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For the Public Record: A Documentary History of the League of Women Voters (Contributions in American Studies)

Barbara Stuhler

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Through a judicious selection of documents from the papers of the League of Women Voters of the United States in the Library of Congress, Stuhler reveals the rich history of an organization designed to serve the public interest. In the aftermath of the 72-year long effort by American women to win the vote, the League was formed to prepare these new voters for their responsibilities as full participating citizens. The organization's first president, Maud Wood Park, and her associates established Citizenship Schools throughout the nation to educate women, and they were so successful that one newspaper complained, Why not for men, too?

Succeeding presidents built the League's reputation as an organization inventive in its dual roles as a voter educator and civic activist. While League members were expected to be nonpartisan, they were also encouraged to be active in their parties, a sometimes confusing posture. Nevertheless, the League?as an advocate in support of specified public policies?succeeded in maintaining an informed nonpartisanship that came to be respected by opinion and political leaders, and the public learned that it could depend upon the League for unbiased information in election contests. In making it possible for women to show their strength and do what they have done for some 80 years, the League has made incalculable contributions to the public good. Students, scholars, and the informed public interested in American political and women's history will find this documentary collection invaluable.

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