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Defying Jim Crow in New Orleans
The Long Struggle for Civil Rights in the Crescent City

Baton Rouge—From the earliest days of Jim Crow, African Americans in New Orleans rallied around the belief that the new system of racially biased laws, designed to relegate them to second-class citizenship, was neither legitimate nor permanent. Drawing on shared memories of fluid race relations and post-Civil War political participation, they remained committed to a disciplined and sustained pursuit of equality. ***Defying Jim Crow: African American Community Development and the Struggle for Racial Equality in New Orleans, 1900-1960*** tells the story of this community's decades-long struggle against segregation, disenfranchisement, and racial violence.

Amid mounting violence and increasing exclusion, black New Orleanians believed their best defense depended upon maintaining a close-knit and politically engaged community. Donald E. DeVore's peerless research shows how African Americans sought to reverse the trends of oppression by prioritizing the kind of capacity building—investment in education, participation in national organizations, and a spirit of entrepreneurship in markets not dominated by white businessmen—that would ensure the community's ability to keep fighting for their rights in the face of setbacks and hostility from the city's white leaders. As some black activists worked to attain equity within the "separate but equal" framework, they provided a firm foundation and crucial support for more overt challenges to the racist government structures.

The result of over a decade's research into the history of civil rights and community building in New Orleans, *Defying Jim Crow* provides a thorough and insightful analysis of race relations in one of America's most diverse cities and offers a vital contribution to the complex history of the African American struggle for freedom.

Donald E. DeVore is associate professor of history at the University of South Alabama. He is the co-author of *Crescent City Schools: Public Education in New Orleans, 1841-1991*.

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