



50-Year Recognition 2022

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The League has a tradition of recognizing individuals who have been members for 50 years. Each year, we honor these long-time members, many of whom joined a local League elsewhere, but who are celebrating their 50th year of membership with the Dane County League. We are grateful for the dedication of our 50-Year Members.

My Life Before LWV

I grew up in Minnesota living on a farm. I attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis. I graduated with a minor in Social Science. I have to admit that as a college student in the '60s I never heard mention of the League of Women Voters. While at Augsburg I met my husband, Doug. Together we moved to Madison when he accepted a position as a teacher at Memorial High School.



I became interested in the League as a young adult. I can easily remember the year I joined because my first child was one year old. My husband and I were both educators. When our first child was born we decided one of us should take a break from teaching to raise our children. As a result, I took a hiatus from teaching for about seven years.

My Life With the League

A neighbor invited me to attend a League Unit meeting. I was very fortunate because this unit was composed of really intelligent and powerful thinking women. For my first year I kept quiet because I was so impressed by their intellect. I just wanted to listen and learn.

The League Units were more active at the time that I joined. As I recall there were at least 10 units at that time. I became a Unit Director early on. The units were responsible for conducting the study programs the League undertook.

Mona Steele was an influential member for me. Her work on the marital property policies drew my interest. Due to my background in education, I was asked to be in a study program about schools led by Barbara Arnold. Other areas of interest within the League have included housing issues, transportation, and increasing voter participation. Throughout my years with the League, I was active in Voter Service activities and moderated the *Know Your Candidate* interviews, as well as live forums. I enjoyed working with a group of others to write the *Candidates' Answers* questions several different times.

In college I never would have dreamed I would become the leader that I have been during my years of service in the League of Women Voters. I first served as president of LWVDC from 1993-1994. I served again from 1995-1996. (I recollect telling my husband that it looks as if I may have to serve a term again. I was on the nominating committee. We called 15 people looking for someone to serve as president!) I was also invited to serve as president in 2009 and served for one final year.

In addition to serving as president of the LWVDC I served as board president for the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin from 1997-2001. When I was asked to be the president for the state I recall saying, "I'll never be any younger..." and I accepted the challenge. I'm grateful for the leadership opportunities the League provided. I discovered that I could run a good meeting and I was never worried about carrying out the responsibilities. During one term, I was teaching full-time and completing my Master's degree! Despite my busy life, I worked to give my best while serving as president.

In 2016 I was honored to receive the Carrie Chapman Catt Award from the LWVDC. I've continued to be active in the League. I'm currently serving as the Central West Unit Leader.

The League's increase in membership has impressed me, especially the recent increases. I can recall when membership was less than 100 strong. COVID has allowed for more participation for some members, thanks in part to technology. Also, our current political environment has encouraged membership. I've noticed that as membership numbers have increased, there's been a drop in the participation in the Unit meetings. (I've not been a participant in the League's Book Discussions and it is possible that these groups have been growing recently to fill that void.)

If I were asked by someone about the League of Women Voters, I would say that it is a GREAT organization that promotes good government. It works to build an informed democracy and maintain fair elections. I've been deeply inspired by the intelligent and dynamic women I've met in the League.