



## Celebrating the 19th Amendment

*Jennifer Kleier and Delores "Dee" Pregliasco*

Join us in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, commonly known as the Suffrage Amendment. The amendment guaranteed women the right to vote, stating "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

The road to passage was an arduous one that took over 70 years and the work of thousands of people. It included protests, riots, boycotts, jail sentences and hunger strikes, disagreement and fracture amongst leadership and confrontations over race. Despite passage stalling during World War I, Congress finally passed the 19th Amendment in 1919. Tennessee became the last state to ratify the amendment and it was officially codified on August 26, 1920, now celebrated as Women's Equality Day. That same year the National League of Women Voters was formed to educate women and the public about the new amendment. The Louisville League of Women Voters also came into existence in November of 1920.

In future issues of *Bar Briefs* look for articles discussing various aspects of the battle for the 19th Amendment and current voting rights issues. Other resources are the

websites of The National League of Women Voters, The National Women's History Alliance, and the Kentucky and Louisville Leagues of Women Voters. A video which is worth the time to watch is Martha Wheelock's video of Inez Milholland, the iconic suffragist on the white horse featured in the various suffrage parades.

There are two wonderful exhibits celebrating a woman's right to vote: The Frazier History Museum's exhibition *What is a Vote Worth: Suffrage Then and Now* can be seen in person or online; and *BallotBox*—a voting rights art exhibition for Louisville Metro Hall, curated by Skylar Smith in partnership with the Metro Government Office for Women, Louisville Visual Art, the Frazier History Museum and the Louisville League of Women Voters.

If you are looking for some good books to read check out *The Woman's Hour* by Elaine Weiss (a recent Filson Historical Society speaker), *Mr. President, How Long Must We Wait* by Tina Cassidy (scheduled to speak, probably virtually at Louisville's Women's Equality Day Celebration on August 22) and *The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters* by Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, first

African-American President off the National League of Women Voters (scheduled speaker for the Louisville League's 100th Anniversary Celebration on November 12).

Some additional resources on the current state of voting rights and voting issues our country continues to face are: *Vote for US, How to Take Back Our Elections and Change the Future of Voting* by Professor Joshua A. Douglas of the University of Kentucky College of Law and *One Person, No Vote, How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy*, by Carol Anderson.

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