

In *Ain't Nobody's Fool: The Life and Times of Dolly Parton*, Martha Ackmann chronicles the life of an American original. From her impoverished childhood in the Great Smoky Mountains to international stardom as a singer, songwriter, actress, businesswoman, and philanthropist, Dolly Parton has exceeded everyone's expectations except her own.

When Dolly finally got her foot in the door, her talent and focus catapulted her to the top of country charts, the pop world, and movie stardom. Yet her success came at a price. Shunned by many in Nashville who saw her ambition as a betrayal of her country music beginnings, Dolly became the target of death threats, lawsuits, and a judge who threatened to throw her in jail. She nearly collapsed onstage and later succumbed to a depression that pushed her to the brink. But she refused to be counted out and came back stronger than ever, developing Dollywood, the amusement park that became the economic engine of eastern Tennessee, and founding the Imagination Library, which provides free books to children around the world. Her philanthropy to health organizations led to the creation of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine. And, finally, she returned to her roots, recording bluegrass albums that became the most celebrated of her unparalleled sixty-year career.

Ain't Nobody's Fool is a deep dive into the social, historical, and personal forces that made Dolly Parton one of the most beloved and unifying figures in public life and includes interviews with friends, family members, schoolmates, Nashville neighbors, members of her band, studio musicians, producers, and many others. It also features never-before-seen photographs and unearthed documents shedding light on her family's hardscrabble life. More than anything, Martha Ackmann's fresh and animated new book proves Dolly Parton knows just who she is, and she ain't nobody's fool.

Martha Ackmann is a journalist and an author who writes about women who have changed America. Her essays have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The Paris Review*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. She has been featured on *Today*, CNN, National Public Radio, and the BBC. Martha is the recipient of fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the Harvard Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. Her books include *The Mercury 13: The True Story of Thirteen Women and the Dream of Space Flight*; *Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone, the First Woman to Play Professional Baseball in the Negro League*; and *These Fevered Days: Ten Pivotal Moments in the Making of Emily Dickinson*.

READ BY HANNAH CHURCH



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DOLLY PARTON

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