

Fredrick L. McGhee: A Life on the Color Line, 1861-1912

Paul D. Nelson, David Levering Lewis



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Fredrick L. McGhee: A Life on the Color Line, 1861-1912 Paul D. Nelson, David Levering Lewis Distinguished by his hawk-like gaze and shock of silver hair, his forceful oratory and fierce advocacy, Fredrick L McGhee was Minnesota's first African American attorney and an intelligent, tireless civil rights organiser. He moved onto the national stage when he helped found the Niagara Movement. Despite McGhee's crucial role in early civil rights organising, until now there has been no serious study of his life and work. Nelson has meticulously reconstructed McGhee's life -- from his birth into slavery during the Civil War, through his education and early career as a lawyer, to his eventual insight into the power the courts held as a force for political and social change. The succession of incremental advances and devastating setbacks in McGhee's remarkable and accomplished life deserve to be remembered alongside the victories won by the civil rights leaders he influenced and whose breakthroughs he made possible. Nelson's biography illuminates one of the darkest periods in American history and recognises the role of one man who helped lead his people into the light.

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