

## Highlights of the 58<sup>th</sup> LWVIL Biennium

### **ELECTION OF THE LWVIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Delegates to the 2017 Convention elected the following Board of Directors to serve LWVIL over the next two years:

Bonnie Cox (Jo Daviess County), President

Sharon Alter (Chicago), Vice President, Voter Service

Hilary Denk (Downers Grove, Woodridge, Lisle), Vice President, Issues

Jean Pierce (Central Kane County, Vice President, Membership/ Leadership Development

Erin Roeper (Homewood Flossmoor), Vice President, Membership/Leadership Development

Corrine Joyner (Coles County), Secretary

\*Olemuel Ashford (McLean County), Treasurer

\*Heather Cunningham (Oak Park/River Forest), Director

\*Meg Murphy (McLean County), Director

\*Michelle Ratledge (Naperville), Director

\*Lali Watt (Wilmette), Director

\*Jean Dorner (Elmhurst), Board-appointed Director

\*new to the LWVIL Board

We said farewell, thank you and best wishes you to these **outgoing** Board members:

Mary Kubasak (Chicago), President

Ann Yoshida (Glenview/Glencoe), Secretary

Kathi Graffman (LaGrange Area), Treasurer

Nancy Clark (Oak Park/River Forest)

Susan Kern (Palatine Area)

Mary Cay Murray (Oak Park/River Forest)

Michelle Peterson (Glen Ellyn)

Irene Pritzker (Greater Peoria)

**An important theme and question that carried the 2017 Convention** is *how can we shape a future where fairness and equity are the norm?* It begins with a conversation--about the issue at the root of societal tension, the cause of much social injustice, a topic with widespread public policy implications. That issue is race and racism, a subject so sensitive that we avoid talking about it.

Race has no biological basis, yet as a social construct it has been a major force throughout the development of the United States, even if our history books failed to record it. What can we as individuals, as League members, and as members of our larger communities think, say, and do to examine the legacy of racism on attitudes, beliefs, and policy--and work toward a more equitable future?

Convention delegates and friends bore witness to three incredible women and all based on personal experiences:

During Saturday's lunch, LWVUS Chief Executive Officer, **Wylecia Wiggs Harris**, Ph.D., addressed *Diversity in the League*. Her presentation can be found [here](#).

Saturday's dinner speaker, **Kyra Kyles**, former Editor-in-Chief of EBONY magazine and immediate past president of the National Association of Black Journalists, spoke on *Changing the Narrative in Discussions of Race* and graciously answered many participant questions.

A Sunday morning caucus led by **Eileen Heinemann**, Director of the Racial Justice Community Engagement initiative at the YWCA Evanston/North Shore, on Sunday offered ways to think about how to have personal & community conversations in *Talking about Race: It's Not as Hard as We Make It*.

Increased media programming and reporting on race and racial inequities have created greater mainstream awareness of the issues. The time to engage in meaningful discourse on these issues is now. LWVIL has an opportunity to listen and contribute to the dialogue. As we continue to explore this important and challenging topic, we look forward to your participation in this critical societal discussion that can help shape the future from an America divided to an America united.

#### **BUDGET AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE TAKE CENTER STAGE AT CONVENTION**

At the Biennial Convention, delegates reaffirmed state League positions and approved the action focus items with one amendment from the floor that highlighted the lack of a state budget and the terrible impact it has had on other social policy issues, like human services and education. Heather Cunningham, new LWVIL Board member from the Oak Park/River Forest League, made the motion that passed with resounding support.

The other action from the floor was the motion for an update of the LWVIL Criminal Justice position since it is over twenty years old and did not have positions relating to bail and restorative justice. Support for this study built during convention through caucus presentations and statements from members during plenary sessions. A study committee is forming and more are welcome. We expect a study timeline to be shared after our July 21 Issues Committee meeting. If you or others from your League would like to be part of the study committee, email Hilary Denk at [hdenk@lwvil.org](mailto:hdenk@lwvil.org).

The Biennial Report contains status updates in many areas of policy, however some changes will be made due to action during the special session. "Where We Stand" will be updated during August and mailed in September to League Presidents or Executive Committee Members. Please make sure the LWVIL office has updated mailing information so you get your copy. The on-line version will be updated as well. We suggest that as you plan your public events you share the League position that connects with that presentation, to educate our members and the public as well.

The Chair of the Issues Committee, LWVIL VP Hilary Denk, is excited to be in her new role and very pleased that Heather Cunningham will be joining the committee from the LWVIL Board. We are lucky that so many other long time members are continuing in their area of expertise and our new LWVIL President, Bonnie Cox, plans to actively participate as well. However, we welcome new members and other areas of policy expertise, as well as feedback on the work we are doing. Contact Hilary Denk any

time at [hdenk@lwvil.org](mailto:hdenk@lwvil.org) or [630-725-8066](tel:630-725-8066) with suggestions, questions or to learn how you or another member from your League can get involved.

### **PER MEMBER PAYMENT (PMP)**

Delegates to the convention voted to keep the LWVIL PMP at \$30 but that it be raised to \$32 for fiscal year 2018-2019.

### **AWARD WINNERS**

**The Carrie Chapman Catt Award** is given during the Convention to recognize a League member or members who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and significant action toward advancing the League's mission and whose efforts benefit and inspire the citizens of Illinois and focus on promoting greater citizen awareness of public issues and/or wider participation in the democratic process. During the 2017 Convention, the award was given to Mary Lubertozzi, long-time member of the League of Women Voters of Park Forest and to Sally Rudolph, beloved member of the League of Women Voters of McLean County.

Likewise, LWVIL confers an award entitled **Community impact Award**. This year's award winners were the League of Women Voters of Roselle-Bloomington and the League of Women Voters of Wilmette.

### **SOME COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS FOR CONVENTION PARTICIPANTS:**

*I learned and observed a lot here which will help me contribute to the operations of my local league.*

*[Wylecia] was inspirational! She lit a fire in me.*

*We sometimes get into the weeds on issues but it's the voter service that gets people excited in the community.*

*Impressed by the commitment and passion of members and leaders to Make Democracy Work.*

*Regarding funding shortfalls after PMP payments: Can we create ongoing communication regarding easy, successful, non-loathsome fundraisers? Send to each league – suggestions, ideas, how to's?*

The LWVIL Board will be evaluating all the convention comments as well as the several directions to the Board over the next few months and will be happy to report on progress.

Thanks to all convention participants who attended the convention, made constructive comments and added important voices to our work to *Make Democracy Work*.