

THE VOTER

JANUARY 2020

P.O. Box 68214, Jackson, MS 39286-8214

http://www.lwv-ms.org/Jackson_League.html

<https://www.facebook.com/LWVJA/>

League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Carol Andersen



As an Iowa native, I grew up with great pride and admiration for Carrie Chapman Catt and her work to help American women achieve the right to vote. I share an alma mater with Ms. Catt and attended many classes and meetings in my undergraduate days in Ames, Iowa, in a beautiful red-brick, turreted building on the Iowa State University campus named in her honor: The Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics. When I became active with the League of Women Voters, I was proud, once again, to learn the League was founded by my Iowa foremother.

But my time in Mississippi has taught me hard truths about Catt and some of the other white women typically credited with the leading the fight for women's voting rights. In the lead-up to 2020, the 100th anniversary of both the ratification of the 19th amendment and the founding of the League of Women Voters, I have read dozens of historical records on those tumultuous decades in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and am still working my way through several of the wave of texts that have emerged in the past year, illuminating important details about how the battle for suffrage was truly waged. What I have been most

excited to read is the work of Martha Jones, professor of history at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, whose research and writing illuminates how black women—the daughters and granddaughters of former slaves—perhaps more so than white women, are owed credit for securing voting rights for all women.

In her 2009 book, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900* (University of North Carolina Press), Jones discusses how African American women worked within their existing social networks (usually churches) in encouraging white women and white and black men to challenge ingrained societal expectations and become leaders in the crusade not just for black suffrage and woman suffrage, but for *human* suffrage. In her forthcoming book, *Vanguard: A Political History of African American Women* (Basic Books, September 2020), Jones examines the lives and work of black women—Maria Stewart, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Fannie Lou Hamer, and rights and human rights, calling on America to realize its best ideals. (continued on p. 2)

(President's Message continued from P. 1)
Jones points out that black women like Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911, abolitionist, suffragist, poet, teacher, public speaker and writer, one of the first African American women to be published in the United States) are often overshadowed by women like Carrie Chapman Catt, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the story of women's voting rights. After the 1869 meeting of the American Equal Rights Association, when Stanton, Anthony—and even Frederick Douglass—deemed black women's claims for voting freedom less urgent than those of white women and black men, Harper asserted, "We are all bound up in one great bundle of humanity, and society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse of its own soul." She demanded black women be included as part of "one great privileged nation."

The 19th amendment indeed finally gave women the right to vote. But we well understand, especially here in Mississippi, that black women (and men) continued to battle for their legal privilege to cast ballots. A portion of that ultimate victory, the Civil Rights Act of 1968, is also owed to black lionesses like Ella Baker, Daisy Bates, Fannie Lou Hamer, Dorothy Height, Diane Nash, Septima Poinsette Clark, Rosa Parks and others.

The League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area will honor these black women, and their white sisters, too, at several events throughout 2020 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the 19th amendment, beginning January 14, with a special panel presentation at Millsaps College entitled "Possibilities and Limitations: 100 Years of Women's Suffrage." We hope you will attend as many as you can.

Possibilities and Limitations: 100 Years of Women's Suffrage

[Millsaps Art & Lecture Series](#)

Hosted by Millsaps College

Sponsored by LWV-MS

On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote was ratified. To mark the 100th anniversary, a panel of speakers will examine the efforts of Mississippi women to achieve full and equitable participation in our democracy. Historians Dr. Rebecca Tuuri, University of Southern Mississippi, and Dr. Shennette Garrett-Scott, University of Mississippi, will join Dr. Nathan Shrader, professor at Millsaps College, as they share a historical perspective on women's suffrage in Mississippi, discuss key achievements, and acknowledge the challenges women still face in our nation. Carol Andersen, co-president of the Mississippi chapter of the League of Women Voters will moderate the panel.

JANUARY 14, 2020

7:00-9:00 PM

MILLSAPS COLLEGE

Gertrude C. Ford Academic Complex

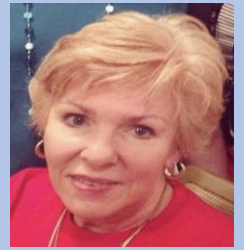
Recital Hall



Would you like to know more about the history of the League of Women Voters? [Learn more here!](#)

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Elaine Talbott



Ladies and gentlemen, your LWV Jackson Area is winding up an active year and 2020 shaping up to be a challenging year to protect the integrity of the vote. To do this work we need a team of committed people to help do this work. The more folks we have on board the more effective we become. All of us are really on the ad hoc membership committee. Take a moment to think about the people in your social, worship and work circles. Who do you know that shows an interest in fair elections and good government? Why not invite them to a meeting in 2020? As you will see in the rest of this newsletter there is a wealth of opportunities for people who want to be involved.

Elaine Talbott

LWV-JA Membership Director

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601-942-0401



WILLIE JONES NAMED LWV-JA 2ND VICE PRESIDENT FOR VOTER SERVICES

Willie Jones has been elected by a unanimous vote of the Board to fill the vacancy in the office of 2nd Vice President for Voter Services for the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area. Ms. Jones is President and CEO of Dependable Source Corp. of MS, a company that provides workforce solutions to the transportation industry and is recognized as one of the largest minority-owned businesses in Mississippi. Among the many hats she wears in business, professional and community service organizations in Jackson and Mississippi, Ms. Jones is president of Women for Progress and creator/host of the Working Women Report network broadcasting on WMPR-FM 90.1 to provide information about relevant policy issues affecting our city and state. She was profiled in the December 2018 issue of The Voter.

LWV-JA welcomes you to this crucial role, Willie Jones!

League of Women Voters – Jackson Area

2019-2020



Officers and Board of Directors

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Deloris Lee

2nd Vice-President**Voter Services**

Willie Jones

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Megan Tidwell

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Lakeeta Jones

Elected Directors

Membership: Elaine Talbott

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National Items: Emily Stanfield

State Items: Annie Reiher

Nominating Committee

Dierdre Payne, Chair

Joy Parikh

Barbara Powell

Calendar

- Jan 14 Millsaps Art & Lecture Series
“Possibilities and Limitations:
100 Years of Women’s
Suffrage”
Sponsored by LWVMS
- Jan 21 LWVMS Meet & Greet
5 p.m. at Elaine Talbott's home
- Jan 22 LWVMS Legislative Day
Jackson (location TBD)
9:00-noon meeting followed by
visits to legislative offices
- Feb 11* LWV-JA Board Meeting
- Mar 10* LWV-JA Board Meeting
- Mar 21 LWV-JA Membership Meeting
Willie Morris Library
Program To Be Announced
950 Rice Rd, Ridgeland, MS
39157
- Mar 24 *Backpack Full of Cash*
OR
Re-screening and Discussion
Mar 31 Mississippi Arts Center
(TBD) Doors open at 5pm, Film at 6pm
- Apr 14* LWV-JA Board Meeting
- May 2 LWV-JA Annual Meeting
Mississippi Craft Center

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT VOTE411

Help us reach more voters by sharing on social.



***Board Meetings 5:30-7:30 PM, Whole Foods
Market – Upper Level Meeting Room**

The League of Women Voters is now listed as an official partner organization of the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2020 Census! The League's name will be included on the public list of partners and used in presentations by the Census Director, along with the other 750 national companies/corporations/non-profits. The League will also be included on the list submitted to the Under-Secretary of Commerce. It is estimated that the total number of national, state, and local partners will be 300,000 by March.

The American Library Association has published its guide, *Preparing My Library for the 2020 Census*. Each census cycle, the ALA provides a tip sheet for libraries to use in preparing for the Census. This year, LWV is specifically named as a reliable community group doing work in this space, and we encourage all Leagues to consider using your local library for census and redistricting presentations and events!

lww.org

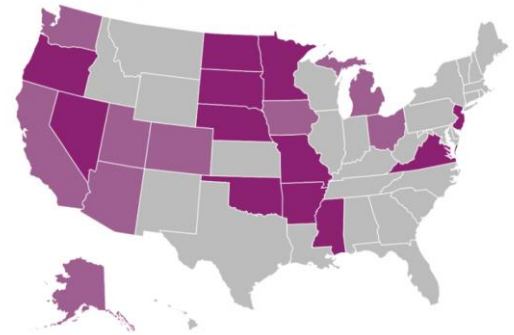


LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS – JACKSON AREA

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

People Powered Fair Maps Campaign

Elaine Talbott
LWV-MS
State Point Person
People Powered Fair Maps Campaign



By now you are probably aware that League of Women Voters US is taking on redistricting and the issue of racial and/or partisan gerrymandering as a national crusade. You will be finding action alerts in your email inboxes throughout this year as we mobilize to increase public awareness and take this issue head on.

Here in Mississippi, State Senate District 22 has been in dispute as the legal challenge, *Thomas v. Bryant*, has worked its way through the court system. This case was brought on the grounds that the lines as drawn were an attempt to dilute the minority vote in the district. Judge Carlton Reeves ordered the district redrawn, and a three-judge panel of the Fifth District Court upheld his ruling. The November election was done with the newly redrawn map and the result was a change in political party now holding that seat. *Bryant et al.* petitioned the court to sit *en banc* (entire panel) to hear an appeal.

During the week of January 20, 2020 an appeal of this case will be heard by the entirety of the Fifth District Court as they sit *en banc* in New Orleans. Your state League and the LWV-US have joined in an amicus brief filed by the national ACLU on behalf of *Thomas et al.* We remain hopeful that the two prior rulings will be upheld during this appeal.

It is the intention of LWV-JA and LWV-MS to undertake further actions across the state where we can identify other district lines drawn to advantage or disadvantage a particular group of voters. We also intend to work with the legislature to encourage them to change the way districts are drawn in 2022 after our next census. Our ultimate goal and that of LWV-US would be an independent nonpartisan commission to do this work.

This is a marathon, not a sprint. We will be allied with other nonpartisan good government groups and concerned citizens. This isn't going to be easy and it won't be overnight. Change comes slowly in Mississippi. This is change worth working and fighting for. Democracy depends on fair elections.

We aren't in this fight alone. LWV-US has given us funding for our public awareness campaign. We need to be the willing boots on the ground. So please read all the email you get from your local League chapter and sign up for updates from LWV-US by going here: <https://www.lwv.org/>

MEMBER PROFILE

LAKEETA JONES



LWV: Please tell us a bit about yourself.

LJ: I am Lakeeta Jones. I have lived in Byram for 12 years. Before that, I lived in Jackson for 14 years. I was born and raised in Columbia, MS. I am married to John and we have two daughters, Shemere and Malia.

LWV: How long have you lived in the Jackson area and what have been your activities since living here (jobs, other organization memberships, etc.)?

LJ: I came to Jackson in 1990 as a college student to attend Jackson State University. While a student, I worked at a sandwich shop named Van and Lillie's. Once I graduated, I worked for Deposit Guaranty Bank in the Investment Accounting Department. In 1997, I began a 10 year career in the accounting department for Saks Incorporated (formally McRae's). I switched gears and joined the student loan industry in 2007 when I accepted a job at JPMorgan Chase. I'm currently employed with GranthamPoole PLLC as an Accounting Specialist in the Client Accounting area. I love to read and have been a member of the Southern Girls Book Club for 19 years. I enjoy traveling with my family and friends, as well as gathering for dinners and parties.

LWV: When did you join the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area, and what drew you to the organization?

LJ: I joined The League in September 2017. Honestly, it was a Facebook post of women dressed as women in the suffrage movement that piqued my interest. I had never heard of the League of Women Voters before this. I asked my grandmother and she enlightened me about the great things this organization had done in the past. After attending the membership meeting and hearing the history, I was excited to join.

LWV: What were some key political issues in Mississippi and nationally at the time you first joined the League?

LJ: The hot topics at the time, and still, are election security, voting rights, and gerrymandering.

LWV: Describe your involvement in the League.

LJ: I joined the Voter Services committee in 2018. I am currently the Jackson Area's treasurer.

Member Profile – Lakeeta Jones

(continued from p. 6)



LWV: Why has the League remained important to you?

LJ: It's important to me because the League keeps the issues of voting rights and disenfranchisement on our minds.

LWV: Has League membership given you an opportunity to make an impact on your community? How?

LJ: Yes. It has allowed me to become better informed on the voter registration process, maintaining my registration by participating in voter registration drives, and attending candidate forums.

LWV: What are current political issues that particularly pique your interest?

LJ: I'm interested in getting every eligible person in the state of Mississippi registered to vote and keeping them motivated to actually go vote. I'm also concerned about restoring voter rights and gerrymandering.

LWV: What do you see as the strengths of the League of Women Voters?

LJ: The League's main strength is Women. We are a force and always get the change we want to see.

LWV: What keeps the League relevant?

LJ: The league will remain relevant as long as there are people who seek to keep certain people from voting.

LWV: How might the League reach out to new, younger, more diverse members?

LJ: As members, we can start by inviting the young people in our family and community. We also need to engage the high schools and colleges in our area.

LWVMS 2020 Legislative Day | Jan. 22, 2020

The state League of Women Voters (LWVMS) will hold its annual Legislative Day Jan. 22 in Jackson. The Jackson League will serve as co-host.

All participants are invited to a **Meet-and-Greet** the evening prior to Legislative Day, Jan. 21, at the home of LWVJA member Elaine Talbott beginning at 5 p.m.

Legislative Day activities will include a morning educational session and a box luncheon, followed by a visit with available elected officials at the Capitol in the afternoon.

Location, lunch order instructions, and further program details will be shared via a separate mailing as soon as they are finalized.

LWV-JA November Program Meeting: 2019 Election Analysis

Dr. Nathan Shrader, Chair of Millsaps Department of Government and Politics, regretted having to cancel his presentation, “2019 Election Analysis,” at the LWV-JA November meeting. While there was no formal program, Mr. Rims Barber graciously responded at the last minute and led a discussion summarizing changes in the Mississippi Legislature.

Barber reported on changes in legislative seats in the Primary as well as General elections that may impact legislation relevant to voting rights and other LWV issues. In the House of Representatives, the balance between Republicans and Democrats will remain the same as last term (75 Republicans and 47 Democrats). Each party claimed two seats from the other. Most incumbents who ran for reelection won (58 Republicans and 37 Democrats).

Rims’ report prompted a spirited dialogue among participants. One focus of discussion addressed by past LWV-JA president, Barbara Powell, was the likelihood of improvements in voting rights under the newly elected Secretary of State, who had announced his support for elimination of the Mississippi law requiring not only winning the popular vote but also requiring winning a majority of House districts in order for a statewide candidate to be elected. Michael Watson, the newly elected Secretary of State, also has indicated a willingness to institute certain campaign finance reforms, like making available a searchable database of campaign donors.

Jack Hoda of Mississippi Votes spoke of voter registration and redistricting efforts that promise an improved environment for voting rights in Mississippi.

