



# **Ella Grasso: Connecticut's Pioneering Governor (The Driftless Connecticut Series & Garnet Books)**

*Jon E. Purmont*

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When Ella Tambussi Grasso ran for governor of Connecticut in 1974, she had not lost an election since she was first voted into the state's General Assembly in 1952. The people of Connecticut chose her as the nation's first woman to be elected governor in her own right—the capstone of a long and successful career dedicated to public service, effective government, and the democratic process. During her tenure as governor, Grasso's leadership was tested in the face of fiscal problems, state layoffs, and budget shortfalls. The daughter of Italian immigrants, she endeared herself to her constituents during the great Blizzard of 1978, when she stayed at the State Armory around the clock to direct emergency operations and make frequent television appearances. Author Jon E. Purmont, who served as Grasso's executive assistant when she was governor, draws on his diary from that time, research in Grasso's archives, and interviews with Grasso's family and friends to give us a rich and intimate portrait of this political pioneer.

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