

# VOTES FOR WOMEN!

~ A Historical Drama of Forgotten Illinois ~

by Zachary Michael Jack



Ida B. Wells-Barnett

Wentz Fine Arts Center  
Madden Theatre  
March 2-3, 2019  
North Central College

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*Votes for Women! A Historical Drama of Forgotten Illinois*  
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REPORTER.....Giuliano Catalano  
BELLE SQUIRE.....Katie Rose Ford  
VIRGINIA BROOKS.....Claire Nelson  
IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT.....Ariana Burks

Stage Manager: Kenny Miller  
Production Designer: Destany Hahn  
Production Supervisor: Dr. John Warrick



About the Director, Benjamin Paynic: Ben served as assistant director for North Central College's 2018 production of *The Laramie Project* and Downer Grove South's production of *Moon Over Buffalo*.



About the Playwright, Zachary Michael Jack: Zachary is the author of many books on social change and the citizen leaders who make it happen, including *March of the Suffragettes*. His plays have been staged off-off Broadway and around the nation, including a 2018 world premiere comedy, *Your Florida Fantasy*, at Florida Gulf Coast University's Bower School of Music and the Arts.



About Forgotten Illinois: To celebrate the Illinois Bicentennial and to spark curiosity about Illinois history Illinois Humanities, in partnership with the Illinois State Historical Society, launched a program entitled Forgotten Illinois. The core question to which this program responds is, "What can lesser-known features of Illinois history tell us about the ever-evolving identity of our state?" By shedding light on chapters of our history that are significant despite their obscurity, and by using storytelling platforms to make them widely accessible, Forgotten Illinois intends to feed curiosity about the many facets that comprise Illinois's complex identity.



Special Thanks: To the Theatre Department at North Central College for their support of *Votes for Women!*, to Illinois Humanities for making the play free and open to the public, and to NCTV and the IRIS Center at Southern Illinois University for documenting and preserving this performance in honor of the Bicentennial and Women's History Month.



*Virginia Brooks*  
20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY JOAN of ARC

REDPATH

## THE TIME AND PLACE

*March 1913. Downtown Chicago. Lights up far downstage right on REPORTER as he energetically scribbles notes into a reporter's notebook. He is dressed as one might expect...trousers, button-up collared shirt, waistcoat, cap. He steps up on a small footstool and shouts as if a conductor. Hint of a Chicago accent.*

REPORTER: Allllll aboard the Illinois Suffrage Special! (*He punches the following line into the air with gusto, as if were up in lights on a theater marquee.*) "Lone male to accompany 150 women to Washington DC!"

*(He jumps down from the footstool. When he hits the ground he is calmer, quite literally more grounded.)*

REPORTER: Sixty-five Illinois women payin' \$2000 each to ride the train to DC to march for a woman's right vote. They call it the Suffrage Special, and it's leavin' Union Station any minute now. (*Beat as he checks his watch.*) The suffs wanna make double sure the President gets his marching orders on women's rights. They're calling themselves the Army of the Middle West and they're not kiddin'... Here they come now, marching up Jackson Street from the Art Institute. Every suffragette who's anyone in this city—heck, in this whole state—is catchin' that train....



*Production Note:* For historical accuracy, and where possible, the dialogue of Belle Squire, Virginia Brooks, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett has been sourced from their own words as they appeared in *My Battle with Vice* by Virginia Brooks, *The Woman Movement in America* by Belle Squire, and *The Red Record* by Ida B. Wells, and from quotes appearing in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* prior to 1914. Portions of many historical quotes have been shifted chronologically or otherwise edited, reordered, or recombined for the most compelling staging possible. Upon request the playwright is pleased to make *Votes for Women!* available royalty-free to qualifying Illinois nonprofits in hopes of keeping the memory of these brave activists alive and accessible to all.