



Daughter of the Empire State: The Life of Judge Jane Bolin

Jacqueline A. McLeod

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This long overdue biography elevates Jane Matilda Bolin to her rightful place in American history as an activist, integrationist, jurist, and outspoken public figure in the political and professional milieu of New York City before the onset of the modern Civil Rights movement. When Bolin was appointed to New York City's domestic relations court in 1939 for the first of four ten-year terms, she became the nation's first African American woman judge. Drawing on archival materials as well as a meeting with Bolin in 2002, historian Jacqueline A. McLeod reveals how Bolin parlayed her judicial position to impact significant reforms of the legal and social service system in New York. Beginning with Bolin's childhood and educational experiences at Wellesley and Yale, *Daughter of the Empire State* chronicles Bolin's relatively quick rise through the ranks of a profession that routinely excluded both women and African Americans. McLeod links Bolin's activist leanings and integrationist zeal to her involvement in the NAACP and details her work as a critic and reformer of domestic relations courts and juvenile placement facilities.



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