of Women Voters in Virginia

One hundred years ago in 1909, a group of women met in Richmond — 61 years after Seneca Falls — to establish Virginia's Equal Suffrage League (ESL), a precursor of today's League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA). These pioneers of southern suffrage were pillars of society; they had the status to have a voice in a very traditional region. They dealt with ridicule, their efforts were dismissed, but they persevered.

The suffrage movement was sweeping the west as several western states had already allowed women to vote. Some of the Suffragists who would picket the White House in 1917, held by a president born in Virginia, Woodrow Wilson, were incarcerated at the Occoquan Workhouse in Lorton, Virginia. The history of women's vote is intertwined with the history of Virginia. Yet Virginia did not formally ratify the 19th amendment until 1952!

The idea for a book about women's suffrage in Virginia was conceived by current LWV-VA President Olga Hernandez when she read about the founding of the Equal Suffrage League in Virginia in 1909. *Virginia Women & The Vote* chronicles the events of those 100 years that began with the ESL which became the League of Women Voters of Virginia and the many contributions made to the Commonwealth by the women who led these organizations.

All of the women who struggled to have their voices heard and engage in issues facing Virginians are detailed for the first time by League Historian Bernice Colvard in this comprehensive history spanning 1909 to 2009. The legacy of those Virginia women is very much alive today and continues to be a beacon to all who value good government and an informed citizenry without partisan overtones.

Read these stories and understand what Susan B. Anthony meant when she reportedly said "There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers." As stated by LWV-VA President Hernandez, "We've come a long way, but still have far to go. All women [and men], young and not so young, need to continue this work. The League of Women Voters [which now includes men] is as necessary today as it was in the last century."

The book is available by contacting the LWV-VA via our website.

For more information about LWV-VA and how to join, visit the website: www.lwv-va.org.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to men and women of all ages. With 850 affiliates across the county, the League is one of the nation's most trusted organizations.