

# LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF SOLANO COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 2021

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On June 1, The League of Women Voters Solano County celebrated its first year as a county-wide organization at the annual membership meeting, starting with recognition of members and friends who have helped LWVSC take shape in the years since it was founded in Benicia in 2004.

Outgoing **League President Niles Medders** presided over LWVSC's expansion to include *all* of Solano County, widening LWVSC's focus on citizens' issues and concerns. With Niles at the helm in the 2020 election year, League members also organized candidate forums and registered voters at high schools, colleges, local churches, sororities and community organizations. Niles also assisted with **Great Decisions**, a series of public discussions presented jointly by the League and the Foreign Policy Association (now on Zoom and available to all county residents). Prior to the November 2020 general election, he coordinated LWVSC efforts to make sure that Solano voters were familiar with pandemic policies and able to cast their ballots safely.



**Niles Medders**



**Maryellen & Jerry Hayes**



**Rischa Slade**

"Friends of the League" **Maryellen** and **Jerry Hayes** and Solano College Student Life Director **Dr. Rischa Slade** were also honored at the June 1 meeting. Since 2004, when the Benicia League was formed, the Hayes' Camellia Tea Room in Benicia has been *the* LWVB meeting site. The Hases have also participated in many League activities over the years.

In 2019, Dr. Rischa Slade helped introduce Solano College students to the League, providing opportunities for registering student voters and enrolling student members on campus until

most classes began remote learning due to COVID-19. As the Director of Student Life at Solano College, Dr. Slade understands the importance of a nonpartisan source of information for students, and the learning experience provided by participating in League activities.



Incoming LWVSC President Carole Paterson, and Rami Muth, Incoming Vice-President

LWVSC's new leadership for 2021-2022 expressed their plans and hopes for their two-year terms. Incoming President Carole Paterson wants to focus on informing Solano citizens about current issues and policies, starting at the June 1 meeting with KTVU's Claudine Wong, who spoke about racism directed at Asian Americans. (See below.) "Because 2021 is *not* an election year, we'll be able to provide the public with unbiased information about social and political issues. Providing useful, accurate facts to citizens is an important League mission," she notes. "For example, because 2020 census data will be used to revise voting districts, the Solano League will provide opportunities for members of the public to learn about reapportionment decisions that affect voters at both state and federal levels.

Incoming LWVSC Vice President Rami Muth is focused on three priorities chosen by LWVSC for the next two years: **Equity and Social Justice, Voting Rights, and Climate Change**, and wants to inform and encourage citizen participation. "As LWVSC Vice President, it's my hope to give life to League precepts and make them a reality, instead of a tag line on a poster. The League and the nation are at a crossroads that could redefine who we are as a country."

In keeping with the Solano League's focus on equity and social justice, the June 1 annual meeting ended with KTVU anchor Claudine Wong, who shared her views on "Asian Americans" in a wry, frank account of growing up as a third-generation American who never learned to speak Chinese. yet, throughout her life, has been viewed in terms of misguided stereotypes,

"I was a 'little China doll' to my Caucasian friends' parents, and my family cautioned me to "stay quiet," and "not rock the boat," like a good member of a 'model' minority," Wong remembers. "It's time to recognize that "Asians" come from many countries. We're not 'you people.' Asia includes 20 different countries, but we're all lumped together as if we're the same," she points out. "We don't call people from the countries around the Mediterranean Sea 'Mediterraneans.' They're Italians, Greeks, Spaniards, Turks, Egyptians, and so on." As Wong pointed out, and as the League of Women Voters firmly believes, "We need to have the discussions we don't want to have" about race and ethnicity."

The League of Women Voters Solano County agrees!

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**League of Women Voters of Solano County** was first founded in Benicia in 2004 and in 2020 expanded to all of Solano County. Our membership includes citizens of Benicia, Cordelia, Dixon, Fairfield, Vallejo, Vacaville, Suisun City, and Rio Vista, reflecting the diversity of Solano County. You can contact us at [lwsolano@gmail.com](mailto:lwsolano@gmail.com) or visit our website at <http://lwvsolanocounty.org/>

**The National League of Women Voters was founded in 1920** and is a non-partisan organization of women and men that is community-based and organized at local, state, and national levels. Our mission is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in governance and to act on selected and studied common-good governmental issues and policies.