



## Annual Meeting Held by League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters of Leelanau County held its 2025 Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 12, at noon at the Leelanau County Government Center. Sixty people gathered for lunch before the business meeting.

Sharon Vreeland received the Outstanding Community Member Award. Sharon has a long history of work and community service for various organizations in our region. She is known as someone who can help others find the resources that they need. Sharon is Coordinator for Substance Free Leelanau, Prevention Specialist for Catholic Human Services Up North Prevention, Coordinator for Substance Free Coalition of Northwest Michigan and is the Head Coach for Traverse City's Central High School's Bowling Program.

Jacquie Johnson received the Vina Mikesell Outstanding Member Award, named for the first President of our local League. Jacquie has many years of League of Women Voters experience. She involved in a Wisconsin League for many years, and as soon as she and her husband moved to Northern Michigan, Vina Mikesell got her involved in LWV of Leelanau County. For many years, Jacquie has served as Chair of the Voter Services Committee which oversees our registration of high school students. In election years, Voter Services organizes non-partisan Candidate Forums focused primarily on the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners races. Jacquie has also served as President of the Northport Women's Club and is an active member of her church.

The League of Women Voters of Leelanau County was pleased to have Professor Amy Gajda, Jeffrey D. Forchelli Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School, present a talk on the history of privacy rights in the United States. She is the author of the acclaimed book, *Seek and Hide: The Tangled History of the Right to Privacy*.

The business meeting included amendments to the Bylaws, acceptance of a Budget for the upcoming year, adoption of our Local Program (the areas of study and work that we intend to do in the League year that begins July 1) and the Election of two of the four officers and three Board members, plus one to fill a vacated term. Natalie Wilson was elected to serve as Secretary and Gary Bardenhagen, as Treasurer, both for two-year terms. Also elected for two-year terms were Board members, Jane Gale, Jacquie Johnson, and Susan Wood. Janet Welch

will fill the one-year vacancy on the Board. Tricia Denton was elected as Chair of the Nominating Committee for 2025-2026 and Jan Rygwelski, as the non-Board member of the committee. A Board member for the Nominating Committee will be appointed later this month by the Board as well as up to six appointed Board members, who will serve one-year terms.

There was a presentation on the national League of Women Voters initiative entitled Unite and Rise 8.5, which aims to engage and mobilize 8.5 million voters through advocacy, civic education, and community engagement. Over the next year and a half, *Unite and Rise 8.5*, will encourage Americans to reinvigorate our civic life through education and engagement, public mobilization, partnership-building, and policy advocacy.

The League of Women Voters (<https://lww.org>) is a national, political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in their government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League is non-partisan and as an organization does not endorse or oppose candidates or political parties. People can learn more about Leelanau County's local League at its website (<https://lwwleelanau.org>).