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*Quest for Justice: Louis A. Bedford Jr. and the Struggle for
Equal Rights in Texas* (review)

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Quest for Justice: Louis A. Bedford Jr. and the Struggle for Equal Rights in Texas. By Darwin Payne. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2009. Pp. 290. Black and white plates, notes, selected bibliography, index. ISBN 9780870745222, \$22.50 cloth.)

Directly or indirectly, Louis A. Bedford Jr. was connected to some of the most influential figures in the struggle for racial equality in not only Dallas and Texas, but also in the entire United States. Bedford's grandfather was Mack Matthew Rodgers, a prominent African-American political leader in Texas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As an aspiring member of the legal profession in the 1950s and 1960s, Bedford was taken under the wing of the redoubtable civil rights lawyer William J. Durham, famed for, among other things, his role in the case of *Sweatt v. Painter*. Bedford even managed in his only meeting with Martin Luther King Jr. to tempt the Nobel Prize winner to play his first game of pool since school days. Later on, Bedford mentored so many up-and-coming lawyers and activists that their names read like a veritable who's who of distinguished African Americans in Dallas. Darwin Payne's *Quest for Justice* recounts Bedford's struggle during the 1940s and 1950s to forge a career for himself in the legal profession, his role as legal advisor to the new generation of more militant civil rights activists in Dallas and its environs in the 1960s and 1970s, and his contribution to the amazing expansion of African Americans' political influence in Dallas in recent decades.

It is commendable that Payne has focused upon the life and times of the kind of figure so often overlooked by history: a leader who, even if not always the most influential or prominent player, still made a significant contribution to numerous important campaigns. However, *Quest for Justice* would be a more satisfying study if it contained a greater amount of information about the man and less about his times. All too frequently, the book offers only hints of how Bedford perceived or felt about his many remarkable experiences. Moreover, Payne's habit of paraphrasing Bedford's words or thoughts without providing citations creates confusion over who is the originator of the insight proffered—is it Bedford or Payne? In places, it also seems as though Payne's objectivity and candor are compromised by the collaboration he received from Bedford, such as interviews with him and access to his papers. In handling the few episodes in Bedford's life that do not show him in an entirely complimentary light, like his unsuccessful forays into local electoral politics during the 1970s and 1980s that on occasion actually split the black vote, Payne seems more concerned with defending than explaining his protagonist's behavior.

Quest for Justice provides new or more detailed information on two episodes of note to those interested in the history of the civil rights movement in Texas: the student sit-in movement in Marshall and the desegregation of downtown Dallas. The book also sheds light upon the challenges faced and obstacles surmounted by African-American lawyers in Dallas during the second half of the twentieth century. However, under the guise of establishing context, Payne regularly interrupts the narrative's flow with excessively long but only marginally relevant descriptions of figures (like John Mercer Langston) and episodes (such as school desegrega-

tion in Dallas) that have received definitive treatment elsewhere. *Quest for Justice* is a not entirely unrewarding book, but for an essentially biographical work it falls short of striking the perfect balance between macro- and micro-level discussions. It really needed to provide less of the former and more of the latter.

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Winning Their Place: Arizona Women in Politics, 1883–1950. By Heidi J. Osselaer, forward by Janet Napolitano (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. Pp. 240. Illustrations, map, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9780816527335, \$45.00 cloth.)

Winning Their Place is a fascinating study documenting the efforts of Anglo-American women to achieve woman suffrage and win elective office in Arizona from 1883 to 1950. The book adds to a growing body of literature that explains the early enfranchisement of women in the West, and it makes an important contribution to our understanding of women in partisan and electoral politics, a relatively new area in the historiography. Like other recent studies of woman suffrage in the West, Heidi Osselaer argues that suffragists in Arizona began during the 1890s to cultivate working-class support, form alliances with reform movements such as populism and progressivism, and use party competition to achieve votes for women. One particularly important factor in engendering popular support for suffrage in Arizona was the fact that women had a relatively high rate of labor force participation, with married and widowed women outnumbering single women (an unusual and significant demographic). Victory came after statehood was achieved in 1912. With the active support of state's labor unions and the Socialist Party, the backing of the state's Progressives, and the eventual (while reluctant) endorsements of the major parties, the women's suffrage initiative gained 68 percent of the popular vote (the largest popular vote for suffrage in any state in the nation) (49).

After winning suffrage, Arizona women led the nation in achieving elective office. From 1914–1928, Arizona's female politicians held elective offices deemed appropriate for women, including county school superintendent, clerk, recorder, and treasurer. Some more ambitious women policymakers also served in the state legislature (especially in the house) where they were placed on education and social welfare committees. While female politicians remained connected to organized womanhood and its maternalist agenda, they received vital support from a group that has not received much attention in the historiography up to now, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW). Osselaer stresses that female office holders saw themselves as working women; especially as working mothers who used their public service to both support their families and expand careers for professional women.

Osselaer sees the 1930s as an era of change for Arizona's female politicians. Female candidates continued to run on maternalist platforms, but they now focused on broader economic issues. They increasingly came from legal or business backgrounds and served on committees in the state legislature new to women (industrial, agricultural, banking, and appropriations). During the 1940s, women