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# Oveta Culp Hobby: Colonel, Cabinet Member, Philanthropist (Louann Atkins Temple Women & Culture (Numbered))



## Synopsis

Winner, Gold Medal for Biography, Military Writers Society of America, 2015  
Oveta Culp Hobby (1905–1995) had a lifetime of stellar achievement. During World War II, she was asked to build a women's army from scratch—and did. Hobby became Director of the Women's Army Corps and the first Army woman to earn the rank of colonel. President Eisenhower chose her as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, making her the second woman in history to be appointed to a president's cabinet. When she wasn't serving in the government, Hobby worked with her husband, former Texas governor William P. Hobby, to lead a media empire that included the Houston Post newspaper and radio and TV stations. She also supported the Houston community in many ways, from advocating for civil rights for African Americans to donating generously to the Houston Symphony and the Museum of Fine Arts. Oveta Culp Hobby is the first biography of this important woman. Written for middle school readers, it traces her life from her childhood in Killeen to her remarkable achievements in Washington, DC, and Houston. Debra Winegarten provides the background to help young adult readers understand the times in which Hobby lived and the challenges she faced as a woman in nontraditional jobs. She shows how Hobby opened doors for women to serve in the military and in other professions that still benefit women today. Most of all, Oveta Culp Hobby will inspire young adults to follow their own dreams and turn them into tangible reality.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Debra Winegarten in Oveta Culp Hobby: Colonel, Cabinet Member, Philanthropist has written a guide for women to follow and Oveta Culp Hobby is clearly an example worth emulating. More than a biography, it will encourage the reader to not see obstacles but rather opportunities." (Dispatches, Military Writers Society of America 2015-03-08)"Debbie Winegarten has done an excellent job of capturing Mother's spirit." (Bill Hobby, Lieutenant Governor of Texas, 1973-1991)"Oveta Culp Hobby was one of the most successful women in twentieth-century America in business, government, and politics. I am pleased that Debra Winegarten has written her biography for our Texas history students. Oveta is a true Texas trailblazer who left a tremendous legacy. Everyone should know her story." (Senator Kay Bailey Hutichson)

"Debbie Winegarten has done an excellent job of capturing Mother's spirit." (Bill Hobby, Lieutenant Governor of Texas, 1973-1991)"Oveta Culp Hobby was one of the most successful women in twentieth-century America in business, government, and politics. I am pleased that Debra Winegarten has written her biography for our Texas history students. Oveta is a true Texas trailblazer who left a tremendous legacy. Everyone should know her story." (Senator Kay Bailey Hutichson)

Oveta Culp Hobby is not a book I would normally pick up, but a friend said it was a selection in her woman's book club that received rave reviews. From page one, I was enchanted! A biography, it carries a well-documented 'journalistic' record of Oveta's life and accomplishments. However, Winegarten also imparts a realistic and unapologetic view of day-to-day politics at the local, state and federal level. The personality and idiosyncrasies of living a political life is conveyed by the connections and friendships Oveta makes to move the political machinery. Without rancor or judgment, Winegarten helps the reader understand the dynamics between relationships and policymaking. A well-written, thoughtful and energetic book, I thoroughly enjoyed Oveta. Without the conceit or apology of many political biographies, Winegarten shares the real life story of a kind, respectful and hard-working woman who made history. A remarkable read for both adolescents and adults!

Good information, but I was disappointed at the somewhat abrupt ending and use of a timeline which wasn't needed (in my opinion) and was used as "filler"

Loved, loved the book!! Really hated to see it end. Cannot wait to read Ms. Winegarten's next one. Well researched and truly inspirational as to all Oveta accomplished. Kudos for bringing her story to the readers.

This book has served as a great overview of Hobby's life and provides great insight into her work.

"Go for it" we tell our young people. "You can do anything you want to do; be anything you want to be." Sounds good, but sometimes they are skeptical. *Oveta Culp Hobby: Colonel, Cabinet Member, Philanthropist* is a good book to hand to a questioning middle-schooler. Some people do seem to do it all, and Hobby, as author Debra Winegarten demonstrates, is one of them. The apt title describes only three of Oveta Culp Hobby's multiple accomplishments. The daughter of a Texas state legislator, the young Oveta Culp went off to Austin with her dad. There she found sitting in on the lawmakers more enticing than sitting in the classroom. She learned lots; before she was old enough to vote, she was selected to be Parliamentarian of the Texas House of Representatives. She was off and running on a lifetime of achievement and adventures. Oveta Culp worked at a Houston newspaper, later she was its owner. She attended law school; she married former Texas governor Will Hobby and had two babies (both born on her birthday). Life was nearly perfect until the 1940s rocked the Hobby family as it did so many in America. But in this family Mother went to war. Oveta Culp Hobby became the founder of the WAC (Women's Army Corps). In May, 1942 there was one WAC; Colonel Hobby. When she left in 1945 nearly 100,000 women served their country in jobs from riveter to chemist all over the world. Upon returning to her Houston home, Hobby jumped right back into her work. She helped her husband run the Houston Post, and she became politically active. She was a clear factor in the Presidential election of 1952. She accepted President Dwight Eisenhower's offer to serve in his Cabinet. She was the second woman in the United States to serve on a Cabinet, becoming the first Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. Is this not enough? No, when Hobby again returned to Houston she took the reins of the newspaper, radio and TV empire of the Hobby family as Governor Hobby became more and more private. Later, one of the wealthiest women in the country, she disposed of these assets and then turned her attention and still considerable energy into sharing the fruits of her hard work with the city and state she loved. These are the highlights. Winegarten offers the full story in her appealing and anecdote-laden account for young adult readers. I am delighted and not a little bit amazed at the number of intriguing details she works into the relatively short volume. Two more big pluses are the detailed timeline and the many internet links. The link to YouTube clips of Hobby are outstanding. The reader meets the real

woman--here and now. This real woman is an excellent example for twenty-first century young people. She saw herself as a capable and able person, as quotations in Winegarten's chapter headings indicate: "My father taught me that I could turn the world around as well as any of my brothers

Although Debra Winegarten's book targets middle school readers, it is inspirational for girls and women of any age. Throughout the book, Debra uses wonderful quotes from Oveta, Oveta's family, and friends. These quotes create an intimate picture of Oveta, her history, her personality, and how she persevered in a time when women were not expected to be in leadership roles. Although it is clear from Debra's book that Oveta claimed she never felt discriminated against for being a woman, Debra provided numerous examples of the hurdles Oveta had to overcome in her leadership roles. One of my favorite examples comes from the chapter about Oveta as the first director of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). Debra wrote, "on the WAAC's first payday, the comptroller general decreed that it could not pay the WAAC women doctors. The comptroller was only authorized to pay persons serving as doctors in the military service, and women are not persons." Stories like these really illustrate how far women have come and how Oveta helped pave the way for women. I highly recommend this easy to read, inspiring book. It will take you back in time, make you appreciate the present, and inspire you for the future.

How many books have you ever read about an American trailblazer that was a woman? Debra Winegarten follows in her mother Ruthe Winegarten's footsteps, revealing one of America's unsung heroines--a woman who lived an extraordinary life and serves as a model for young girls (and even us older women). Leaders like this may be born, but they also rise from simple beginnings to do great things for humanity, and in this case, for American women. During World War II, Oveta Culp Hobby was asked to build a women's army--without ever having been in the military. She became director of the Women's Army Corps and the first Army woman to earn the rank of colonel; then Pres. Eisenhower appointed her to lead the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare during a time when women just didn't hold public office. Hobby did so much for her country, her home state of Texas, her community, and all women, it's hard to find someone who's accomplished more. For little girls who really need these role models--and a good read--I highly recommend this book. Debra Winegarten does an excellent job of presenting the material in a clear and engaging manner for

young readers everywhere.

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