Kentucky Women and the Advocates Who Fought for Them

Kentucky women are not idiots—even though they are closely related to Kentucky men.
—Madeline McDowell Breckinridge, 1915
(quoted in Irvin, 2009)

One gets a sense of Kentucky from its mountains in the east and its fields stretching across the Mississippi plains in the west; from its high buildings and urban face to its rural green landscapes; and, collectively, from its boundaries with seven other states. Kentuckians’ connection to the land has been captured by state historian James Klotter: “For many Kentuckians the land continues to provide their roots, giving generation after generation a sense of place, a tie that binds them to those who have walked the ground before them, a bridge from past to present” (Appleton, Hay, Klotter, & Stephens, 1998, p. 11). Kentucky’s land informs its identity and its name. The latter reflects the Commonwealth’s conflicting reputations in its early years. The name Kentucky is of Native American origin and has been attributed to several different Indian languages with several different meanings, including the Iroquois word Ken-tah-ten, which means “land of tomorrow,” and a second translation that means “dark and bloody ground.” For the first century of Kentucky’s statehood, the latter seemed a more apt description.
A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

In the nineteenth century, Kentucky's homicide rate was more than twice what it is today (Ireland, 2000). As noted by one writer, “While nineteenth century Kentucky produced fine horses, hemp and whiskey, she excelled most in crime” (Ireland, 1983, p. 134). In fact, Kentucky held the distinction of having one of the highest crime rates in the nation in those years (Wall, 2010). One of the primary causes of this rampant aggression was a code of honor rooted in the sacredness of men's reputations. Any affront or embarrassment, no matter how trivial, often led to a duel and the attendant loss of life. For this reason, most homicides in the nineteenth century involved the killing of men by men (Ireland, 2000). Women sometimes found themselves drawn into the violence when it entailed acts of individual retribution, such as when one man killed another for having sex with his wife. In one such case reported by Harrison and Klotter (1997), in April 1883 Congressman Philip B. Thompson Jr. of Harrodsburg killed a man who had allegedly “debauched” his wife. He was acquitted by a Kentucky jury. In another case from the 1890s, an irate husband in Louisville caught his wife in an intimate position with the son of former governor John Young Brown; he shot and killed them both but was found not guilty. (John Young Brown served as governor from 1891 to 1895; he is not related to Governor John Y. Brown Jr., who served from 1979 to 1983.)

The end of the Civil War and Reconstruction brought another kind of violence to Kentucky: racial killings and lynchings. Fully one-third of these acts occurred in the counties of the Commonwealth between 1865 and 1874 (Wright, 1990). Kentucky had been a border state in the Civil War, yet its severe and brutal treatment of African Americans in the years after the war rivaled that of the Deep South. Ironically, Kentucky's loyalty to the North during the war meant that its citizens were allowed to rule their own affairs during Reconstruction, unlike those in the former Confederate states; this laissez-faire approach meant that federal officials often turned a blind eye as freed slaves suffered under the rope and by the whip of hostile whites who had supported the Union cause and resented the racial equality intended by emancipation (Wright, 1990).

Assassinations also accounted for some homicide cases, as election days in the nineteenth century were often followed by violent arguments between political parties and the killing of candidates or
elected officials. The most famous assassination occurred in 1900 when newly elected governor William Goebel was shot and killed as he neared the state’s capitol (Powell, 2001). Violence and homicide in the nineteenth century can also be attributed to family feuds that originated in conflicts over the Civil War, tobacco, and coal, exacerbated by growing rates of alcoholism and perhaps even the lax justice system that prevailed at the time (Klotter, 2003; Wall, 2010).

In her book on the impact of violence on the reputation of Kentucky’s horse industry, Maryjean Wall describes how violence and lawlessness influenced horsemen to choose horse farms in the Northeast rather than exposing themselves to the brutality in the hills of the Commonwealth. She shares a quote from the New York Times that reflects Kentucky’s violent reputation: “So long as these midnight assassins continue to ply their trade within the shadow of the state capitol, Kentucky has no claim to be considered a civilized state” (Wall, 2010, p. 93).

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a decline in the homicide rate in Kentucky, largely because some of its primary causes (the honor code, lynchings, and family feuds) began to decline. Importantly, however, a tradition of violence would persist. As noted by one historian, “murderous violence within families continues to be a problem, as do occasional outbursts of violence during the labor disputes in the coalfields. One has to wonder whether Kentucky residents today are safer from violence than the Kentuckians who lived a hundred years ago” (Ireland, 2000, p. 170). Despite the trend toward lower homicide rates, the settings in which killings occurred suggested that, for women, this did not mean an improvement in their safety.

The History of Kentucky Women

The archives of Kentucky’s history are strangely silent on the experience of women. Historians note that before 1900, women experienced the same hardships as men, but they were almost invisible in any written records and other documentation (Harrison & Klotter, 1997; Potter, 1997). “Too few pre–Civil War Kentucky women left accounts of their lives, and so they remain somewhat vague figures in the background of the period. They were indispensable to the development of the state, although they seldom appear in its public records” (Harrison & Klotter, 1997, p. 148). The inadequacy of
written history belies the fact that women lived with the same challenges as their male counterparts, but they did so without the legal rights afforded men. And, as the next chapter attests, they lived with significant exposure to, and little relief from, violence.

Throughout the first century of Kentucky’s statehood (secured in April 1792), women had few legal rights. Women could not vote, make a will, own property, control their own wages, or obtain custody of their children (Crowe-Carraco, 2000). When a woman married, both she and any property she may have inherited became the property of her new husband (Harrison & Klotter, 1997). If a woman married an intolerable, cruel, or violent man, she had few options. Although divorce was legal in the years after statehood, the burden of proof was on the woman, who had the difficult task of complaining about her husband’s cruelty while living under society’s rule that she must endure and obey (Harrison & Klotter, 1997). There were few pathways for women to escape their plight, in part because they had little opportunity to go to school past the lowest grades. Any advanced education was likely to be a finishing school that prepared upper-class girls for life as “genteel ladies” (Harrison & Klotter, 1997).

At the turn of the twentieth century, working women were most often employed by Kentucky industry, the higher (or so-called white-collar) professions being closed to them. In fact, almost 45,000 females over ten years of age were employed in Louisville factories in the early 1900s (Irvin, 2009). Mirroring the decades that would follow, women were paid less than men and, for the most part, were excluded from unions (Irvin, 2009). The latter left them powerless in the face of twelve- to fourteen-hour days, even as men successfully pushed for eight-hour workdays.

Thus, for much of its early history, the Commonwealth trailed other states in affording women legal protections. The antebellum women’s rights movement that had gained attention in other parts of the country had not yet attracted the attention or interest of women in Kentucky (Harrison & Klotter, 1997). And when the national Seneca Falls Convention launched the first women’s movement in America in July 1848, Kentucky seemed oblivious.

**The History of Women’s Advocates in Kentucky**

While the vast majority of Kentuckians in the 1800s and 1900s seemed content to ignore the national women’s movement, a small
group of women began to make waves, seeking to improve the status of Kentucky women. They faced a daunting task. Kentucky was among the most backward states when it came to women’s rights, as it had not adopted the progressive reforms embraced by other states. Because it had not seceded from the Union during the Civil War, it had not experienced the postwar constitutional revisions that improved the status of women in the former Confederate states (Irvin, 2009). Among the early reformers who joined the national fight were Laura Clay, Madeline “Madge” McDowell Breckinridge, Mary E. Britton, Josephine Henry, Lida Calvert Obenchain, Linda Neville, Cora Wilson Stewart, Mary Breckinridge, and Eliza Calvert Hall (Crowe-Carraco, 2000; Fuller, 1992; Hay, 2009; Niedermeier, 2007). These women lived in eastern, western, and central Kentucky, but they fought for women across the Commonwealth.

Laura Clay was born in 1849, less than a year after the eruption of the first women’s movement at the Seneca Falls Convention.
For her, the struggle for women’s rights was deeply personal as well as political (Fuller, 1992; Irvin, 2009). During Clay’s childhood, her father, Cassius Clay, served as ambassador to Russia and lived in Europe, away from his family, for nine years. While he was away (first in Russia and later on exploits to Mexico and while campaigning for anti-slavery political candidates), Clay’s mother, Mary Jane Warfield Clay, made extensive improvements to the family’s estate, which became a profitable farm under her watchful eye and hard-working hands. She devoted her time, hard work, family money, and ingenuity to the farm. She also oversaw vast renovations to the family home, White Hall, and succeeded in repaying her husband’s debt when his bank failed.

Cassius Clay eventually returned to Kentucky, bringing with him a Russian boy whose paternity he did not deny. That affront was the breaking point in what had become a very difficult marriage. Mary Jane Clay left and took her daughters Laura and Annie, the only two children still living at home, to her family’s residence in Lexington. Mrs. Clay charged her husband with breach of the marriage contract, but he ultimately filed for divorce against her, ironically charging that she had deserted him for five years (as required by Kentucky’s divorce law at the time). Mary Jane Clay was fortunate that her wealthy family saved her from the poverty that otherwise would have been her lot. After the divorce, she lost all access to and possession of White Hall, its properties, and its resources. Some have speculated that Laura Clay became such a fervent activist for women’s rights because of her firsthand knowledge of the challenges encountered by women who lived without the benefit of legal rights (Fuller, 1992). In Laura Clay, the women’s rights movement in Kentucky found a champion. She founded the Kentucky Woman Suffrage Association (KWSA) and the Kentucky Equal Rights Association (KERA) and left a lasting mark on the Commonwealth.

Madeline “Madge” McDowell Breckinridge, a descendant of Henry Clay, was born in 1872. Like Laura Clay, her personal history may well have influenced her choice to participate in social movements on behalf of those in need. Her early years were marred by health problems, family conflicts, and marital infidelities. She suffered from tuberculosis of the bone in her right foot, requiring her to wear a formidable boot with sturdy braces on each side. She endured multiple surgeries, and at age twenty-four, her right foot was amputated. By then, the tubercle bacilli had invaded her body
and left her susceptible to the disease for the rest of her life (Hay, 2009). Breckinridge’s reaction to the amputation was a marvel. Many young women of her day would have withdrawn from social life after losing a foot, but she did exactly the opposite. According to her biographer, “for Madge the coming years would prove that adversity only invigorated her, while physical suffering increased her empathy for the poor, the sick, and the downtrodden... Instead of retreating from the world, Madge began to focus on reforming it... Her belief in women’s rights had begun to emerge” (Hay, 2009, p. 46).

Breckinridge enrolled in college (at what would later become the University of Kentucky), attending on a part-time basis from 1890 to 1894. She used her writing skills to publish articles in the *Lexington Herald* on the causes in which she so fervently believed. Her gift with words made her one of the most quotable women’s activists in Kentucky and across the nation, and she was known for electrifying her suffrage audiences (Tice, 1997). Her activism led her to become president of the Kentucky Equal Rights Association and vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. In the latter role, she lobbied for Kentucky’s ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote in 1920. Her lifetime of work provided a lasting benefit to the women of the Commonwealth and beyond. In 1914 Madeline Breckinridge and Laura Clay became the first women to address a joint session of the Kentucky legislature, bravely blazing a path for the women’s advocates who would follow them.

Communicating to the General Assembly, in this case through written commentary, also became a regular practice for another Lexington woman in the late 1800s. In 1892 Mary E. Britton wrote a highly critical article published in the *Kentucky Leader* explicating why the legislature should not pass a law that required blacks and whites to ride in separate railway coaches (Smith, 2002). While her articulate opinion piece did not stop passage of the law, it was an exemplar of the advocacy that would become part of Mary Britton’s everyday life. She was born in Lexington in 1855, the daughter of a free black couple. She grew up in an era when little black girls were not expected to strive for careers of any kind, and certainly not the career path the outspoken and accomplished Britton would pursue (Eblen, 2012). At age sixteen, she enrolled in Berea College (the first college or university in Kentucky to admit African Americans), where she learned to connect teaching with social activism. After
Madeline McDowell Breckinridge, circa 1900. (Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky)
five years in Berea, Britton returned to Lexington, where she taught in the segregated schools of that era. It was during this time that she wrote the *Kentucky Leader* commentary. Britton’s social activism for educational and civil rights was soon joined by a desire to improve health care in the African American community. To address this need directly, Britton went to Chicago and graduated with a medical degree from the American Missionary College. In 1902 she became the first black woman in Lexington to obtain a medical license, and for two decades she practiced medicine from her home, a practice heavily influenced by her conversion to the Seventh Day Adventist Church (Wilkinson, 2000). In addition to her busy medical career, Britton remained active as a fighter for civil rights and women’s rights. She died in Lexington in 1925.

Laura Clay, Madge Breckinridge, Mary Britton, and other reformers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fought for a wide range of women’s rights. Suffrage, the right to express their views and to influence the political sphere, was a prominent part
of their platform. Legal reforms, such as the right to own property, secure custody of their children, and control their wages, also gained the attention of the reform movement, as did health care, maternal and child care, and the needs of the poor. Slowly, their efforts in Kentucky paid off: in 1894, laws were passed allowing women to own property and to make wills; female physicians were permitted to work in women’s wards in hospitals in 1898; in 1900, women were given the right to keep their own earnings; and in 1910, women won the right to seek custody of their children, and the age at which Kentucky girls could legally marry was raised from twelve to sixteen (Crowe-Carraco, 2000; Irvin, 2009).

The advancement of women’s education was also exceedingly important. Once they were admitted to institutions of higher education, these educated and empowered women were in a better position to advocate on behalf of their gender. The University of Kentucky (initially called the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kentucky) was established in 1865, and the first women were admitted in 1880. These first female students were allowed to earn only certificates, not degrees; it would be 1888 before the first woman broke the barrier and graduated with a degree from the university. Parenthetically, while the University of Kentucky is well known for its men’s basketball program, the first basketball team at the university was the women’s team (University of Kentucky, 2010). Transylvania University opened its doors to women in 1889, and Georgetown did so in 1892; Berea had admitted women from its founding (Crowe-Carraco, 2000). The modern University of Louisville and the normal (teacher training) schools in western and eastern Kentucky were established in the early twentieth century and admitted women from their inception. A century later, women accounted for more than half the undergraduate (54 percent) and graduate (60 percent) student populations (Sugarman, 1999).

As suffragists campaigned for the vote and other social and legal reforms, the temperance movement addressed what many viewed as the evils of “intoxicating spirits.” In Kentucky, the suffrage and temperance movements were often aligned. At a practical level, the older temperance movement (led in Kentucky by Madison County native Frances Beauchamp from 1895 until her death in 1923) was helpful to the suffragists, in that it tended to be more well organized (Irvin, 2009). Opponents of the two movements also bonded; many of the business interests that opposed the temperance movement
also opposed suffrage, fearing that if women were given the right to vote, then they would vote for prohibition (Kee, Frost, Albu, Lindberg, & Robert, 1998). Temperance and suffrage issues were also aligned because the social ills targeted by the temperance movement disproportionately impacted women. In that sense, both movements had the mission of freeing women—from legal powerlessness and from violence and mistreatment. The work of the temperance movements across the nation ultimately resulted in the Eighteenth Amendment, banning the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol and signaling the beginning of Prohibition. Kentucky ratified the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, the same year it became law.

Among the most visible and controversial leaders of the national temperance movement was Carry A. Nation, born Carry Amelia Moore on November 25, 1846, on a farm in Garrard County, Kentucky. At the time of her birth, Garrard County was a “hotbed of religious fervor” that included the strict order of the Shakers and the enthusiastic revivals held at Cane Ridge (Grace, 2001). Her own family members were devout Protestants. The marriage of Nation’s parents was a second union for both, each having been widowed. Nation’s father, George Moore, had been financially successful in the years before the Civil War, but because he depended heavily on slave labor, he lost his economic stability with emancipation. Nation had a close but rather conflicted relationship with her father; though their bond was deep and affectionate, he could be harsh and occasionally violent (Grace, 2001). Nation’s relationship with her mother was distant, likely owing to Mary Moore’s emotional instability, which some have depicted as severe mental illness (or, in the nomenclature of the day, insanity). Mary’s first husband and two sons had died in close succession before she was even twenty years old. Her second husband, George Moore, was significantly older than Mary and had four children from his first marriage. According to some stories, insanity ran in Mary’s family, and she supposedly had delusions with a paranoid quality, believing herself to be Queen Victoria and expressing concerns about being killed. When her delusions became unmanageable, she was ultimately hospitalized in an insane asylum (Grace, 2001; Irvin, 2009).

Carry Nation’s first husband was a physician named Charles Gloyd, but his alcoholism led her to leave him shortly after the marriage. From this experience, she acquired both a personal distaste for alcohol and one child, Charlien, who was infirm from birth and
spent part of her adult years in an insane asylum (like her grandmother). Her second husband, whom she married in 1877, was David Nation, a minister who shared her fervent religious faith. His career as a traveling preacher took the young couple to Texas and then to a Christian church in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, in 1889. It was there that she helped establish a local chapter of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, which became her vehicle for speaking out against alcohol and two other “evils”: tobacco and women’s immodest dress.

In Kansas, residents had voted for prohibition, but the law was rarely enforced until Nation took action. At first, beginning in 1890, she merely knelt in prayer in front of saloons. By 1900, however, she had adopted a more violent and confrontational approach, using rocks and bricks until she finally settled on the instrument that would make her famous: the hatchet.

In 1901 Nation met with Kansas governor William Stanley to appeal for enforcement of the state’s laws. When the governor gave her no assurances, she pointed to a black eye she had received during a demonstration in Enterprise, Kansas, and accused the governor of giving her that black eye. A rattled Governor Stanley told her that women had to know their place; they should not be raising the kind of disturbance that came so naturally to Nation (Grace, 2001; Nation, 1909).

In the end, Carry Nation led a movement with no followers and fought her battle alone. She may have been the most visible figure associated with the temperance movement, but her hatchet-wielding ways were not endorsed by the national Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Although she fought for women’s rights (supporting suffrage because she viewed women’s votes as votes in favor of prohibition), feminists were not comfortable with her intensely religious dogma; likewise, the religious community distanced itself from her because she was a staunchly independent woman who had “deserted” her husband (Grace, 2001). That she became somewhat of a caricature should not obscure her historical importance. As noted by one of her biographers: “Yet many people were oddly compelled by her. She galvanized thousands of followers to pursue a radical form of activism. . . . Carry Nation’s emergence as a reformer underscores the power of tragedy in formation of a crusading identity” (Grace, 2001, p. 281).

Among the temperance activists in Kentucky was an African
Carry Nation, circa 1901–1911. (Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society)
American woman named Elizabeth B. “Lizzie” Fouse. She was already well known for her work with the National Association of Colored Women (serving as its president), her founding of the Phyllis Wheatley branch of the YWCA in Lexington, and her strong advocacy for the education of young women of color. When the first state convention of the Kentucky Women’s Christian Temperance Union (KWCTU) was held in Lexington in 1881, however, she was not involved: membership was not open to African American women. In the early 1900s the KWCTU began to organize auxiliary unions that African American women could join. Ultimately, all the auxiliary branches broke away from the KWCTU and created the Kentucky Sojourner Truth Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, with Fouse as president (Notable Kentucky African Americans Database, 2011). Fouse died in October 1952. Her tombstone in Cove Haven Cemetery reads: “To Live in Hearts We Leave Behind Is Not to Die” (Smith, 2002).

Women and Suffrage

As noted above, suffrage was central to the fight for women’s rights in the early twentieth century. But it was an extremely difficult goal to obtain, as the opposition was strong. Opponents of women’s suffrage argued against what they saw as a “social revolution” and “a loss of sexual identity” (Thébaud, 1997). Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, called the suffragists “silly-sallies,” “crazy Janes,” and “red-nosed angels” (Irvin, 2009). J. W. Porter, editor of the Kentucky Baptist newspaper, wrote that the National Suffrage Association had originated “out of the brain of a semi-masculine Minerva. . . . Its ultimate ideal is to de-womanize the woman and make of her a female man. . . . The feminine demons, knowingly or otherwise, are pointing womankind to the path that leads to harlotry and to hell” (Morgan, 2003, p. 22). Those naysayers were ultimately drowned out when Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919 and when it was ratified by thirty-six states in 1920 (including Kentucky on January 6, 1920).

Ironically, women in Kentucky had been given the right to vote in 1838, making it the first state in the country to do so (Crowe-Carraco, 2000). That right was something of a trompe l’œil, however. It was limited to only one situation: widows with school-age children who lived in rural school districts were allowed to vote for
Elizabeth “Lizzie” Fouse, circa 1880s. (Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky)
members of the school board. In 1902 even that right was rescinded because people claimed it allowed too many illiterate black women to vote (Crowe-Carraco, 2000). Thus, in addition to being the first state to give women the vote, Kentucky had the distinction of being one of only two states to rescind that right.

Despite the centrality of suffrage to the women’s movement, not all activists took the same approach. In fact, a major split occurred in the final stretch before suffrage was secured in August 1920. In the end, suffrage was won not via state laws but through a federal constitutional amendment. A staunch states’ rights advocate, Laura Clay fought the federal amendment, arguing that voting rights were a state matter. What lay behind the states’ rights argument, in the view of many, was actually the issue of race. Though a formidable and highly successful women’s activist, Clay was also a white supremacist, as were many others at the time (Irvin, 2009). The argument for state-level decision making became an argument over whether black women should be given the right to vote. Clay urged that an education requirement be implemented for women voters. Although not specifically referring to race, the practical effect of such a requirement would be to disqualify black women from voting because of their limited educational opportunities. Sadly, as women were finally winning the right to vote, suffragists in Kentucky were split. Laura Clay had appointed Madge Breckinridge to follow her as president of the KERA, but in the end, their ideologies were far apart.

**Kentucky Women and Public Office**

Oddly, more than two decades before women won legal suffrage in 1920, they were being elected to public office in the Commonwealth. At first, women won some local elections in Kentucky (even though they could not vote for themselves), but in 1923, things changed. Once suffrage passed, the question became not just what women would do with the vote but also what impact their votes would have on the election of women to public office. That spring, those questions led Democratic Party officials to discuss the idea of placing a woman on the statewide ticket. Emma Guy Cromwell was serving as state librarian for the Kentucky legislature when she heard rumors of those discussions and rumors that she was being considered. In fact, the party asked Cromwell to run for secretary of state—an invitation she accepted. In winning, Cromwell became Kentucky’s first
Emma Guy Cromwell, circa 1925–1936. (Herald-Post Collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Louisville)
woman to hold an elected statewide office. As she mused on the night of her election, “It was a question of whether Kentucky women had upheld a woman candidate, and whether men had carried their traditional Kentucky gallantry and chivalry to the polls to do justice to womanhood. . . . Those questions were settled when the vote was counted” (Cromwell, 1996, p. 51). In her role as secretary of state, Cromwell also became the first woman to serve as acting governor (when the governor and lieutenant governor were both out of state while attending the Democratic National Convention). After serving as secretary of state for one term, Cromwell went on to be elected state treasurer in 1927 and then failed in an effort to recapture the secretary of state position.

Thirty years later, another Kentucky woman would use the post of secretary of state as a springboard to higher office. After serving three terms in the house, Thelma Stovall set her sights on a state-level post and won election as secretary of state in 1956. In the political equivalent of musical chairs, Stovall and two other perennial candidates traded off terms in the posts of secretary of state and state treasurer. (At the time, Kentucky law did not allow successive terms in those offices.) Stovall won a term as secretary state (1956), followed by a term as state treasurer (1960), then secretary of state (1964), state treasurer (1968), and secretary of state (1972). While serving as secretary of state, Stovall assumed the role of acting governor when both the governor and the lieutenant governor were out of state, doing so to take the controversial step of pardoning three convicted offenders. This would not be Stovall’s last provocative act while serving in the capacity of acting governor.

In 1975 Stovall became the first woman in Kentucky to achieve a higher statewide office when she was elected lieutenant governor. At one point in 1978, when Governor Julian Carroll traveled out of state, Stovall invoked her powers as acting governor to call the Kentucky General Assembly into special session and, quite famously, vetoed the General Assembly’s repeal of its earlier ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Kentucky had passed the ERA in 1972 but later repealed it, becoming one of five states to do so. (The other states were Idaho, Nebraska, Tennessee, and South Dakota.) As quoted in a newspaper story at the time, Stovall asked the legislators, “How is it going to look for Kentucky with a woman lieutenant governor, to take this slap at women?” (Associated Press, 1978, p. 3).4

Stovall ran for governor in 1979 but lost to John Y. Brown Jr. The
next woman to serve as lieutenant governor, Martha Layne Collins, would succeed where Stovall could not. After receiving a bachelor’s degree from the University of Kentucky, Collins taught school in both Louisville and Versailles. It was in Versailles that her interest in politics began to emerge. She worked her way through the ranks of the Democratic Party, helping on multiple campaigns, and in 1971 she was appointed central Kentucky coordinator of women’s activities for Wendell Ford’s gubernatorial campaign. After Ford’s election, he named her Democratic national committeewoman from Kentucky. Collins’s commitment to public service eventually led her to seek elective office herself. In 1975 she decided to run for clerk of the Court of Appeals, won the Democratic nomination in a five-way primary, and defeated Republican Joseph E. Lambert (who, some years later, would become chief justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court). In her first campaign, Collins adopted a style that would serve her well. She believed that for women to win elections, they
Lieutenant Governor Martha Layne Collins presiding in the senate, circa 1980. (Courtesy of the Public Records Division–Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives)
had to work harder, know more, and be more credible than men of equal stature. During her campaign, she traveled to all 120 counties of the Commonwealth, rather than limiting herself to the roughly forty media markets in Kentucky, as many candidates did (Collins, 2013).

During her tenure as clerk, a constitutional amendment restructured the court system of the Commonwealth (see chapter 7), turning the Court of Appeals into the Kentucky Supreme Court. Collins was subsequently named to the appointed position of clerk of the Kentucky Supreme Court and played a substantive role in educating the citizenry about the court’s new structure and role. Collins thus became the last person to hold the office of clerk of the Court of Appeals and the first to hold the office of clerk of the Kentucky Supreme Court (Ryan & Fraas, 2004). Collins approached her role in the judicial branch with an eye toward educating the Commonwealth’s citizens and making the court more accessible to them. She created booklets explaining the history of the court and showing photographs of judges and distributed them to schoolteachers across Kentucky, with the goal of making the judicial system less intimidating to children; she moved aside the secret veil of the court and allowed the citizens of the Commonwealth to look in (Collins, 2013). Her time in the judicial branch was a learning experience, to be sure, but it was also extremely beneficial on a practical level, as attorneys from around the state encouraged her to take the next step and seek higher office.

After her service in the judicial branch, Martha Layne Collins became Kentucky’s second female lieutenant governor in 1979 (after besting six candidates in the primary and Republican Hal Rogers in the general election), serving under Governor John Y. Brown Jr. (Harrison, 1993; Harrison & Klotter, 1997). During Brown’s four-year term, Collins served as acting governor for more than 500 days when the governor traveled out of state, and she visited all 120 counties of the Commonwealth (Ryan & Fraas, 2004). During her tenure as lieutenant governor, she announced her intention to run for the office of governor.

In 1983 Martha Layne Collins became the Commonwealth’s first woman governor, closely edging out Harvey Sloane and Grady Stumbo in a tough primary (Stumbo had been endorsed by Governor Brown) and then Jim Bunning in the general election. At her swearing in, she stood with her hand on her grandmother’s Bible,
and in her inaugural address, Collins said, “True, the governor of Kentucky is a woman. And, if I am a symbol, then let it signify the kind of individual freedom and opportunity precious to typical Kentuckians from whom I come and with whom I remain. With a deep awareness of the responsibilities conferred by your trust, I vow that this ‘first’ for Kentucky will be ever dedicated to putting Kentucky first” (Johnson, 2012, p. 112). Collins’s governorship would be known for its blended focus on education and economic development (see chapter 7).

With her election as governor, Collins also became the highest ranking Democratic woman in the United States at the time (Powell, 2001). In the 1980s Governor Collins was very active in national politics and was seriously considered by several presidential candidates as a running mate. She was interviewed for the position by Walter Mondale, who ultimately selected Geraldine Ferraro (Ryan & Fraas, 2004).

**Women in the Kentucky General Assembly**

Kentucky women broke the electoral glass ceiling in the state legislature in 1921 when Democrat Mary Elliott Flanery of Catlettsburg, in Boyd County, won a seat in the Kentucky house representing the Eighty-Ninth District. A native of eastern Kentucky, Flanery was born in April 1867 and, after graduating from the University of Kentucky, became a teacher. When Flanery took her seat in January 1922, she was not only the first female member of the Kentucky General Assembly but also the first female legislator elected south of the Mason-Dixon Line (Kleber, 1992). An advocate for women’s rights, Flanery was part of the Equal Rights Association and worked for the amendment’s passage. She served just one term in the house because she decided to run for secretary of state (at the time, no woman had yet held statewide office). That pitted her against Emma Guy Cromwell, who, as noted above, was the first woman elected to that post. Cromwell said of her opponent during the campaign: “May I say now that here was a real opponent, a charming and intellectual woman who would be in earnest in her efforts to be nominated. . . . I will say that she and I kept on being good friends . . . we often met and had lunch together. Each kept her own secrets, if she had any, and we closed the heated campaign with no mudslinging and none of the inevitable regrets that follow such a course . . .
we ever remained good friends and co-workers” (Cromwell, 1996, p. 30).

It would take another forty years for the gender and color barriers to be broken simultaneously. That would be accomplished by two African American women from Louisville: Republican Amelia M. Tucker in 1961 and Democrat Mae Street Kidd in 1968. Kidd had been in the insurance business and had never expected to seek public office when she was approached by representatives from the local Democratic Party, who asked her to run in the primary. Reluctant at first, Kidd ultimately embraced politics with vigor and won eight straight elections in what became a seventeen-year legislative career (until she was beaten in 1984 by Democrat Tom Riner).
Kidd was best known for her advocacy of open housing and low-income housing, and in fact, a housing bill named after her created the Kentucky Housing Corporation in 1972. (Governor Louie Nunn had vetoed the bill in prior sessions.) When asked to identify her proudest achievement, however, Kidd chose her resolution ratifying the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution (Hall, 1997).

“...It’s not easy to get a bill passed, especially a controversial one that plows new ground. You’ve got to convince a lot of people to vote for it. Some of the legislators said, ‘If we don’t vote for her bill, Mrs. Kidd will choke us with our neckties.’ I didn’t exactly say that, but I didn’t care what they said I said as long as they voted for the bill.”

—Mae Street Kidd talking about the 1970 legislative session (quoted in Hall, 1997, p. 117)

On the senate side of the General Assembly, the glass ceiling was breached when Democrat Carolyn Conn Moore of Franklin,
in Simpson County, became the first female senator in 1950, serving out the remaining year of her deceased husband’s term. Pauline Burton Davis also followed her husband in the state senate, although she was elected in her own right in 1958, becoming the first Republican woman elected to the senate. It would be 1968 before Kentuckians elected a female state senator who was not replacing her husband in that office. That occurred when Georgia Davis Powers took her civil rights career to the senate. Senator Powers chose a seat on the senate floor in the second row, purposely avoiding the back row and the humiliating symbolism of the back of a bus (Powers, 1995). She would not be able to avoid all signs of discrimination, however, for even as an elected official, her skin color meant that she could not rent a hotel or motel room in Frankfort. That experience fueled her interest in legislation to outlaw housing discrimination, which became a major focus during her time in Frankfort. By the second year of her twenty-year legislative career, Senator Powers had been named chair of the Health and Welfare Committee, where she championed civil rights, child protection, education, mental health, and women’s issues. In 2010 Senator Powers began a close collaboration with the Center for Research on Violence Against Women at the University of Kentucky and publicly shared her own experience of being victimized at age thirteen by a male friend of the family. Through her visible partnership with the center, Senator Powers has proved herself to be a powerful and vocal advocate for justice and legal reform, well deserving of an endowed chair in her name.

While women have served in the Kentucky General Assembly since the 1920s, even today they remain significantly underrepresented in both the house and the senate (see table 1.1). The Commonwealth ranks forty-second in the nation in the percentage of female legislators and is among only eleven states (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, North Dakota, Alabama, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and South Carolina) where less than 20 percent of state legislators are women (National Council of State Legislatures, 2012c). Only nineteen women have ever served in the Kentucky senate, and only seventy have served in the house; four of the female senators began their legislative careers in the Kentucky house.6

The first five women to become Kentucky state senators (beginning in 1950) followed their husbands in office, either filling their
unexpired terms or in separate elections. They served short terms of less than three years each, and often just one year. As noted above, Georgia Powers was the first woman elected without riding her husband’s coattails, and her twenty years in office still stand as the longest term of any woman in the Kentucky senate. Patty Weaver and Helen Garrett each served for more than a decade in the 1970s and 1980s, and since 1995, it has become more common for female senators to serve for a decade or longer.
Likewise, in the Kentucky house of representatives, the first female legislators served short terms, most commonly two years. After forty years, that changed in 1968 with the election of Mae Street Kidd, who went on to serve for seventeen years. Two Kentucky representatives have had legislative careers lasting more than two decades: Ruth Ann Palumbo, a Democrat from Lexington who was first elected in 1991; and Dorothy “Dottie” Priddy, a Democrat from Louisville who served from 1970 to 1991.

Dottie Priddy was a flamboyant legislator, easily identifiable by her bright jewelry and hats but perhaps even better known for the .38-caliber revolver she was said to wear strapped to her ankle. Her constituents in Louisville knew her to be a staunch opponent of court-ordered busing to integrate schools. Although Priddy was the only female legislator to vote against the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, almost two decades later she would make remarkable comments about the rights of women from the floor of the house to influence passage of a bill outlawing marital rape.

Ruth Ann Palumbo continues to be one of the most liberal members of the General Assembly and is one of the few women to serve as a committee chair. In the 2000s Palumbo became part of a liberal caucus of women legislators that included Joni Jenkins, Susan Johns, Eleanor Jordan, Mary Lou Marzian, Kathy Stein, and others. When they recognized that their collective voice was more powerful than their singular opinions, they began to caucus together, each assuming responsibility for tracking legislation in her respective area of expertise. They tracked legislation addressing women’s health, domestic violence and rape, women’s representation on state boards and commissions, fairness bills, and more, and together they organized support for or opposition to legislation impacting women. They gained early, visible notoriety by building statewide opposition to a bill that, before their organized effort, likely would have

Table 1.1. Kentucky General Assembly by Year, Party Affiliation, and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Percentage of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
gone unnoticed and passed easily. That bill would have removed the requirement that educational institutions offer women’s softball in addition to men’s baseball, violating the spirit if not the letter of Title IX (Stein, 2013).

The number of women in the Kentucky legislature has been and continues to be small, but for nearly a hundred years, they have shown themselves to be substantial in voice. The earliest reformers who took their seats in the Kentucky General Assembly saw what contemporary women’s advocates still see: the strongest sustainable reforms on behalf of women are secured in the halls of the Kentucky legislature.

A WOMEN’S MOVEMENT TO END VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The legal and political reforms of the early twentieth century changed women’s lives substantially. They provided economic freedom, gave women legal standing as individuals, and gave them a voice in the electoral process. After the vote was secured in the 1920s, however, the women’s reform effort seemed less urgent and became less visible in communities across America. Many women’s advocates had considered suffrage their sole goal and felt their job was over with passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. This limited view and episodic attention slowed the progress of women’s rights and was a pattern that would be repeated in years to come.

In the 1960s a second wave of reform began in the United States. The women’s movement that blossomed in the late 1960s and 1970s was part of an international groundswell whereby women sought both civil and national rights. Within this overall movement, there were two specific campaigns to address violence against women: the anti-rape movement and the domestic violence movement. As social movements, both shared a broad goal: to end violence against women in all its forms. Advocates engaged in collective action guided by the idea of justice, a pattern consistent with long-standing theories of social movements (Touraine, 1981).

Like other movements, the anti-rape and domestic violence movements sought to implement change at multiple levels with a combination of services and activism: the local organization of women-run services (such as rape crisis centers and battered women’s shelters); efforts to reform the legal, criminal justice, and service systems; and bipartisan political pressure to advance the cause
of women (Bergen & Maier, 2011; Stark, 2007). These early efforts created an important connection between advocacy to build services and improve protection and political activism to change laws. They involved women telling their own personal stories, which, in the hands of advocates, became a political force. “Through the thread of these stories, women came to understand that the personal was indeed political. Women's stories and women's experiences have shaped the development of the field of women and the law” (Schneider & Wildman, 2011, p. 1).

The presence of anti-rape and domestic violence advocates was felt first in local communities, where grassroots shelters and crisis services were built outside the standard service system. In fact, “activists perceived violence against women as integrally linked to gender inequality and viewed the political and legal establishment with suspicion, maintaining that it perpetuated institutional forms of sexism. This perception led the domestic violence movement to focus initially outside of the governmental sphere . . . on the establishment of shelters, empowerment groups, and community education workshops” (Epstein, 1999, p. 128).

Similarly, in the anti-rape movement, volunteer advocates often believed that women would be best served not in collaboration with professionals in the legal system but in spite of them. This approach reflected a learned distrust of law enforcement and other professionals and a belief that women were revictimized by the legal process. Although the provision of direct services was and always will be the bedrock of the domestic violence and anti-rape movements, advocates were increasingly seen in the halls of statehouses and state offices, where they tried to change state law and policy. While victim services remained a priority, as these movements grew, advocates realized they could make changes at the macrolevel as well. In addition to responding to individual women who had been victimized by an intimate and then unsupported by the criminal justice system, they sought to change the system that had inflicted the wrong. And they urgently sought to reform a culture that perpetuated disempowering views of women as property and victimizing views of women’s culpability when they were raped or battered (i.e., it must have been her fault). Survivors themselves were involved at every level: individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, and cultural change. The stories they told in the early days of the anti-rape and domestic violence movements gave an immediate face to the issue of violence
against women (Polletta, 2006). Their stories were compelling and grabbed the attention of all who heard them. Stories told by women who had experienced rape or domestic violence emphasized the victims’ ability to recover (Dunn, 2005; Loseke, 2000) and painted a portrait of survivors as strong and resilient rather than passive, weak, or deserving of pity. And they depicted survivors as “just like me” to audiences, countering the tendency to blame the victim and attribute her plight to some failing of her own, rather than the force used against her.

One Lofty Mission with Two Paths

The anti-rape and domestic violence movements enabled the legislative changes achieved on behalf of women over the past four decades. But the relationship between the two movements—one fighting against sexual violence and the other seeking to protect battered women—has at times been an uneasy and ambivalent alliance. The two movements never battled each other in any direct sense, and certainly they were both fueled by the desire to stand up for women. However, the dearth of financial resources, limits on political capital, and constant sense of having to fight outsiders created tension and moments of competition between the two movements. For instance, some bemoaned the reduction in attention to rape when feminists seemed to become more concerned about domestic violence (Caringella, 2009). But feminists do not always think alike or approach problems in the same way. As such, ideological differences and practical pressures have separated the two movements historically and continue to do so at times today.

The bifurcation between rape and domestic violence seen at the birth of the two movements was not just an artifact of the era, for even today, service providers often define themselves as serving rape victims or domestic violence victims. In the academic community, scholars tend to specialize in studying rape or domestic violence or stalking, rather than all forms of violence against women (Jordan, 2009a); researchers seek a marriage between a hard science approach that advances rigorous empiricism and a social justice approach that advances the end of violence against women (Campbell, 2009; Jordan, 2009a, 2009b).

Within the contemporary movement to end violence against women, distinct anti-rape and domestic violence movements can
still be found, although in some states, the separation has become less apparent. At the national level, coalitions of rape and domestic violence advocates have marched together on Washington, D.C., and on Congress (most recently in support of the federal Violence Against Women Act), and state advocates have found that there is power in numbers, leading to combined efforts to secure funding for both domestic violence and rape programs. In a number of states, combined programs now provide services to battered women and rape survivors. Arguably, however, a scratch of the proverbial surface often reveals that the old separations persist. There may be one lofty mission, but perhaps, here and there, we find two paths to reach it.

**The Movement Evolves**

As described above, early efforts against rape and domestic violence involved a marked connection between advocacy to build services and political activism to change laws. Political advocacy, however, became off-limits or more complicated to engage in when domestic violence and anti-rape programs began to accept government, corporate, and foundation funding that specifically prohibits the use of those funds to support lobbying efforts. While struggling philosophically with the pressures to shift away from pure grassroots organizing and activism, advocates have continued their legal reform work.

The collection of activists pushing for legal reforms has also expanded its reach. Some advocates who began their careers in battered women’s shelters and rape crisis centers have moved into positions in the government, providing a voice for women from within the executive and legislative branches. Others have moved into the private sphere, adding a voice from foundations. Still others have joined universities, where research can be used as a tool of advocacy.

Within the past decade, another group of victim advocates has appeared with a criminal justice perspective (e.g., prosecutor-based advocates, Mothers against Drunk Drivers, Parents of Murdered Children) that has not always been congruent with that of the more traditional anti-rape and domestic violence advocates. Disparate points of view have emerged around issues such as the death penalty, with criminal justice advocates advancing a pro–death penalty viewpoint and anti-rape and domestic violence advocates, with their more liberal grassroots histories, taking the opposite view. Fetal homicide is another issue that has caused a split between many in
the domestic violence and anti-rape movements and other advocates who have a more conservative point of view about legal reforms in this area.

The voices of anti-rape and domestic violence advocates catalyzed the legal and legislative reforms of the past four decades. This same voice, in some cases handed down to the next generation of advocates, continues to speak for women across the nation in the halls of state capitols. But have these advocates succeeded? Some forty years later, it can be argued that survivors and advocates have both succeeded and failed. As noted by Dobash and Dobash (1992, p. 1):

For the women who have been physically abused in the home by the men with whom they live, the past two decades have seen both radical change and no change at all. The lives of some have been touched by an ever expanding, worldwide movement to support women who have been battered and to challenge male violence. Some legal and social institutions have begun to respond, while others remain in a nexus of traditional tolerance of male violence and indifference to those who suffer from such violence. This is a time marked by social change and resistance to change, by innovation and reassertion of tradition. Both the new and the old responses are used, challenged and defended by those with differing views about the nature of this problem and how best to confront it. The arena of change and challenge is alive with ideas and activity.

While this perspective may be realistic, one cannot discount the extraordinary difference that advocates have made. In fact, the early results of the movement are quantifiable. The first battered women’s shelter was opened as early as 1967 (Lemon, 2009), and in 1978 the growing number of shelters across the United States came together to form the National Coalition against Domestic Violence (Fulkerson & Patterson, 2006). In the latter part of the 1970s, there were barely two dozen emergency shelters for battered women, but a decade later, approximately 1,200 shelters were housing 300,000 annually (Stark, 2007). By 1985, legislators in more than half the states had listened to advocates and passed statutes funding domestic violence shelters (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990, 1992). By 1994, when the first federal Violence Against Women Act was signed, U.S. shelters were
serving more than 1 million women annually (Stark, 2007). Services for rape victims have also expanded, growing to more than 1,200 organizations by 2010 (Bergen & Maier, 2011).

The presence of the movement was just that: a physical presence. Advocates’ combined voices made some communities think that the rape and battering of women had suddenly worsened, but in fact, these crimes were finally piercing the consciousness of Americans. In this process, words became all-important. Domestic violence advocates created and doggedly held on to terms such as woman battering and wife abuse to accurately characterize this type of violence as a gendered phenomenon. The anti-rape movement, similarly, worked hard to use the word rape publicly. By naming rape and wife battering, the movement gained power from the public’s growing awareness.

**A WOMEN’S MOVEMENT TO END VIOLENCE IN KENTUCKY**

As the national movements to end rape and domestic violence took root in the 1970s, reforms also began to emerge in the Commonwealth. Not unlike the national anti-rape and domestic violence movements, the first responses in Kentucky took shape in local communities, where services for rape survivors and battered women sprouted. Volunteers staffed crisis hotlines for rape survivors, and communities found beds for women who were fleeing violent homes. These informal grassroots efforts led to the creation of formal advocacy organizations and statewide networks of services, collaborations with other Kentucky practitioners, and enormous legislative reforms. Just as the national movements linked advocacy for victims with political activism, so did reforms in the Commonwealth.

In a symbolic way, a call to a telephone hotline in the late hours of the night launched the anti-rape movement in Kentucky. In 1971 a volunteer staffing a hotline in Lexington answered a call from a woman who had been raped. Shortly thereafter, the first rape crisis center was opened in Kentucky, called the Lexington Rape Crisis Center (now operating as the Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center). In 1975 the Rape Relief Center (now the Center for Women and Families) became Kentucky’s second such center, operating under the auspices of the YWCA in Jefferson County. This was followed in 1976 by the Rape Crisis Center of Northern Kentucky (now the Women’s Crisis Center of Northern Kentucky) and in 1982 by Rape Victim
Services Program in Owensboro (now called New Beginnings). Over the fifteen-year period between 1971 and 1986, these four centers were the only funded programs of their kind operating in Kentucky. Notably, the majority of these programs began as grassroots, volunteer efforts; as they began to receive local and state funding, additional volunteer programs sprang up around the Commonwealth. At present, there are thirteen rape crisis centers, divided regionally to serve each county in the state.

The earliest funding from the state government was a pass-through of federal preventive health and health services (PHHS) block grant funding. The state’s Department for Public Health (now part of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services) served as the administering agency. The PHHS block grant was originally split among the first three rape crisis centers in Kentucky, but in the 1980s, in an expression of solidarity, those three programs asked that the limited funding be split four ways to help support the new center in Owensboro. In 1985 the Kentucky Department for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services assumed responsibility for administering the PHHS block grant, a move that coincided with the department’s creation of a Sexual and Domestic Violence Services Program for victims of rape, domestic violence, and child abuse administered by the state’s network of community mental health centers. As the department assumed responsibility for the administration of funding for Kentucky’s rape crisis centers, it also prioritized the expansion of these programs statewide. This led to the first state general funds for rape crisis centers in 1986 (an accomplishment covered in more detail in chapter 7).

As the department began to coordinate the growth of rape crisis centers, the centers’ directors had the opportunity to meet on a regular basis. Growing in number each year, these directors strengthened the individual services provided through their programs, and they organized a formal statewide coalition. In 1990 the Kentucky Rape Crisis Center Association was created as an independent advocacy organization unattached to the government; it later changed its name to the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs (KASAP).

Meanwhile, in 1977 the first spouse abuse shelter (as it was then called) opened in Louisville. Like the Rape Relief Center, this program was operated under the auspices of the YWCA, although its rape and domestic violence services were initially administered
independently.\textsuperscript{11} In 1978 the YWCA also opened a spouse abuse shelter in Lexington (now called the Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program).\textsuperscript{12} The Barren River Area Safe Space opened in 1980,\textsuperscript{13} and soon thereafter the Women’s Crisis Center in Northern Kentucky expanded its scope to include victims of domestic violence as well as rape survivors, adopting a model that blended those services.\textsuperscript{14} Shelters in Paducah and Barbourville followed.

By 1981, there were six shelter programs serving battered women and their children across the Commonwealth. That year, those six programs formed a statewide coalition, the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association (KDVA), whose membership included all domestic violence programs in the state.\textsuperscript{15} An early goal of the KDVA was to increase the number of programs so that each area development district in the Commonwealth was served, a goal it reached in 1985. Among the KDVA’s earliest successes was obtaining state funding for domestic violence programs, accomplished during the administration of Governor John Y. Brown.\textsuperscript{16} This came at a crucial time, as key federal funding had been slashed, and directors struggled to provide crisis services for battered women while dealing with a 50 percent cut in funding (Van Houten, 2013). Additionally, the General Assembly passed legislation in 1982 to expand funding, establishing the spouse abuse shelter fund (now called the domestic violence fund) under the Adult Protection Act (see chapter 7).

\begin{quote}
“We shall someday be heeded, and when we shall have our amendment to the Constitution of the United States, everybody will think it was always so, just exactly as many young people believe that all the privileges, all the freedom, all the enjoyments which woman now possesses always were hers. They have no idea of how every single inch of ground that she stands upon today has been gained by the hard work of some little handful of women of the past.”

—Susan B. Anthony, 1894 (quoted in Sherr, 1995, p. xi)
\end{quote}

The founding of rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs and the creation of state-level associations to address sexual assault and domestic violence formed the bedrock for Kentucky’s legislative reforms. These outspoken and visionary activists joined with other women’s advocates in the state government and local grassroots
organizations (e.g., the Kentucky Coalition against Rape and Sexual Assault) to advance the protection of women and children by legislative reform. Their stories, which are told in detail in later chapters, gave women a visible role in Kentucky’s history. While revealing the destructiveness of rape and domestic violence, they showed the true strength and resiliency of women, and they changed the face of the Commonwealth for generations to come.