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Sandra Gioia Treadway
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Changing History: Virginia Women through Four Centuries Gives a New Perspective on Our Shared Past

Contact: Janice M. Hathcock
804-692-3592

For Immediate Release

The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the publication of *Changing History: Virginia Women through Four Centuries*, which tells the important and compelling stories of women—both famous and lesser-known—who have influenced the course of history in the Old Dominion. Authors Cynthia A. Kierner, Jennifer R. Loux, and Megan Taylor Shockley cover the rich panoply of Virginia's history from the region's Native American peoples before the founding of Jamestown to a 21st century profoundly changed by a second wave of feminism.

Copies of the book are available for purchase in the Virginia Shop by phone at 804-692-3524 or online at www.thevirginiashop.org/changinghistoryvirginiawomenthroughfourcenturies.aspx, for \$24.95.

Changing History builds on the legacy of the Virginia Women's Cultural History Project, launched in 1982 by then-Virginia First Lady Lynda Robb. The Virginia Women's Cultural History Project was a path-breaking effort to uncover and document the history of women in Virginia. Among the project's many accomplishments was a major exhibition, "A Share of Honor": *Virginia Women, 1600–1945*, which opened at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in 1984 and traveled to Roanoke and Norfolk. The exhibition's richly illustrated catalog included a history of Virginia women written by historian Suzanne Lebsock that revealed women, previously overlooked in history books, as active participants in Virginia's political, social, economic, and cultural life from the 17th century onward.

When the Virginia Women's Cultural History Project ended in 1985, the Library of Virginia (then the Virginia State Library) received permission to reprint Lebsock's essay, which was published in 1987 under the title *Virginia Women, 1600–1945: "A Share of Honour."* In 2004 the Library marked the 20th anniversary of the *Share of Honour* project with an exhibition entitled *Working Out Her Destiny* and a symposium entitled *Virginia Women Through Four Centuries* that focused on new research in the field of women's history. The scholars who spoke at the symposium revealed how rich the field of women's history had become and how women's private and public lives across the centuries were much more complex, intertwined, and nuanced than historians had previously understood. The consensus of those attending the symposium was that while tremendous progress had been made in recovering women's lives and past experiences, the work was far from over.

Changing History: Virginia Women through Four Centuries is an outgrowth of the Virginia Women Through Four Centuries symposium. The book takes advantage of new discoveries in women's history and brings the story forward to the present, covering women involved in the civil rights

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800 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

www.lva.virginia.gov

804.692.3500 *phone*
804.692.3976 *tty*

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and feminist movements, advancing abortion and reproductive rights, and facing economic challenges and income disparity as well as becoming successful business leaders and professionals—and much more. Progress has not always been steady and improvements have varied by class, race, and region, but Virginia's women have created an evocative legacy. *Changing History* tells their stories.

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About the authors: Cynthia A. Kierner is professor of history at George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia, and the author of *Martha Jefferson Randolph, Daughter of Monticello: Her Life and Times* and *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700–1835*. Jennifer R. Loux is a former editor of the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* and is completing a book about slavery and shifting regional identity in Maryland during the Civil War. Megan Taylor Shockley is professor of history at Clemson University, in Clemson, South Carolina, and the author of *We, Too, Are Americans: African American Women in Detroit and Richmond, 1940–1954* and *The Captain's Widow of Sandwich: Self-Invention and the Life of Hannah Rebecca Burgess, 1834–1917*.

About the Library of Virginia: The Library of Virginia (www.lva.virginia.gov), located in historic downtown Richmond at 800 East Broad Street, holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion and has been a steward of the commonwealth's documentary and printed heritage since 1823. The story of Virginia and Virginians has been told in many ways since 1607. At the Library of Virginia it is told through more than 116 million manuscripts and more than 1.9 million books, serials, bound periodicals, microfilm reels, newspapers, and state and federal documents, each an individual tile in the vast and colorful mosaic of Virginia's experience.