

# Septima Clark Book Award, 2021



The Septima Clark Book Award honors outstanding nonfiction and informational trade books representing women's issues and lived experiences. The award is named for Septima Poinsette Clark, an African American teacher, civil rights leader, and adult civics educator. Clark, working with other civil rights leaders, designed and implemented Citizenship Schools across the southern United States. In Citizenship Schools, African Americans developed functional, civic, and economic literacy, enabling them to access and advocate for resources needed to improve Black communities. These schools also became sites of power for African American women who were able to further develop leadership skills while holding teaching positions.

In 2019, the National Council for the Social Studies established this yearly award to recognize distinguished books that educate readers about women's achievements. Books chosen for this honor accurately reflect women's issues, perspectives, and stories. They must be nonfiction, thoroughly researched, well written, and indicate originality. They must also be written for young people. Books published and set either in the United States or internationally are eligible.

This year the Septima Clark Award Committee selected six significant books published in 2020. These books commemorate female trailblazers in a variety of fields, such as athletics, politics, science, and human rights. We hope that you, too, will recognize the merits of these selections, and that these stories will find a home in every library and classroom.

—Elizabeth Sturm, Chair, Carter G. Woodson Book Awards Committee

## Elementary Level Winner

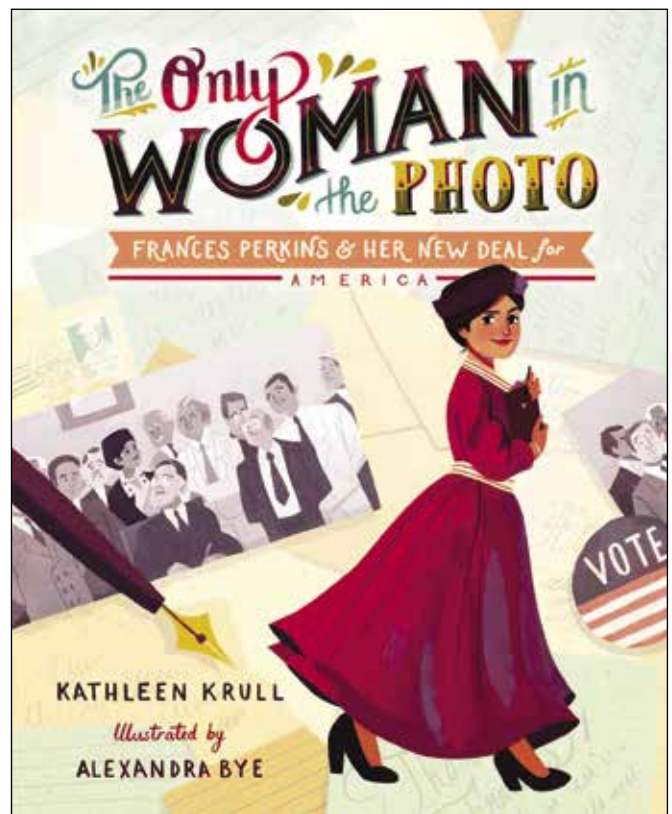
*The Only Woman in the Photo: Frances Perkins & Her New Deal for America*, by Kathleen Krull. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Sarah Segal, Sixth Grade Teacher, Hood River Middle School, Hood River, Oregon.

Frances Perkins was the first woman to serve in a U.S. presidential cabinet. During her 12 years as secretary of labor, Perkins restructured American society by introducing, developing, and implementing civic programs including Social Security, minimum wage, unemployment insurance, the 40-hour work week, child labor laws, and protections of labor rights.

Kathleen Krull's kid-friendly biography reflects Perkins's moral guidance and depicts her life of social activism. From a young age, Perkins recognizes injustices all around and commits to advancing her public speaking skills in order to advocate for others. Extreme poverty, poor working conditions, and witnessing firsthand the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire further motivated her social justice endeavors.

As a government official, Perkins's successful workplace improvement policies impressed then-New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt. Upon being elected president, Roosevelt asked Perkins to join his cabinet as secretary of labor. Perkins advised FDR through the Great Depression and the creation and implementation of The New Deal.

*The Only Woman in the Photo* celebrates the woman who



established numerous programs essential to Americans today. It's an excellent teaching resource about using one's voice to help

others and for exploring unsung women in history. Back matter contextualizes historical circumstances.

Social Studies Standards: 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 3 PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; 7 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 10 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

### Elementary Level Honoree

*Shirley Chisholm is a Verb!* by Veronica Chambers, illustrations by Rachelle Baker. Reviewed by Annette Civiello, TESOL/Title Teacher, Canton City Schools, Canton, Ohio.



Veronica Chambers delivers a timely tribute to the legacy of the trailblazing Shirley Chisholm. Chambers’s powerful book, accompanied by Baker’s realistic illustrations, will help young readers connect with Chisholm’s life story. Chambers uses a conversational narrative that begins with Chisholm’s formative years where she learned about the power of words and how

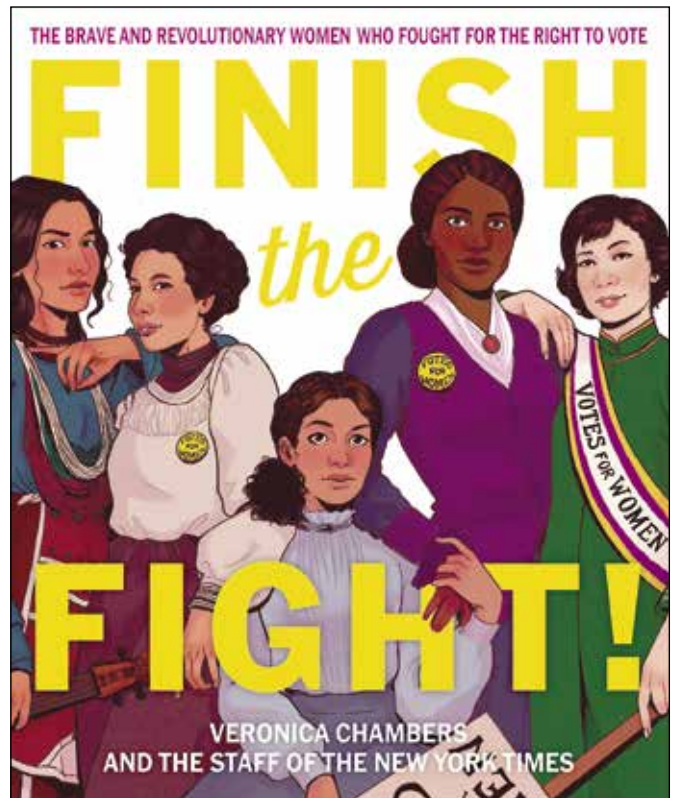
to speak up. The book chronicles Chisholm’s life as the first Black woman in Congress, where she demonstrated her ability to listen and represent, and her campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. As a woman who broke many barriers, Chisholm “planted the seed of possibility for others.”

Social Studies Standards: 2 TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE; 7 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; 6 POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS.

### Middle Level Winner

*Finish the Fight: The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote*, by Veronica Chambers and the Staff of the New York Times. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, Associate Professor and Department Chair, Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla.

In *Finish the Fight*, Chambers and colleagues share the stories of women who fought for women’s suffrage and, more broadly, women’s rights. In the Author’s Note, Chambers states, “What don’t we know about suffrage? The answer is a lot” (p. 106). In an effort to help readers learn more, Chambers presents a chronological collection of biographies showcasing the diverse voices integral to the movement. Throughout the book, Chambers celebrates the stories of Black, Asian, Latinx, Native American women who helped lead the fight for women’s rights. From Haudenosaunee women to Mary Eliza Church Terrell,



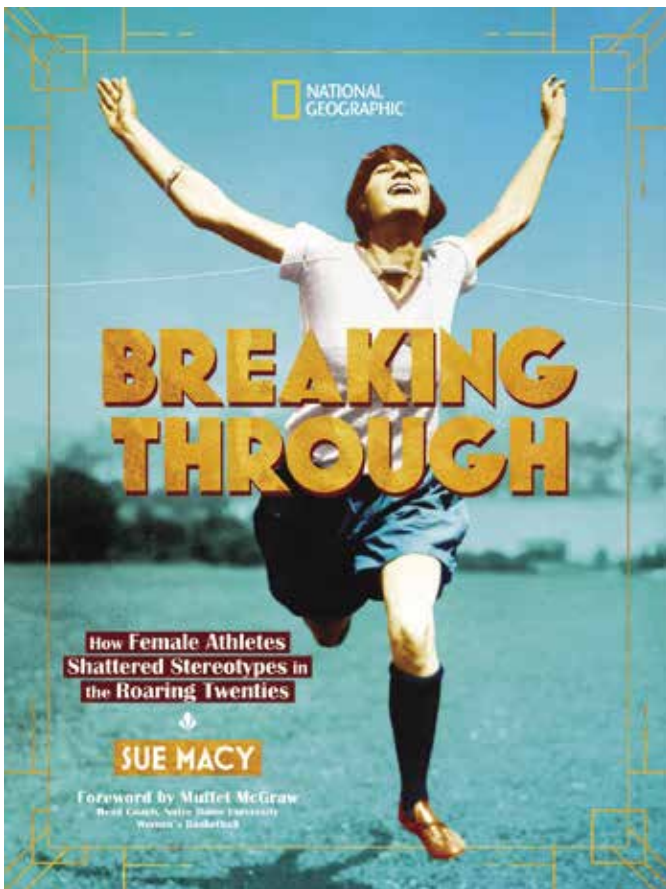
who co-founded the National Association of Colored Women (NACW); Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, who helped lead the biggest suffrage parade in history in 1912; as well as Jovita Idar, a journalist and founding member of the League of Mexican Women. The text includes a rich collection of back matter including a multi-page timeline spanning 1807–1972, and a collection of brief biographies of “Brave and Revolutionary Women You Should Know.”

Social Studies Standards: 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 7 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 6 POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE.

### Middle Level Honoree

*Breaking Through: How Female Athletes Shattered Stereotypes in the Roaring Twenties*, by Sue Macy, forward by Muffet McGraw. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, Associate Professor and Department Chair, Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla.

This outstanding history of women’s sports in the 1920s, a decade often depicted by flappers rather than female golfers, runners, swimmers, and soccer players, provides a wonderful glimpse into the road of women’s rights through the lens of women’s sports. Sue Macy presents the decade of the 1920s in two-year increments to explore examples of opportunities (chapter 2, 1922–23), victories (chapter 4, 1926–27), and



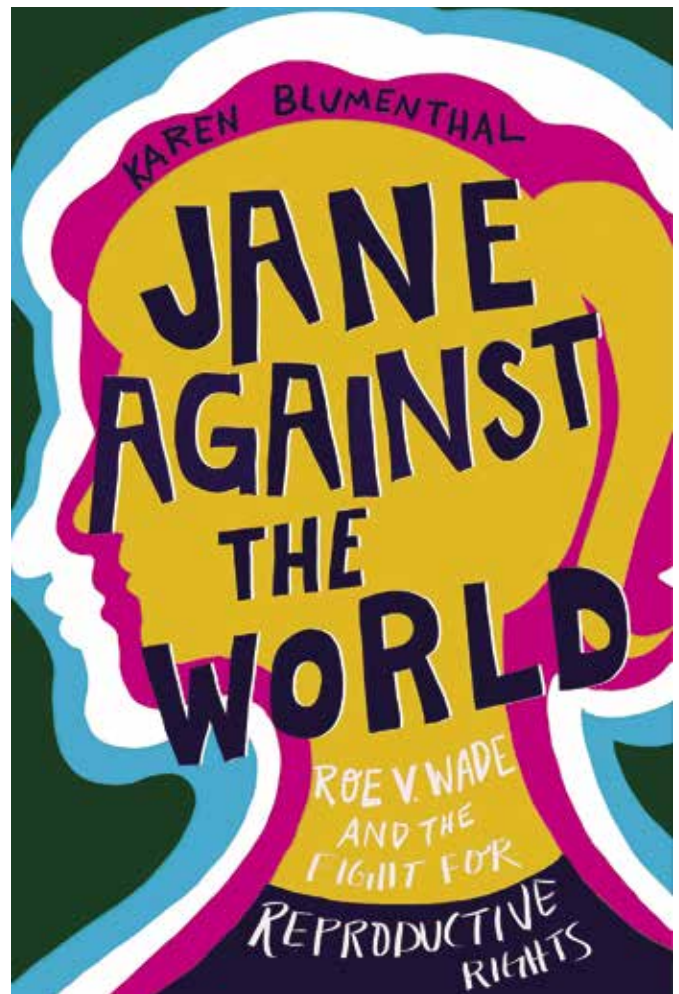
challenges (chapter 5, 1928–29) in women’s sports. Throughout the text, Macy’s engaging prose is complemented by a variety of fascinating primary sources from archival photographs to newspaper excerpts that highlight athletes and their critics. The back matter includes a collection of defining moments in women’s sports from the 1890s to 2017.

**SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS:** ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ❸ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY.

### Secondary Level Winner

*Jane Against the World: Roe V. Wade and the Fight for Reproductive Rights*, by Karen Blumenthal. Roaring Book Press. Reviewed by Stephanie Long-Carsrud, Fifth Grade Teacher/K-12 Literacy Strategist, Liberty Peak Elementary, Spring Creek, Nevada.

In *Jane Against the World: Roe V. Wade and the Fight for Reproductive Rights*, Karen Blumenthal takes us on a tour of the historical views, laws, and practices that led to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*. For Blumenthal, telling the story of Roe was not a simplistic one that could be understood by merely looking at the case and court decision itself. She wanted “to understand how the lawsuit came about – and then how the laws behind the lawsuit came about.” Readers will discover that this isn’t just a story about Roe. It’s an exploration of women’s rights, reproductive rights, racial



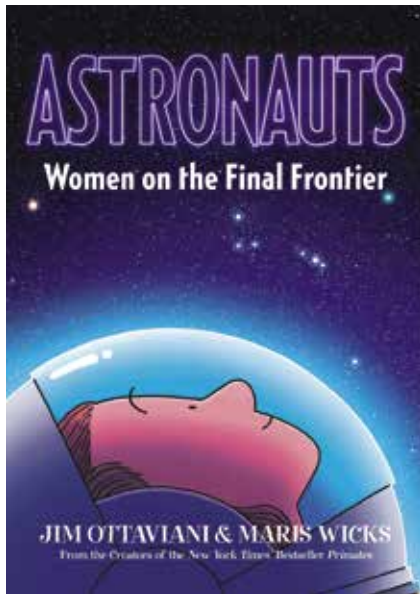
discrimination, politics, medicine, and the nuances of balancing individual rights with states rights, all the while intersecting with religious values and ideals.

Blumenthal takes on a very complex topic and presents it from a historical perspective that is well sourced. She begins a century before *Roe v. Wade* and weaves the reader through the beginnings of abortion and abortion laws in our nation. The book moves through the decades of repeals and reforms until the case landed on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court. Lastly, a story isn’t a story without engaging characters and the story of *Roe* has many. Blumenthal includes all the standouts: a madame, a young crusader, a rebel, a doctor, a housewife, a religious leader, an activist, a politician, a lawyer and finally “Jane Roe.” Each playing a role in the practices, laws, repeals or reforms of reproductive rights in our nation’s history. Regardless of where one falls on the political, ideological or religious spectrum, this book is bound to spark curiosity, deep thinking and an opportunity to engage in dialogue about reproductive rights.

**Social Studies Standards:** ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE; ❸ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ❹ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS; ❺ POWER, AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE; ❻ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

## Secondary Level Honoree

*Astronauts: Women on the Final Frontier*, by Jim Ottaviani & Maris Wicks. First Second. Reviewed by Heidi J. Torres, Assistant Professor, Elementary Education, Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla.



At turns funny, infuriating, and inspiring, this engaging graphic novel tells the story of the women who struggled to break NASA's gender barrier and become women astronauts. Mary Cleave, former U.S. astronaut, serves as the narrator, taking the reader through multiple stories following the initial attempts (and failures) to have women included in the astronaut training program through to their eventual inclusion in the space program.

Helpful information that makes the science accessible, witty asides, and the conversational tone make what could have been a dry historical text a personal and humanizing account of these women who fought to be recognized as equally capable, strong, and competent to be astronauts. The vivid cartoon panels work collaboratively with the text to add layers of meaning, emotion, and context.

Portrayals of the prejudice and ignorant assumptions the women faced are infused throughout the story, helping readers understand how sexist norms and behavior impact opportunities and equality for women.

Back-matter includes an author's note, references, bibliography, sketches, and an explanation of the process used to create the novel.

Social Studies Standards: ● TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE; ● SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY.

## The Korean War and Its Legacy: Teaching about Korea through Inquiry

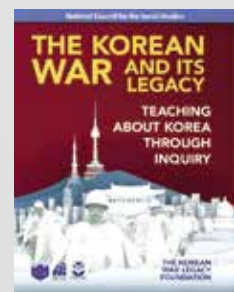
Korean War Legacy Foundation. 231 pages. 2019

News headlines regularly remind us of the importance of the Korean Peninsula and the challenges facing U.S. policy on North Korea.

The tensions in Korea are part of the legacy of the Korean War, which culminated in an armistice in 1953, but has never been concluded by a peace treaty. Often described as the "Forgotten War," it had significant consequences for the United States and the world. Even though more than a million U.S. soldiers fought in the Korean War, and 28,000 U.S. forces are still stationed in South Korea, it only receives limited coverage in history textbooks.

This book fills an important gap by presenting rich primary resources in the form of oral histories, photos, and official documents of the Korean War that enable teachers and students to explore the war through the eyes of those who experienced its intensity and hardships. The contributors to the book also offer important background information about contemporary Korea and the challenges facing United States diplomacy in the Korean Peninsula.

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