



Claytie and the Lady: Ann Richards, Gender, and Politics in Texas

Sue Tolleson-Rinehart, Jeanie R. Stanley

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It was like a remake of *The Cowboy and the Lady*, except that this time they weren't friends. The 1990 Texas governor's race pitted Republican Clayton Williams, a politically conservative rancher and oil millionaire, against Democrat Ann Richards, an experienced progressive politician noted for her toughness and quick wit. Their differences offered voters a choice not only of policies and programs but also of stereotypes and myths of men's and women's proper roles.

Claytie and the Lady is the first in-depth look at how gender affected the 1990 governor's race. The authors' analysis reveals that Ann Richards' victory was a result of a unique combination of characteristics. She was simultaneously tough enough to convince voters that she could lead and feminine enough to put them at ease. At the same time, she remained committed to the progressive and women's issues that had won her the early support of feminists and progressives. The authors also show how Clayton Williams' appeal to the Texas cowboy myth backfired when he broke the cowboy code of chivalry to women.

The authors set their discussion within the historical context of twentieth-century Texas politics and the theoretical context of gender politics in order to pose a number of thought-provoking questions about the effects of women's participation in political life. Interviews with key players in the 1990 election, including Governor Ann Richards, add a lively and insightful counterpoint to the text.

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