It took 72 years from the first women’s rights convention in the relatively young United States until women finally got the right to vote. Early suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, who presumably said this with another 20 years to go before suffrage was attained, put the struggle into context:

“To get the word 'male' in effect out of the Constitution cost the women of the country fifty-two years of pauseless campaign ... During that time they were forced to conduct fifty-six campaigns of referenda to male voters; 480 campaigns to get Legislatures to submit suffrage amendments to voters; 47 campaigns to get State constitutional conventions to write woman suffrage into state constitutions; 277 campaigns to get State party conventions to include woman suffrage planks in party platforms, and 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congresses.”

A Herculean struggle for the 19th Amendment, ratified in 1920, no matter how you measure it, and one that wasn’t over even when it seemed over to some:

Women of color continued to face terrible, race-based obstacles to exercising their right to vote, as did African-American men, and it would be another 45 years until some remedy came in the form of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

That’s why, locally, a commemoration of landmark anniversaries in American suffrage honors both the centennial of the 19th Amendment and the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. One did not work without the other.

Now that the big year, 2020, is here, the vision of observing the impact on our past, present and future must and does include both, too.

In the Jan. 5 Courier Journal Forum section (thank you, CJ!), a two-page spread outlined what we know of what’s coming in the months ahead. Tina Ward-Pugh, director of the Louisville Metro Office for Women, wrote about the commemoration and an accompanying calendar contained more details about what area citizens and organizations already are planning to salute and celebrate suffrage.

Please find Ward-Pugh’s column here:

https://www.courier-
Please access the calendar here:

https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2020/01/02/19th-amendment-louisville-events-planned-celebrate-womens-rights/2714755001/

Ward-Pugh highlighted important events and meaningful dates in January:

— Jan. 9 — Application deadline for the Celebration of Women portion of the April 30 Pegasus Parade. Themes of the suffrage portion of the parade are Our History, Our Voices and Our Power. Space is limited and 1,000 people are expected to participate in this part of the parade. For details and the application, please go to forms.gle/iDk8eH8TPeffGxFg7.

Jan. 16 — Black Girl Magic, an evening panel discussion providing an overview of African American women as Jefferson County Public Schools prepares for its Females of Color Steam Academy in August 2020. Panelists include Ronda Cosby, principal; John Marshall, JCPS equity officer; Renee Murphy, JCPS chief communications officer; and Hannah Drake, poet and author. Special guest: Carol Mattingly, professor emerita, the University of Louisville. 6 to 8 p.m., Frazier History Museum, 829 W. Main St., Louisville. fraziermuseum.org

... We want the calendar to be as complete, inclusive and representative of what’s happening, as possible, so please let us hear from you and we will feature your events in the calendar, too.

Please send additions to the calendar to Pam Platt at pammerz@att.net, with 2020 SUFFRAGE CALENDAR in the subject line. Please use the following format:

DATES:
BRIEF DESCRIPTION of the event:
PLACE:
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:
CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Save the Dates!

Here’s a look ahead at 19th Amendment-related events already planned for this year. We will have more details on them, and other events, the closer we get to them.
Feb. 1-8 – Stage One in Louisville, “Lawbreakers!”

Described by Stage One as “a fast and furious history of women’s suffrage,” the venue also provides these details: “Stepsisters Maya and Kiara travel back in time to the beginning of the American women’s suffrage movement. Along the way, they meet many key figures – Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells, Alice Paul, Sojourner Truth, and many more – as they explore the complexities, struggles, and heartache that led to women’s right to vote. Written by Diana Grisanti and commissioned by Stage One, Lawbreakers! (a fast and furious history of women’s suffrage) honors and celebrates the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment.”

For more information, go to Stage One: https://stageone.org/our-season/lawbreakers/

March 19 — Opening of "What is a Vote Worth", a Suffrage Voting Rights Act Exhibit at the Frazier History Museum; panel and tours.

March 20 — Public ribbon cutting at the Frazier

March 26, 27 — Two-day event with the University of Louisville History Department; guest speaker is Ellen DuBois, a professor of history and gender studies known for her pioneering work in the same fields.

April 21 — Trailblazers panel discussion with local women who have made a difference, at the Frazier.

April 30 — The Pegasus Parade with a Celebration of Women

May 21 — Angela Dodson, author of “Remember the Ladies,” appears at the Frazier

June 2 — Elaine Weiss, author of “The Woman’s Hour,” appears at the Filson

June 8-11 — Suffrage Play Festival at the Frazier

Aug. 21 and 22 — Tina Cassidy, author of “Mr. President, How Long Must We Wait?,” appears at Women’s Equality Day events in Louisville
Let us hear from you!

We realize many organizations will be scheduling a variety of special programs throughout 2020 to honor suffrage, and we want to include your information in our newsletters. Please let us hear from you by filling out this form:

https://fraziermuseum.org/wsnewsletterideas

Stay in the loop!

We're here to keep you in the loop about the Women Vote 100 commemoration.

- Please visit fraziermuseum.org/womenvote for everything related to Women Vote 100

- The above details and more are found on the Women Vote 100 calendar that will be updated and kept throughout the commemoration.

- We encourage your organization to add an event to the calendar

- To get an idea of what has been planned for 2020, please read this overview by Penny Peavler, Frazier History Museum Board Member.

- And, of course, please keep current with the newsletter and if you would like your voice heard, fill out our form!

- Sign up to receive our monthly newsletter!

An invaluable resource in learning and knowing about women’s history in Kentucky is the Kentucky Woman Suffrage Project, about which we will
Today, we’ll sample from a blogpost by Randolph Hollingsworth, University of Kentucky professor of gender and women’s studies history, in an overview she wrote the subject:

“... on Jan. 6 (1920), Kentucky became the 23rd state to ratify the 19th Amendment. On Dec. 15, 1920, the Kentucky Equal Rights Association officially became the Kentucky League of Women Voters. Mary Bronaugh of Louisville was the first president of the state chapter.”


Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1825-1911, was an American abolitionist, suffragist, teacher, poet and writer. She also was the first African-American woman to have a short story published in the United States, when the Anglo-African printed her “Two Offers” in 1859. She began her writing career when she was a teenager, publishing pieces in anti-slavery publications.

In her long and impressive life, Harper blazed so many trails ... taking on social issues in her poetry and prose, refusing to give up her seat or ride in a segregated trolley car in 1858, becoming the first female teacher at Union Seminary in Ohio, traveling in the 1850s as a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society, teaching newly freed African Americans after the Civil War and working for them to gain suffrage, publishing her first novel at age 67.

She also spoke truth to power in her own movement, challenging white leaders of the woman suffrage movement who opposed the 15th Amendment because it conferred rights to African-American men but not to women, a conversation that would continue well beyond the ratification of the 19th Amendment. She was, in so many ways, ahead of her time, a woman who made our time possible with her words and deeds a century before we came to be.
“We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul. You tried that in the case of the Negro ... You white women speak here of rights. I speak of wrongs. I, as a colored woman, have had in this country an education which has made me feel as if I were in the situation of Ishmael, my hand against every man, and every man's hand against me ... While there exists this brutal element in society which tramples upon the feeble and treads down the weak, I tell you that if there is any class of people who need to be lifted out of their airy nothings and selfishness, it is the white women of America.

— Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, in excerpts from a speech to the National Women’s Rights Convention in 1866. For her full speech, please go here: https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1866-frances-ellen-watkins-harper-we-are-all-bound-together/