

**ADVOCACYNET 355**  
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## Hail To The Nineteenth!

**On the eve of a historic election, Bobbi Fitzsimmons celebrates the amendment that gave American women the vote and the women who made it happen.**



I recently finished work on a project with the [Cameron Art Museum](#) in Wilmington, NC to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution (photos left and below).

This amendment gave women the right to vote after a decades-long campaign by many strong, determined women who saw an inequity and took steps, often at great personal cost, to correct it. This push for voter equality began with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, the first women's rights convention in the US.

It took 72 years from that date for women to gain the ballot. Many (probably most) of the women initiating the actions which led to this all-important right, never lived to cast a vote. But they understood the importance of what they were trying to accomplish and persevered in the face of violence and invective.

Some lost their families as a result of their actions, many lost jobs, many were imprisoned or beaten. And yet, they never gave up. They continued to enlist more women to the cause until their movement became an irresistible force.

I think of these suffragists every time I cast my ballot and I have never missed voting in any election, whether national, state, or local since I became eligible. In the United States, voting is one of the rights of citizens but it is also a responsibility. I also consider it my responsibility towards these amazing women who simply would not give up.



During my time with The Advocacy Project, I have come to recognize this same determination and persistence in the women we work with.

I see the women in Nepal who lost loved ones to the disappearances. Even as the years have passed, they have continued their campaign to attain justice for those lost and restitution for those remaining.

I see the women in Mali who have survived gender-based violence, trying to recover from their personal trauma but also telling their stories so they may help protect other women and girls from suffering the same fate.

I see women in Zimbabwe explaining to their young sisters or daughters how with ingenuity and hard work they can earn an income that will support their families and help them resist early marriage.

I am no longer surprised by these stories of sacrifice and determination because I encounter them wherever I go. I stand in awe of women everywhere – women who never give up, women who work together for the greater good, women who survive even when circumstances are against them. They persevere, they persist, they find a way. We should all be grateful for this quality in women and recognize that it makes the world better.

As I cast my vote in this presidential election, I'll be thinking of the women who made my vote possible and take pleasure and pride in the knowledge that it will, in all likelihood, be the votes of women that determine the outcome.



#### **Thank you:**

Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mathilda Franziska Anneke, Alice Stone Blackwell, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Harriet Stanon Blach, Amelia Bloomer, Carrie Chapman Catt, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Julia Ward Howe, Lucretia Coffin Mott, Anna Howard Shaw, Lucy Stone, Sojourner Truth, Alice Pal, Frances E.W. Harper, Mary Church Terrell, and all the countless other suffragists who worked tirelessly to secure the vote for American women.



“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.” This summer, the [Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington North Carolina](#) invited local quilters to make blocks for each of the 110 letters in the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. Over 140 blocks were submitted and assembled by volunteers into the banner seen above. Contact [Nan Pope](#).

*Bobbi Fitzsimmons is on the Board of The Advocacy Project. This piece originally ran [as a blog on October 12, 2020](#). Visit our [collection of advocacy quilts](#).*

