



Women Activists in the Fight for Georgia School Desegregation, 1958-1961

Rebecca Dartt

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On the heels of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Georgia General Assembly enacted a series of massive anti-desegregation laws to stand in opposition to the federal mandate. Governor Ernest Vandiver was elected with an overwhelming majority after promising to close every school if even "one Negro" entered a white classroom. While the fight for segregated schools was certainly strong, a small group of women in Atlanta's white community played a radical role in bringing peaceful desegregation to the Georgia school system. This book tells the story of HOPE (Help Our Public Education), beginning with a small neighborhood coffee chat then growing through mail and meeting campaigns across the state. The women of HOPE changed the school crisis from politics-as-usual to public controversy. Based on factual material found in library special collections, books, newspapers, transcripts, symposiums, and several interviews, this book honors and tells the story of a small group of courageous, hard-working women credited with creating a public climate in which peaceful desegregation was possible.

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