

## Will Jones Wins Labor's Best Article Award

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*Labor* proudly presents its biennial Best Article Award, including a \$1000 stipend, to William P. Jones for the "The Unknown Origins of the March on Washington: Civil Rights Politics and the Black Working Class" [vol. 7, # 3, 2010]. The journal's Editorial Committee (Julie Greene, Nelson Lichtenstein, Joseph McCartin, Scott Nelson, Jocelyn Olcott, and Shelton Stromquist) weighed many serious contenders before reaching its final decision.

The essay offers a sharply revisionist understanding of an iconic moment in modern American political history, the 1963 March on Washington. Jones argues that the march has been mistakenly assimilated into an understanding of the civil rights movement that too easily separates an earlier movement confronting class and economic injustice from both a 'classic' movement period that narrowed its focus to a "liberal" assault on Jim Crow and the 'radicalism' of the Black Power era. Instead, Jones emphasizes how A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and the Negro American Labor Council (NALC), created to challenge discrimination within the AFL-CIO, framed an expansive March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, initially fueled by the energies of local unions and civil rights organizations in black working-class communities, mostly in the urban North. Only in the late 1960s, Jones argues, did growing ruptures within the movement lead historians as well as contemporary activists to fasten a more conservative ideological mask on the March than it deserved.

### Author



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Rosemary Feurer is Professor of History at Northern Illinois University. She is the author of *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, among other books and essays. She is working on *The Illinois Mine Wars, 1860-1940* and a new biography of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones.

