

The League of Women Voters of Dane County, Inc.
2009 CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT AWARD RECIPIENT

 **Dorothy Wheeler** 

About me: I have had a long teaching career in secondary education where I taught both English and math. I taught in middle school most of my career but I started and ended in high school teaching English. I always had an abiding interest in issues and politics and I enjoyed my 8 years at West High School with a faculty that was very aware and informed about politics. I retired in 1999. The first thing I did was to join the League where I could continue my interest in issues and politics. I also stepped up my activities in the Democratic Party and ran for a seat on the county board in 2002. I won that seat in 2004 and have been on the board for almost 3 terms.

About my family: I married in 1956 at the tender age of 21 right after graduating from the University of Wisconsin here in Madison. Thus began my bifurcated career as mother and teacher which I carried forward until my retirement in 1999 with a couple of years off to birth my three children. Tom is now 50 years old and owns a jewelry store in Honolulu where I like to visit and recently got home from a month's stay. He and his wife have our two granddogs. My only daughter Mary is 49 and has my only grandchild, a girl who is now a freshman in high school. John is the youngest at age 40. He has a dual career as a teacher of physical education and an officer in the Air Guard. Now the military has taken over and he is working for the Air Guard in a civilian type of job. He will be deployed in June. He was married for the second time in March of 2008 and I have reason to hope for another grandchild or two!!

My interest in the League: I have always had the greatest respect for the League and its members. I remember going to meetings when I was a young mother and had a year off of teaching. I was very impressed that women could meet without getting out the linen and silver and talk together about issues of our society and actually study them with research and written reports. I didn't become active until I retired because of the time commitment but I have enjoyed 10 years of membership. League members volunteer as individuals for all kinds of charities and causes, but nothing is as powerful as their primary role of studying the issues and working to influence the policy makers. That's the only way we can change the direction of our government to support the causes and people we identify as the most worthy recipients of our tax dollars. That's the only way to level the playing field by working for the common good. An important part of that process is to work for fair elections by educating the voters so they can elect the best candidates for office.

[Pam's additional insights]: Dorothy did all the writing for LWVDC's study *Dane County Supports for Children and Families* and she wrote Part One of LWVDC's recent study *An Once of Prevention, Quality Early Care and Education for Dane County*; she had recommended that we do both studies. She also helped with an earlier study on housing. She is greatly motivated to learn about social policy issues for LWVDC.