

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

We have a story we want to tell you, one that's inspiring, exasperating, and sometimes shameful. It's the story of the suffrage movement and the amazing women—and even a few men—who accomplished something remarkable that still impacts us today. When we were growing up, this story got glossed over in history class because teachers were racing to get through World War II before the end of the year. It seemed like the whole women voting thing was inevitable anyway, so it didn't need much more than a few sentences. But that couldn't be more wrong.

Our foremothers didn't just make the world a better place; they left future generations an arsenal of tactics to achieve their goals. They learned so much through painful trial and error, and we can't afford to let it be forgotten—including their mistakes. Starting with virtually no political power or public support, a diverse group of suffragists effected the largest single change to American democracy, without resorting to armed rebellion or overthrowing the government. They were fearless, creative, tenacious, and radical (one of our ongoing writing challenges was finding family-friendly synonyms for *badass*). They were also, just as we are today, deeply flawed and human. We find that liberating. You don't have to be perfect to make the world a better place; you just have to step up.

As we celebrate the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, a lot of the hoopla focuses on the pageantry: the sashes, banners, hats, and dresses. We love the pageantry; it was an intentional and effective political tactic. But the costumes tend to make it feel like the suffrage movement belongs in another time, when in fact their strategies and rhetoric can be incredibly effective for today's activists. That's why this isn't just a history book, but a playbook.

As for us, our friendship goes back generations. Lucinda's grandmother Lady Bird Johnson and Rebecca's grandmother Lindy Boggs became friends in the 1940s, when both were young southern political wives in Washington, DC. Our mothers, Lynda Robb and Cokie Roberts, were lifelong friends. We met as babies (there is even a family legend that Lucinda was promised to Rebecca's brother at birth), reconnected as college students at Princeton, and as adults became colleagues and mutual admirers in the museum education world of Washington.

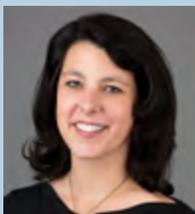
Between us, we have six kids ranging from ten to eighteen, so we are acutely aware of how the next generation is learning American history. We've both published research on the

suffrage movement, and when Lucinda suggested collaborating on a book for young readers, Rebecca jumped at the chance. We wrote *The Suffragist Playbook* in the nooks and crannies of our busy lives; we literally edited this authors' note while cooking family dinner and pretending to watch baseball practice. Ideally, we want our book to be a little like *The Art of War* if it were written for activists, with a pinch of *How to Win Friends & Influence People*, and by the last page, without realizing it, you would actually know suffrage history. It was important to us that the tactics be genuinely practical. Some of our children want to save the planet, and some just want to save puppies. We hope the lessons in our book apply to both. Thank you.

P.S. Rebecca wants you to know that she is acutely jealous that Lucinda has actually held the Nineteenth Amendment in her (gloved) hands. Lucinda wants you to know that it . . . was . . . **AWESOME!**



photo by Moshe Zisman



REBECCA BOGGS ROBERTS is the author of *Suffragists in Washington, DC: The 1913 Parade and the Fight for the Vote* and *Historic Congressional Cemetery*. She has been many things, including a journalist, producer, tour guide, forensic anthropologist, event planner, political consultant, jazz singer, and radio talk show host. Currently she is a program coordinator for Smithsonian Associates, where she has made it a personal mission to highlight the history of our capital city. She lives in Washington, DC, with her husband, three sons, and a big fat dog.

photo by Karen Kasmauski



LUCINDA ROBB was project director for *Our Mothers Before Us: Women and Democracy, 1789–1920* at the Center for Legislative Archives. The project rediscovered thousands of overlooked original documents and produced a traveling exhibit and education program highlighting the role of women in American democracy. She also helped organize the National Archives' celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1995. She lives in Virginia with her husband, three children, one dog, and more than five hundred PEZ dispensers.