



# Carrie Chapman Catt Award 2021

League of Women Voters of Dane County

## Gail Bliss

Gail Bliss is a singularly dedicated LWV Dane County member, devoted to making democracy resources accessible as possible. She is a stalwart presence during the summer Dane County Farmer's Market on the Capitol Square through the heat and humidity. Gail is a frequent, friendly, and trusted presence for the League at the Beacon, YWCA, Salvation Army, St Vinny's, and numerous other food pantry providers. What the pandemic hit, she preserved and worked around the clock ensuring people who were the most severely affected still had opportunities to vote- ensuring their voices were heard.

Her fight against the discriminatory Voter ID legislation prompted her to write the 2011 grant for the Evjue Foundation, which led to the LWV Dane County receiving \$5,000 to help those affected by the law. She untangles the bureaucratic mess for those who have lost their paperwork petition for their Voter ID and chaperones and provides transportation to the DMV rain or shine. In a particularly poignant example of Gail's dedication, she spent more than five hours with one Madison resident over the course of two days, driving to five locations in order to help them get a photo ID and a social security card. Gail's service to this one person went far beyond voter assistance; it helped them access education, housing, and employment that had previously been unattainable because of their lack of ID.

Gail tirelessly worked and walked with the Dane County and City of Madison social service providers to their rehoming locations as well as encampments when the pandemic impacted the homeless community hard. She went out into the community, under bridges, across frozen ponds, in hidden spots where those who have the least need the most, all with the goal of leveling the playing field.

Since 2012, Gail has worked with social workers at local hospitals ensuring staff understand hospitalized voter rules. In 2016, she worked with medical students to publicize the opportunity to vote for patients at UW hospitals which was covered by the local news station.

In addition to her determined boots-on-the-ground voter services work, Gail has held a number of leadership positions with LWV Dane County since becoming a member in 2008. She served as International Relations/Great Decisions Chair from 2009–2010, Fundraising Chair from 2010–2012, Voter Service Chair from 2011–2017, Board Secretary from 2017–2018, and as a member of the Voter Service Steering Committee from 2018 to the present.

There is no greater representation of making a difference and understanding the issue with democracy is not only who is and is not allowed to vote but who cannot. Her perspective of making democracy more accessible is one all LWV Dane County members should take to heart.



**The Carrie Chapman Catt Award is presented  
as a tribute to years of excellence  
in contributing to the community,  
in making a sustained commitment to the League  
and to its governing principles,  
and in fulfilling the words of Carrie Chapman Catt:**

**"What should be done can be done:  
what can be done let us do."  
[1920]**





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## Caryl Terrell

This year, we celebrate Caryl Terrell's long commitment to conservation, the environment and climate advocacy through the League. Caryl's ongoing work champions the connection between informed voters, the role of government, and fact-based common sense to bring about high-functioning infrastructure, clean air and water for all.

One can argue that the origin story to Caryl's work begins with Carrie Chapman Catt. Seven and a half months after Chapman Catt was born in Ripon, Wisconsin, oil wildcatter Edwin Drake launched the petroleum age with the world's first oil well—successfully drilled in Titusville, Pennsylvania, not so far from where Caryl grew up. By this time in 1859, scientists already recognized Earth's natural "greenhouse effect" thanks to French physicist Joseph Fourier.

In 1880, Chapman Catt received her bachelor's degree in General Science from Iowa Agricultural College in Ames (Iowa State University). She was the only woman in her graduating class. As Chapman Catt blossomed, so too did the modern industrial age, triggering massive social and environmental changes. To be clear, climate change was not a problem at this point, but the underpinnings of it along with fallout from large-scale environmental destruction are here. These are what Caryl Terrell, several lifetimes later, has been working to undo. Chapman Catt identified voting rights as the issue of her time. She poured her energies and leveraged her skills as an outstanding organizer and orator to this end. Fast forward a few lifetimes—Caryl Terrell is building on Chapman Catt's work, tackling the biggest issue of our time with similar passion and skills.

Caryl holds a degree in economics from Oberlin College in Ohio, and two Master's degrees from UW-Madison, one in Public Policy and Administration and the other in Urban and Regional Planning. Her curriculum vitae is extensive. Her key to success: always bringing the most relevant data and never getting emotional at legislative hearings.

Caryl joined the League in 1974, making her mark at national, state and local levels as a natural resources policy expert. Simply listing her contributions does not do her justice but, in brief, it includes: participation on two LWV national policy task forces, helping to develop the League's position on climate change and energy positions adopted by the LWVWI, serving as chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee, serving for 20 years on the LWVWI Legislative Committee on Natural Resources and serving on the local League's Climate Crisis subcommittee. Recent advocacy work includes testifying before the City of Madison Planning Commission and the Board of Public Works on the need to revise the existing City of Madison's Stormwater Ordinance and providing oral and written recommendations to the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change. Caryl also currently serves on LWVDC's Fund Development Committee and spearheaded the very successful Making Democracy Work campaign this year.

"Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchaseable voice in government." Carrie Chapman Catt (1917) *Votes for All: A Symposium. The Crisis* 15 (1). Caryl Terrell has taken Chapman Catt's beautiful concept and brought it up to date by adding 'environmental quality' and 'climate rescue' to 'democracy' and 'government' for all, one meticulous well-researched detail at a time.



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