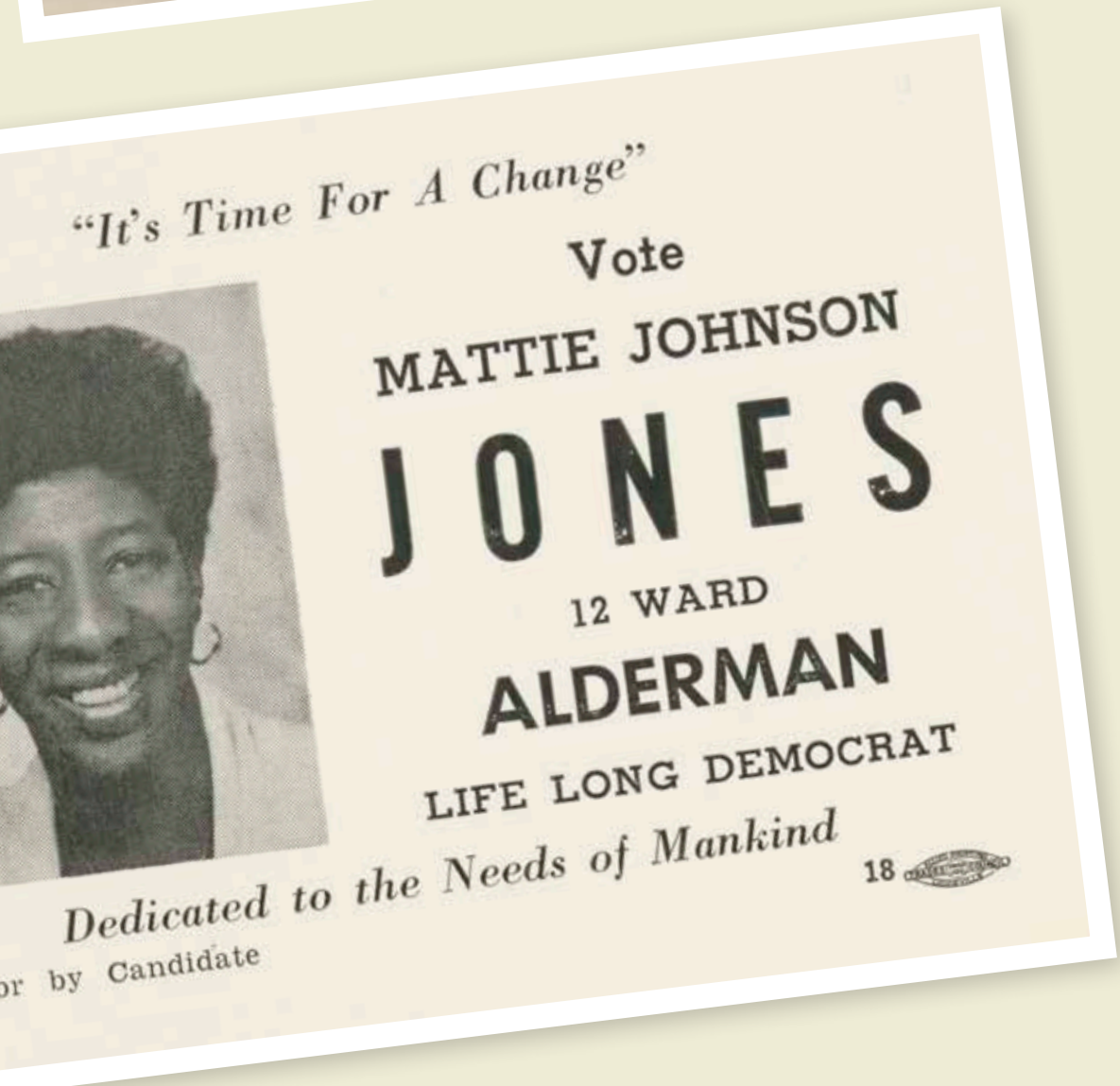
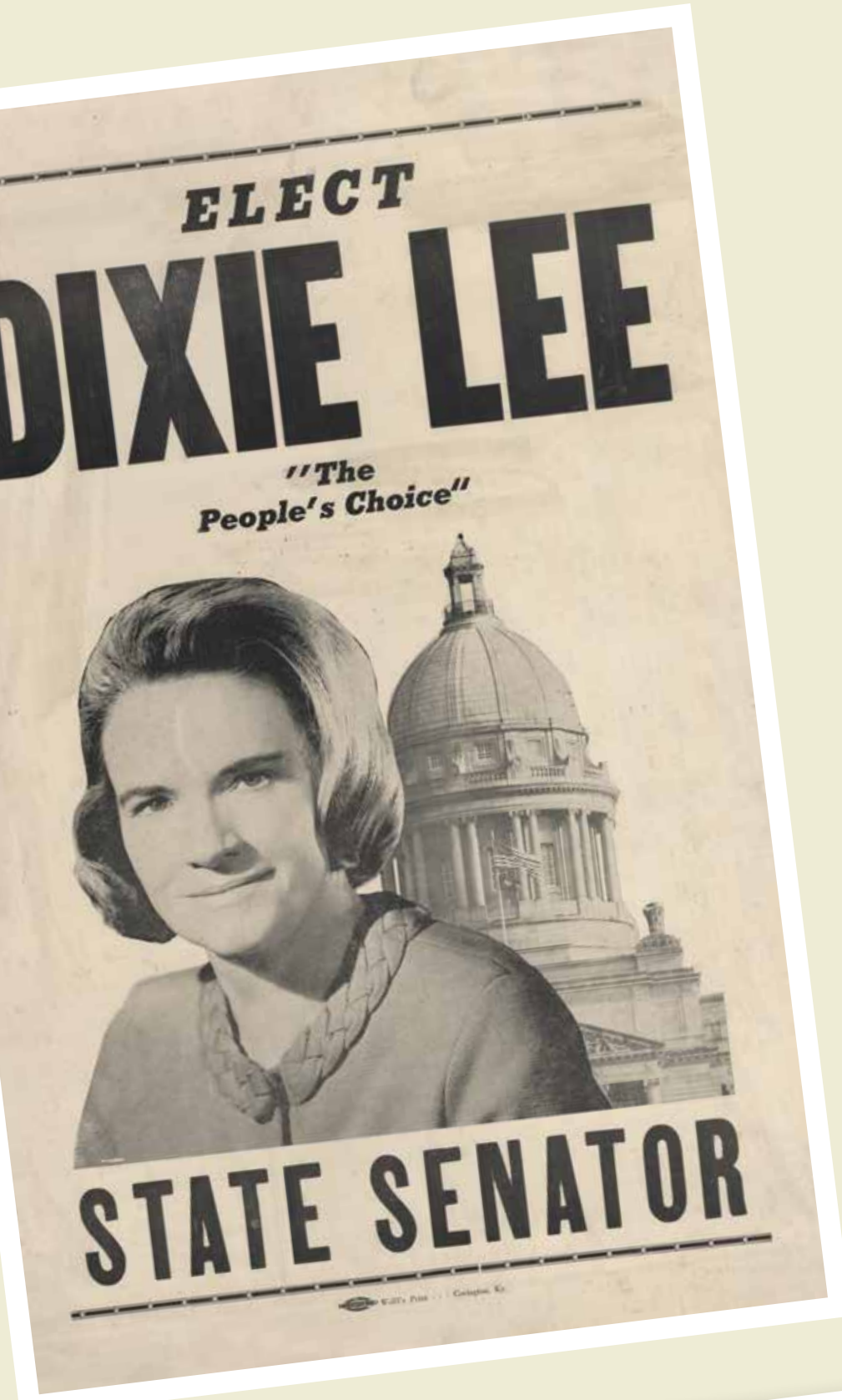


KENTUCKY WOMEN RISING

Kentucky women have been active in politics for over 200 years. Before and after the passage of the 19th Amendment which granted women the right to vote, they repeatedly sought to participate in political life and make their voices heard. Though not always self-identifying as feminist – one who supports political, economic and social equality of the sexes – many fought for political, economic, and social equality. They organized groups focused on achieving their goals, ran for and attained political office, and proposed legislation.

Women of color did not share equally in the gains made over time by their white female counterparts. Although the 19th Amendment applied to women of color, cultural norms – manifested in Jim Crow laws and other discriminatory practices – restricted women of color from their rights, especially in the southern states.

Despite over 200 years of activism and the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, the struggle for equality continues today. Kentucky women are still in the fight, with many participating in the successive waves of feminism that have shaped the lives of all Kentuckians.



Thanks to the WKU Department of Library Special Collections, Library of Congress, and University of Kentucky Special Collections for providing images utilized in this exhibition.



KENTUCKY WOMEN RISING **FIRST WAVE** 1830's to 1920's

First Wave Feminism focused on women's right to vote. In 1838 – ten years before the Seneca Falls Convention – Kentucky passed the first permanent statewide suffrage law. It allowed any widow or female head of household over 21 who paid property taxes the right to vote in elections for the school system. However, in practice, this right was denied in many counties.

Despite strong opposition to women's involvement in politics, historical records indicate that women were running for, and gaining, office at unprecedented rates. Women in the United States led over 4,480 political campaigns before 1920 – 75% of which they won. Most of these campaigns were on the local level.

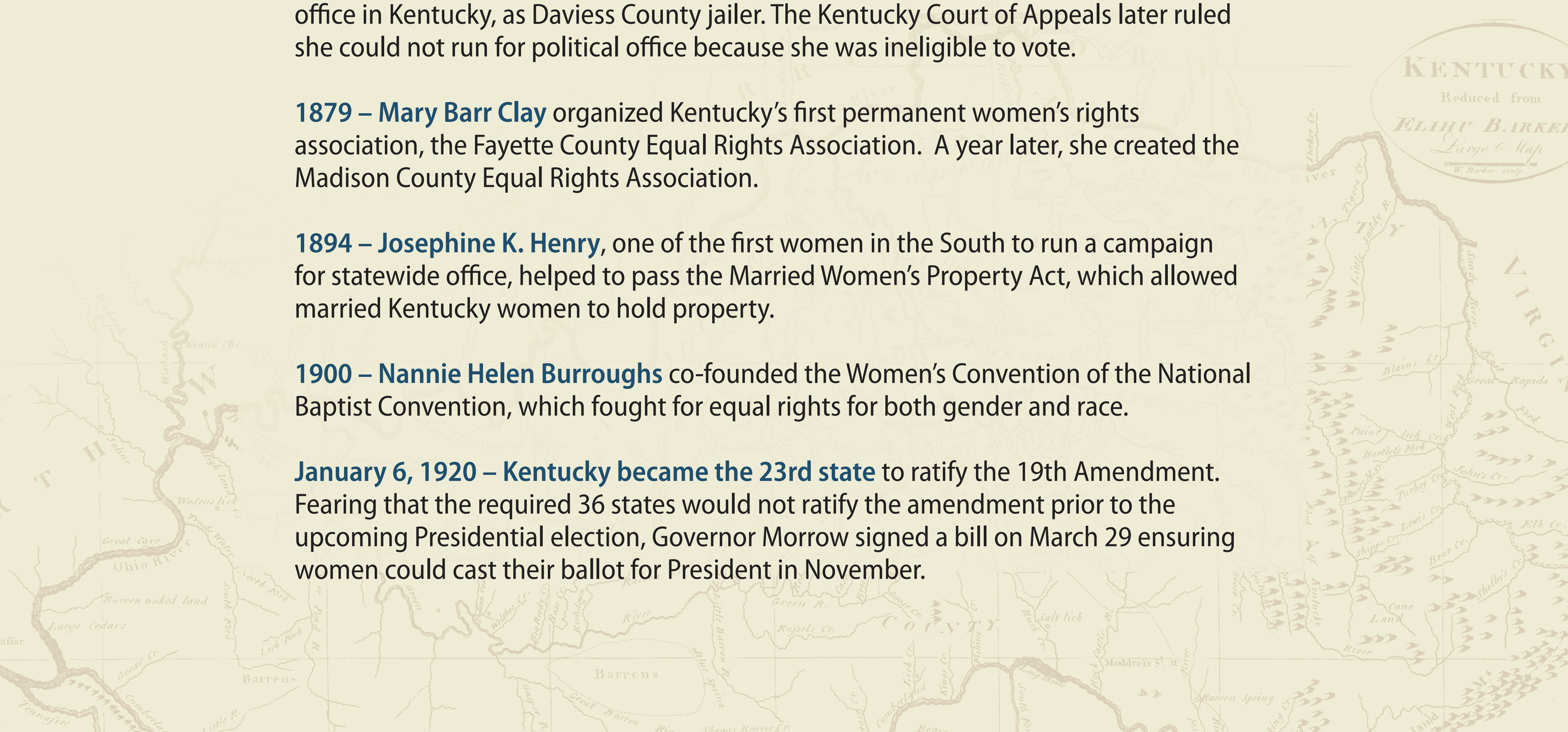
1874 – Mildred Summers Lucas became perhaps the first woman elected to political office in Kentucky, as Daviess County jailer. The Kentucky Court of Appeals later ruled she could not run for political office because she was ineligible to vote.

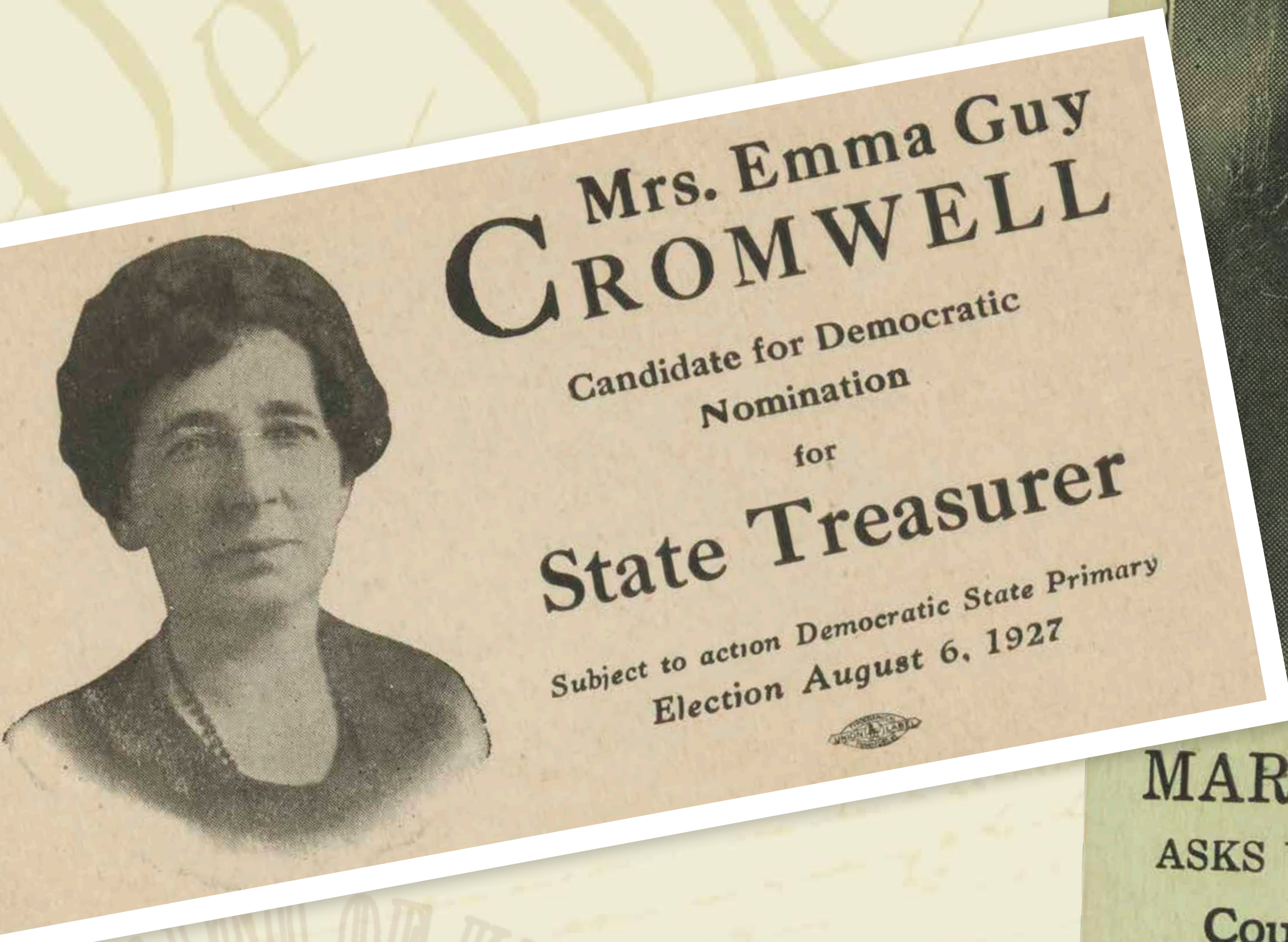
1879 – Mary Barr Clay organized Kentucky's first permanent women's rights association, the Fayette County Equal Rights Association. A year later, she created the Madison County Equal Rights Association.

1894 – Josephine K. Henry, one of the first women in the South to run a campaign for statewide office, helped to pass the Married Women's Property Act, which allowed married Kentucky women to hold property.

1900 – Nannie Helen Burroughs co-founded the Women's Convention of the National Baptist Convention, which fought for equal rights for both gender and race.

January 6, 1920 – Kentucky became the 23rd state to ratify the 19th Amendment. Fearing that the required 36 states would not ratify the amendment prior to the upcoming Presidential election, Governor Morrow signed a bill on March 29 ensuring women could cast their ballot for President in November.





KENTUCKY WOMEN RISING BETWEEN THE WAVES

Suffrage did not end women's fight for equality. Rather, it spurred more women to become active public figures and highlighted how other factors – such as race and class – marginalized women of color. It also encouraged women to fight for greater rights, including equal opportunities in education and employment. Women increasingly ran for more traditionally male offices, including state and national positions.

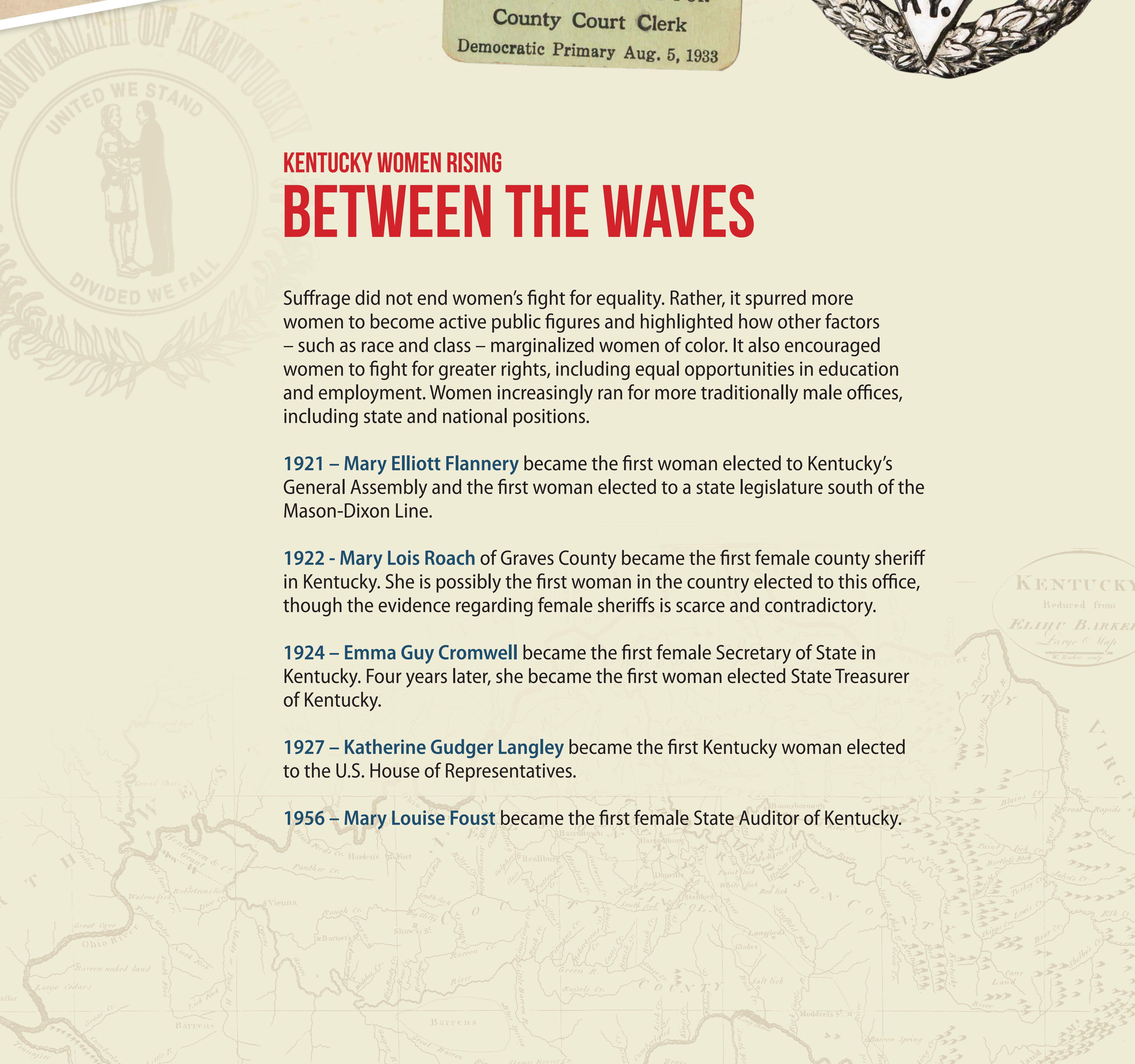
1921 – Mary Elliott Flannery became the first woman elected to Kentucky's General Assembly and the first woman elected to a state legislature south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

1922 - Mary Lois Roach of Graves County became the first female county sheriff in Kentucky. She is possibly the first woman in the country elected to this office, though the evidence regarding female sheriffs is scarce and contradictory.

1924 – Emma Guy Cromwell became the first female Secretary of State in Kentucky. Four years later, she became the first woman elected State Treasurer of Kentucky.

1927 – Katherine Gudger Langley became the first Kentucky woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

1956 – Mary Louise Foust became the first female State Auditor of Kentucky.





KENTUCKY WOMEN RISING

SECOND WAVE

1960's to 1980's

Spurred by Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1949) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), the Second Wave focused on eliminating systemic sexism that encouraged women to remain wives and mothers. This wave included social equality – resulting in the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title IX, and a series of landmark Supreme Court cases on reproductive rights.

It was also the first time in Kentucky's history where women of color successfully gained state office. In 1966, the General Assembly passed the first state civil rights law in the South – the Kentucky Civil Rights Act. This expanded the federal law – which prohibited racial and religious discrimination in businesses, employment, and public spaces – to also prohibit discrimination in housing and public accommodations.

1961 – Amelia Tucker became the first African American elected to the Kentucky State Legislature.

1967 – Georgia Davis Powers became the first woman and first person of color elected to the Kentucky Senate.

1968 – Mae Street Kidd became the first mixed-race Representative in Kentucky's General Assembly. She led a campaign that resulted in unanimous ratification of the 13th (abolition of slavery), 14th (granting U.S. citizenship to African Americans and naturalized citizens), and 15th (enfranchising African Americans) amendments, over 100 years after Congress ratified these amendments.

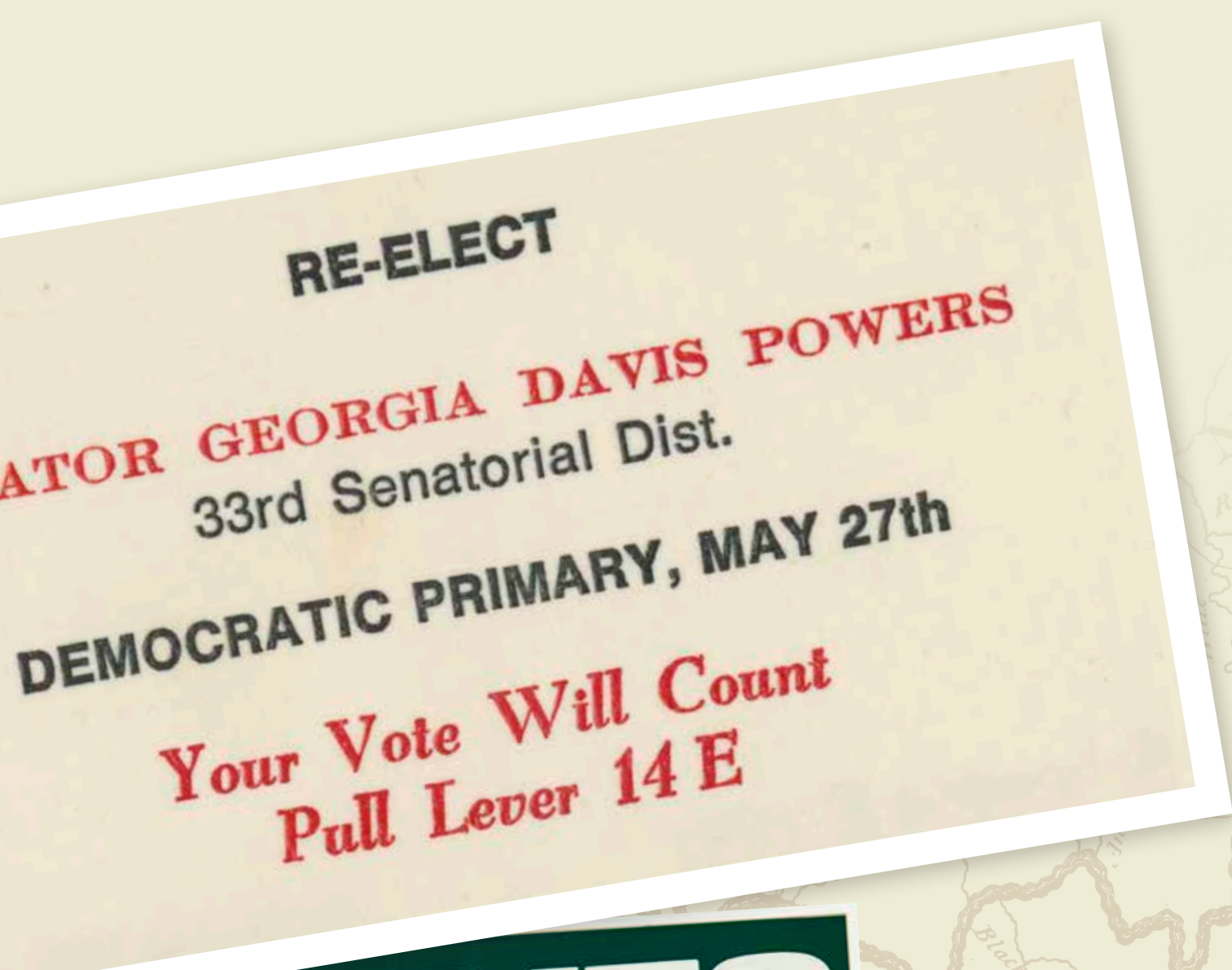
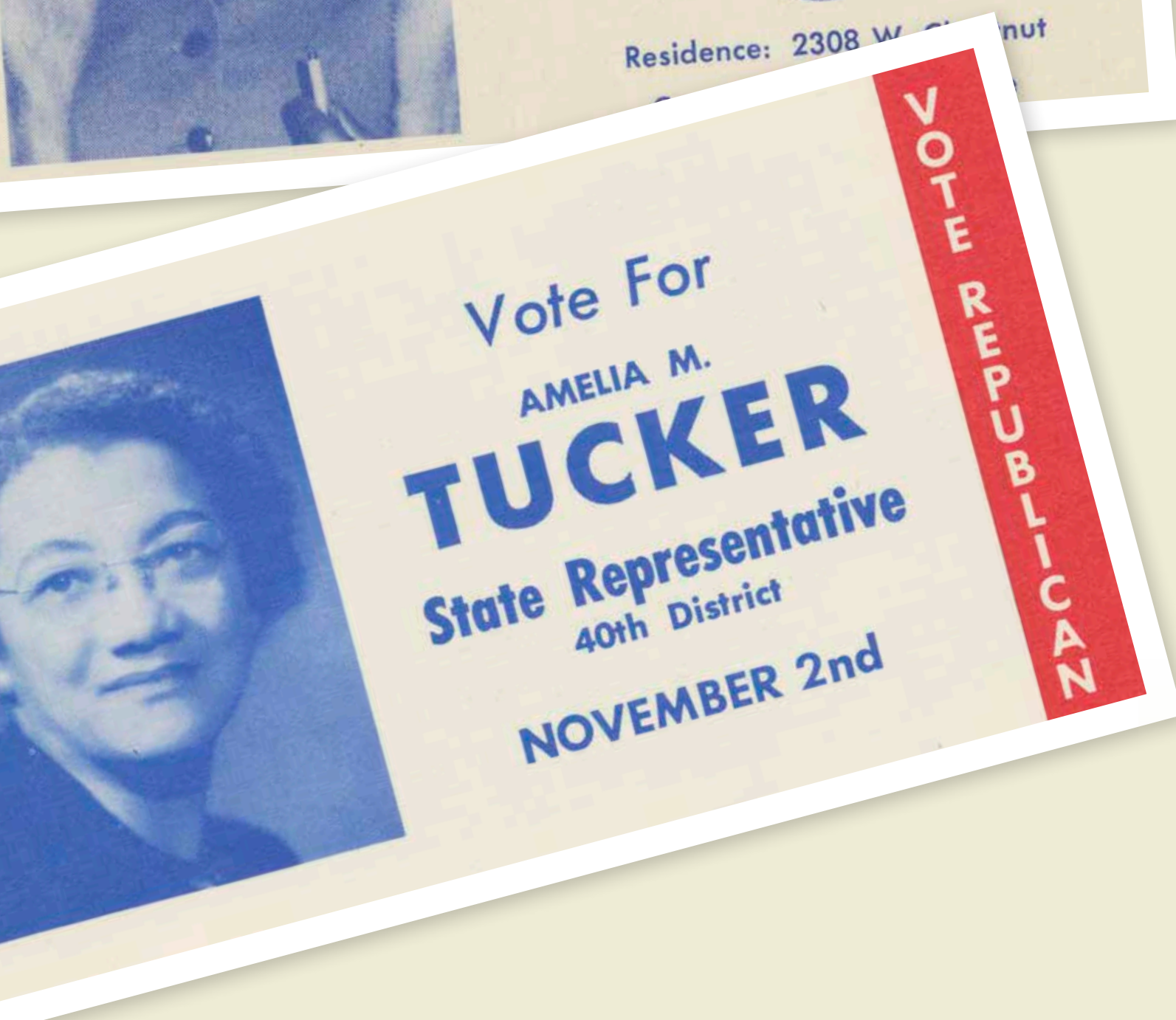
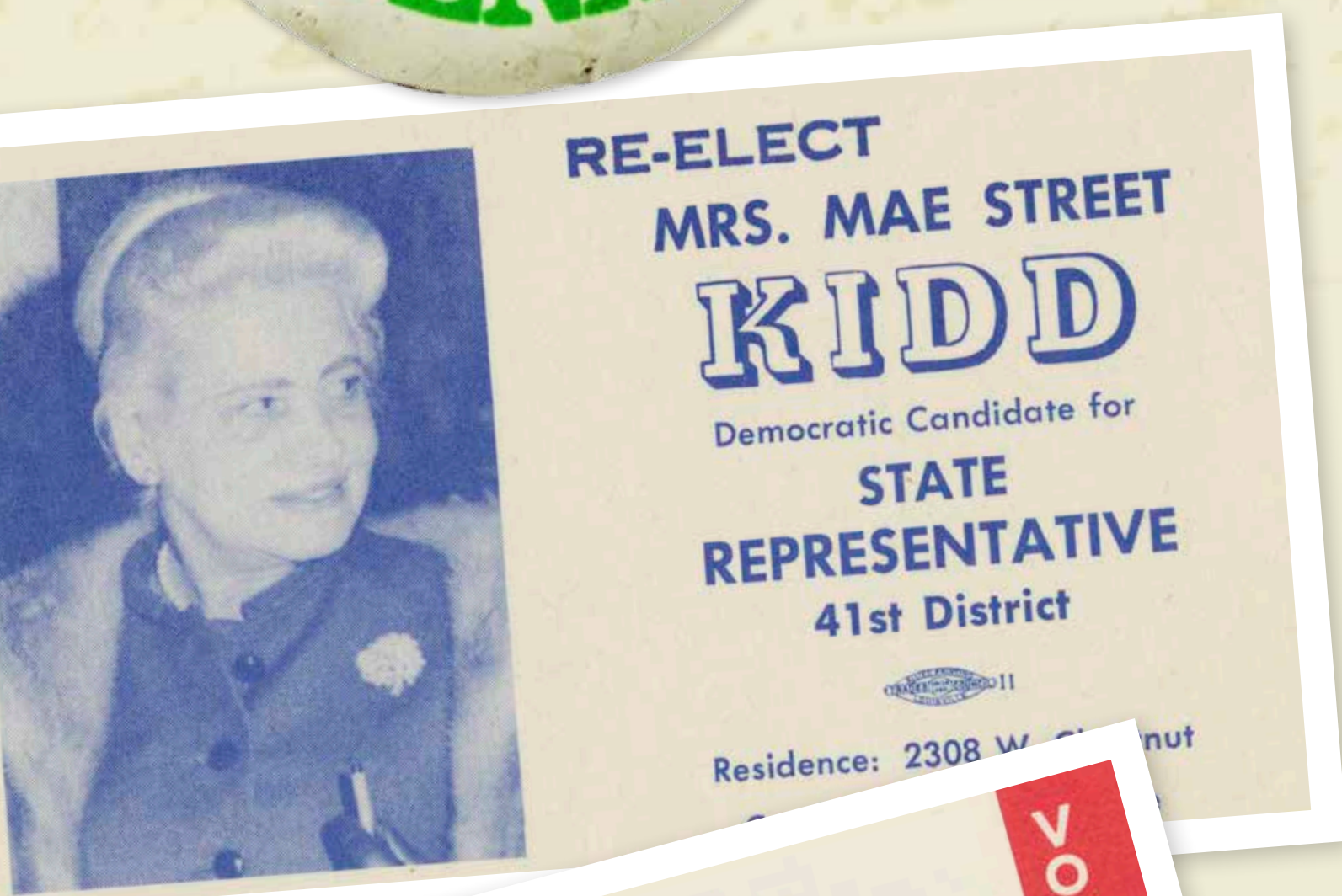
1968 – Katherine "Katie" Peden became the first woman in Kentucky to win a statewide senate primary.

1972 – Kentucky became the 16th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

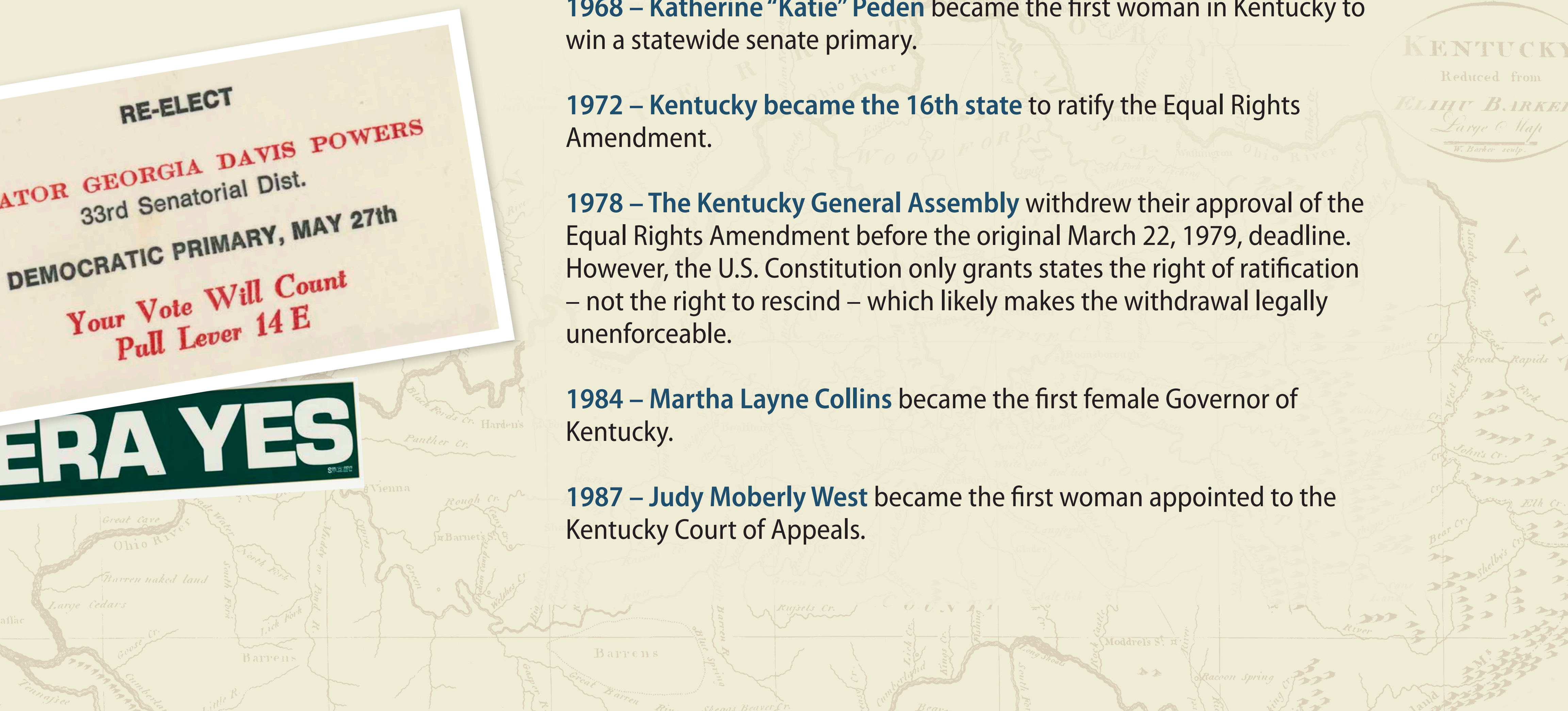
1978 – The Kentucky General Assembly withdrew their approval of the Equal Rights Amendment before the original March 22, 1979, deadline. However, the U.S. Constitution only grants states the right of ratification – not the right to rescind – which likely makes the withdrawal legally unenforceable.

1984 – Martha Layne Collins became the first female Governor of Kentucky.

1987 – Judy Moberly West became the first woman appointed to the Kentucky Court of Appeals.



ERA YES



KENTUCKY WOMEN RISING

THIRD WAVE

1990s to 2000s

Third Wave feminism began in the early 1990s. Two moments spurred it on. First, Anita Hill's testimony about Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas prompted other women to speak out about sexual harassment. Second, the Riot Grrrl movement embraced a variety of ideas, language, and aesthetics that prompted some of the first intersectional fights for equality.

Despite comprising 51.6% of Kentucky's population in 1996, women held only 17% of elective positions. While the Third Wave urged political and societal change, Kentucky women's participation as elected officials remained one of the lowest in the nation.

1991 – Janie R. Martin became the first elected African American female judge in Kentucky.

1993 – Sara Walter Combs became the first woman appointed to the Kentucky Supreme Court. After Janet Lynn Stumbo defeated her in an election to hold the seat in her own right, Combs was named to the Kentucky Court of Appeals. She later was the first woman to serve as Chief Judge for the Court of Appeals.

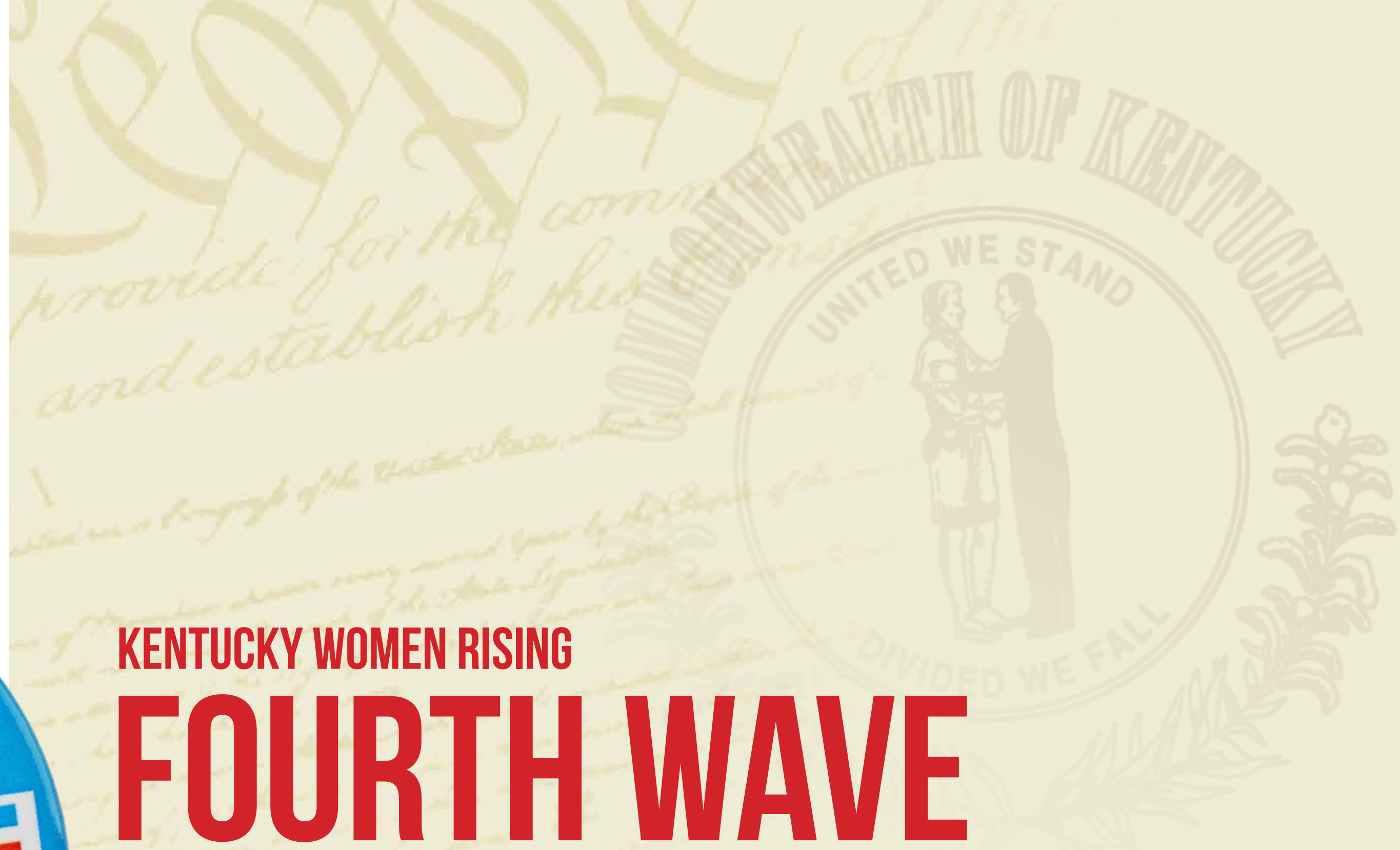
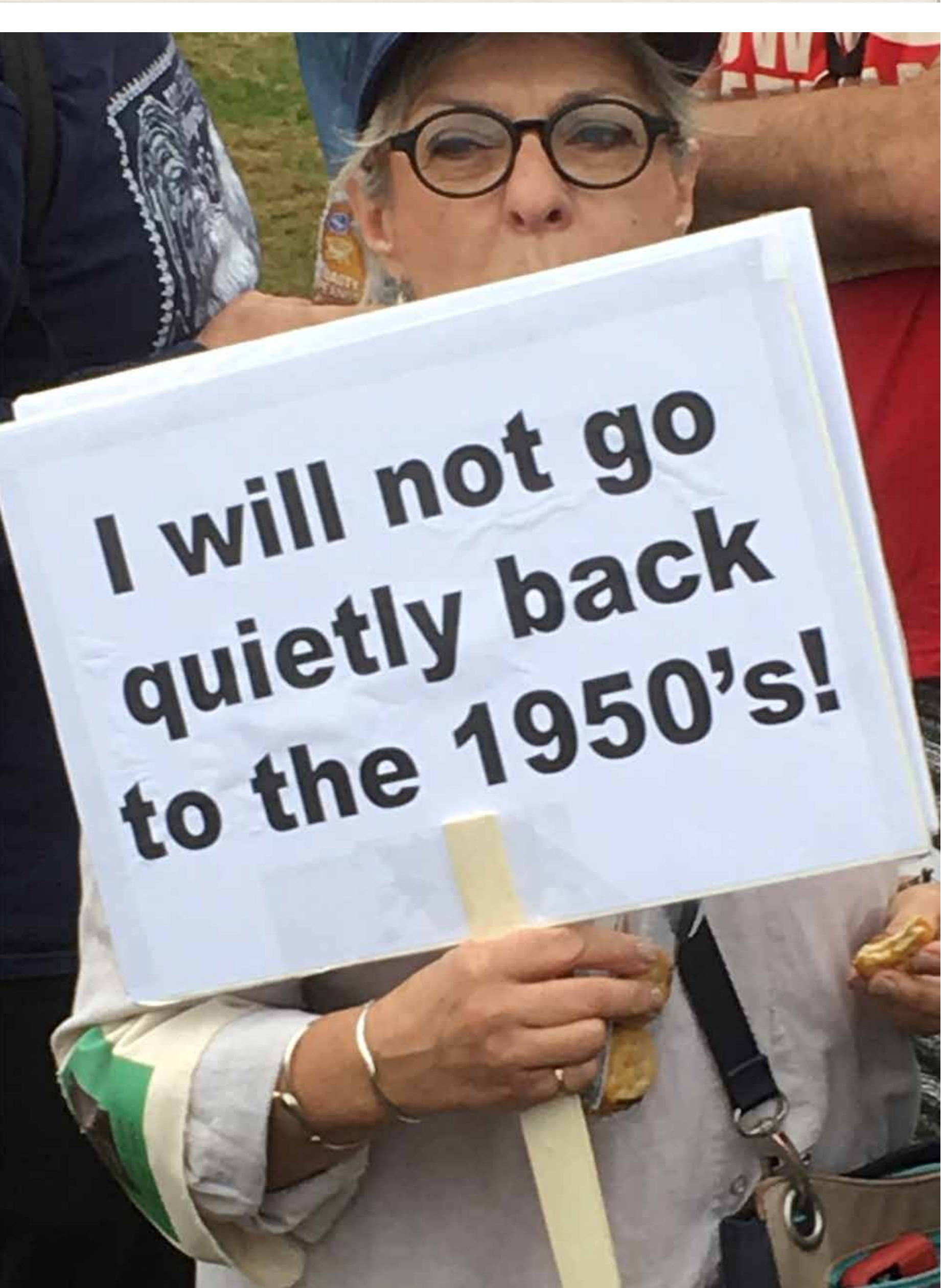
1998 – Margaret Ryan Huddleston became the first woman appointed to the Warren Circuit Court.

Since the passage of the 19th Amendment, Kentucky has elected only two women to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, Kentucky women have held only eight of the 13 statewide offices.





Feminism. *the radical notion that Women Are People Too* #Intersectional Feminist



KENTUCKY WOMEN RISING

FOURTH WAVE takes the stage.

Started in 2012, the Fourth Wave explicitly focuses on **intersectionalism** – calling attention to how social categories such as race, class, and gender combine to oppress others. Its advocates also seek to end violence against women, ensure equal pay for equal work, and/or grant women full bodily autonomy. They also encourage men to participate, and advocate to end harmful gender stereotypes. Using the Internet, fourth wave feminists have mobilized on a national scale.

January 21, 2017 - the first Women's March became the largest single-day protest in U.S. history. Powered by social media, it was mounted in response to President Trump's election.

2018 – Christine Thompson became the first Hispanic woman to win an election in Kentucky, as a member of the Livingston County School Board.

2019 - Nima Kulkarni became Kentucky's first Indian American state legislator.

2020 - Women make up 51% of Kentucky's population, but occupy only 23% of seats in the state legislature.

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, we ask, "When will Kentucky's elected officials become reflective of our populace?"

