

Greetings from the Oval Office (figuratively speaking)! This is the 2022 President's Report for League of Women Voters of Anoka, Blaine, Coon Rapids Area.

There has been a lot of change in how we are meeting this year – we are becoming adept at virtual meetings and have made good use of these resources in our monthly membership meetings as well as Board and Committee work. This technology has allowed us to meet as effectively on cold snowy days as in fair weather, no matter where we are. In fact, I joined the Annual Meeting on April 11 from North Platte, Nebraska, on my way home from a wedding in Phoenix.

Our League has accomplished a lot this year, and I want to recognize the people whose work has made us successful. First, I want to thank Julie Trude for stepping in during my medical adventures (knee replacement in January and a few other medical 'adventures' on my husband's part). Her work has kept LWV ABC rolling along seamlessly, and I am very grateful to her for this. Julie stepped up to finish the vacant term of Vice President at our last Annual Meeting; Kathy Aanerud had been filling in as Acting VP up until that time. Among all the other things she's done for LWV ABC, Julie also took the lead in pulling together materials for our Annual Meeting, a task that makes our meeting work so much better!

DeeAnn Christensen has taken a strong role as Program Chair, working with the program committee to bring us excellent programs like the discussion on voting rights legislation with Congressman Dean Phillips and the program on Indian Boarding Schools. She will be giving us a report on the work of the Program Committee, and look ahead to let us know what's coming up next. Our programs are viewed by many in our community and shared on Cable TV through QCTV. DeeAnn is also a member of our Observer Corps, keeping watch on the meetings of the Anoka County Commissioners and providing good communication with Board Chair Scott Schulte. This really elevates the visibility of our League in the community.

Wes Volkenant is not only Treasurer but also worked with Julie and DeeAnn on the CMAL report on County Governance and concurrence that we voted on at our February meeting. Wes has also taken the lead in working with the Redistricting Committee in developing draft redistricting maps for Anoka County that will be presented to the County Board on April 12. Wes also provides a public service by sharing information on Anoka County government meetings and other events on his Eye on Anoka County Facebook page. He is careful to keep this page non-partisan. You will see local political leaders posting here from time to time.

Linda Rodgers has taken the reins of our Voter Services team, and continues to lead with grace and good humor. We are gearing up for a very busy Candidate Forum season this year; Linda will talk more about this a bit later. All members will be needed to pull this off so know that we will need you. Cindy Wetzel is leading our Voter Registration work, coordinating with the Voter Registration chair in LWV Minneapolis to bring us training and materials. We will have opportunities to do voter registration tables at events this summer, so watch for notices as the schedule fills.

Pat Kennedy continues to keep the wheels on by taking on roles of Membership Chair, website manager, and filling in as our still-vacant Diversity Chair. Our website is an excellent resource for all things LWV ABC, including videos of past meetings, newsletters, book and film club happenings and a calendar that provides info on many events of interest to LWV members. Without Pat's backbone of support, LWV ABC would not be as effective or visible on the interwebs.

Kathy Aanerud continues in her role as Communication Director, doing our press releases and maintaining contact lists for our local news media. She also is an integral part of the Newsletter team, collecting input

from various contributors and creating the draft newsletter that eventually works its way to all of our LWV ABC members and friends. Arlene Gillett provides steadfast support to the Board in her continuing role as our Secretary, providing minutes of our meetings and keeping our official record. Our new Action Committee chairs Jody Anderson and Leslie Waterhouse are working to build the part of our League's work, and have provided a report for this Annual Meeting. Mary Jo Truchon not only serves as Nominating Committee chair, and also provides us with lovely awards for our Zilla Way and Friend-of-League recipients. We thank Mary Jo for her work here.

It takes all of us to keep our League moving and effective. I'd like to take a couple minutes here and recognize our members for their longevity in LWV ABC. First is Zilla Way, our longest-term member. Zilla has been with LWV ABC for 65 years. She continues to serve on the Board in an at-large position and assists with the Observer Corps, attending county meetings so the Commissioners know that LWV ABC is watching. Geri Nelson just passed the 50-year mark and is now a Lifetime Member of LWV. Congratulations to Geri for this accomplishment. Both Zilla and Geri have served many roles in LWV ABC, leaving their marks on our League and our community.

This list shows the other longevity award recipients. The criteria is continuous membership and the award is given when milestone marks are passed. Recipients get a frame-able certificate to make their milestones.

Lifetime Members – 50+ Years

- Carol Bradley (1969)
- Zilla Way (1953)
- Geri Nelson (1972)

45+ Years

- Kay McCulley (1976)

35+ Years

- Jeorgette Knoll (1986)

30+ Years

- Luanne Koskinen (1989)
- Kathy Tingelstad (1990)
- Mary Jo Truchon (1988)

25+ Years

- Joan Molenaar (1994)
- Betsy O'Berry (1996)

20+ Years

- Jim Abeler (2000)
- Susan Anderson (1999 - also a member 1979-1983)
- Lois Ballinger (1998 - also a member 1971-1976)
- Diann Halverson (2002)
- Luranne McLean (2002)
- Katherine Whelchel (1998)

15+ Years

- Julie Trude (2007)

10+ Years

- Kathy Aanerud (2008)

10+ Years (continued)

- Jane Arndt (2012)
- Grace Baltich (2008)
- Arlene Gillett (2012)
- Rochelle Hartje (2008)
- Linda Rodgers (2012)
- Gretchen Sabel (2008)
- Lonni McCauley (2010)

5+ Years

- Rebecca Ahlstrom (2016)
- Shirley Andreason (2017)
- Marcia Baudino (2017)
- Susan Butler (2016)
- Dee Ann Christensen (2015)
- Susan Christenson (2017)
- Cindy DeRuyter (2015)
- Betsy Kiekhafer (2017)
- Susan Kraack (2014)
- Roger McCulley (2015)
- Gene Merriam (2014)
- Jerry Newton (2014)
- Rita Newton (2013)
- Bruce Pomerantz (2014)
- Karen Varian (2016)
- Cheryl Volkenant (2017)
- Wes Volkenant (2017)
- Leslie Waterhouse (2016)
- Susan Witt (2015)

Lastly, I want to recognize two members who recently passed – Carol Bradley and Darby Nelson.

Carol Bradley:

We were saddened by the loss of longtime member, Carol Bradley this past month, a day before her 91st birthday. Carol proudly shared her certificate for 50-plus years of League membership with visitors to her care facility. Member Geri Nelson shares that Carol was the go-to, smart, wise, energetic League member who provided answers for a myriad of questions during her mentoring of newer members. She served on a task force that recommended that Minnesota create a Court of Appeals. Carol was honored to be one of the non-lawyers, and a woman, serving on this committee. Our Vice President Julie Trude was impressed to serve on the Minnesota Court of Appeals as her first job out of law school clerking for Judge Foley and Judge Segwick.

Carol and husband Lyle, who passed away last year, raised their five children at their home on the east shore of the Rum River where they took leadership roles in river clean-up and were observers of the birds and animals in their natural habitats. In 2015 when Lyle was honored by the City of Andover for his river protection and role as an educator, with the naming of "Bradley Launch" for canoeists and kayakers on the Rum River, Carol commented to a local newspaper reporter that "The motion of water on a river or probably even a lake is very important to people's souls. I think people can relax when they're just looking at water and watching the flow. I feel like it's a gift to us. We sit here and wonder how long are we going to be able to look at our little kingdom and see all those birds and animals.

Darby Nelson:

We lost our dear friend, mentor, educator, leader, and League member in January -- Darby Nelson. We were grateful that Geri Nelson shared her League of Women Voters membership with Darby -- who in turn shared his time with us and supported our goals along with his many other accomplishments. We cheered on his publication of two books, *For Love of Lakes* in 2012 and *For Love of a River: the Minnesota* in 2019.

Geri and Darby hosted a summer gathering of League of Women Voters at their Champlin home a few years ago where they had undertaken a major project of native plantings and pollinator protection. Their enthusiasm and accomplishments inspired our League's ongoing commitment to the environment. Darby served three terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives where he excelled in progressive activism, particularly on behalf of environmental issues -- including advocacy for wilderness designation for the Boundary Waters. He was a beloved teacher of biology and environmental science at Anoka Ramsey Community College -- and a student himself, having earned the first ecologist PhD from the University of Minnesota. Many non-profit organizations benefitted from his sharing of knowledge and leadership.

We join our loss of Darby with his wife Geri, his son Per and daughter Robin, their spouses and five grandchildren. As described in the program for Darby's memorial,

A light on Mother Earth has moved on to another place. It is neither good nor bad right nor wrong. It is the cycle of things.

Some lights, though, are a bit stronger and spread their good thoughts, deeds and love a bit further.

So was the way of Darby.

That ends the President's Report. Thank you all for your continued support of LWV ABC!

- Gretchen Sabel, President