



League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area

THE VOTER

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

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

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

FEBRUARY 2019

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Carol Andersen



February is the anniversary month of the **founding of the League of Women Voters**. Suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt established the League on February 14, 1920. Six months later, Catt and her fellow suffragists finally won their battle for the ballot box when Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, achieving the three-quarters majority necessary to pass an amendment. February is also **Black History Month**, and in honor of this annual tribute to African Americans who struggled to achieve full citizenship in American society, I want us to give honor to important African American figures in the U.S. Women's Suffrage Movement.

Edith Mayo, a nationally renowned historian and curator emerita in political and women's history at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, has assembled a [list](#) of notable African American suffragists who also fought to achieve women's voting rights. Their work was not always appreciated and in fact, according to Mayo, black women were often outright excluded from white suffrage organizations and subjected to racist tactics from white suffragists. Nevertheless, black women continued to join the ranks of suffragists as the movement progressed in the 20th century, Mayo says, and deserve recognition for their role in this important milestone for women in America.

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GUEST SPEAKER

JILL MASTROTOTARO
(AUDUBON MS)
"ONE LAKE PROJECT"

Saturday, March 2, 2019
Willie Morris Library
4912 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS

LWV-JA Meeting Saturday, March 2, 2019

Time: 10:30 – 11:30 AM

Willie Morris Library
4912 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS

Guest Speaker: Jill Mastrototaro
of Audubon MS

Topic: One Lake Project

This meeting is free and open to League members and the general public

VERINA MORTON JONES (1865 – 1943)

Dr. Jones was a physician, suffragist, and clubwoman. Born in Cleveland in 1865, she graduated from the prestigious Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1888, and became the first woman to pass the Mississippi medical exam and the first woman licensed to practice medicine in Mississippi. After her marriage to Walter Morton in 1890, she moved to New York City where she co-founded (with Mary White Ovington) and led the Lincoln Settlement House in Brooklyn. The settlement was an extension of the famous Henry Street Settlement in New York City headed by Lillian Wald. The settlement offered a free kindergarten, a day nursery for working parents, and a clinic. Morton Jones was active in the National Association of Colored Women and fought for woman suffrage while she served as president of the Brooklyn Equal Suffrage League. Later, she became a member of the executive board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1913-1925.

JOSEPHINE BRUCE (1853 – 1923)

Born in Philadelphia and educated in Cleveland, Bruce was a political activist and the wife of Republican Blanche K. Bruce, the first United States Senator from Mississippi during the Reconstruction Era. Senator Bruce supported the enfranchisement of women while serving as Senator. While her husband served in the Senate and, later, when the couple remained in Washington, their home became a center of Washington, D.C. social life. Josephine Bruce was a charter member of the Colored Woman's League of Washington, D. C. and helped organize the National Organization of Afro-American Women in 1894, a forerunner of the National Association of Colored Women. During Margaret Murray Washington's presidency of the National Association of Colored Women, Josephine Bruce headed the national Executive Committee of the NACW, and was editor of its publication, *Notes*. Bruce wrote editorials for the NACW publication demonstrating the increasing concern of the organization's leadership and membership regarding woman suffrage. She also published articles in the *Crisis* magazine and in *Voice of the Negro*. She also became editor of the magazine for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. After the death of her husband, she joined the faculty of Tuskegee where she became Dean of Women. Like a number of other black women reformers, she brought together her community's concerns with both temperance and suffrage.

IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT (1862 – 1931)

Wells-Barnett was a journalist, newspaper editor, suffragist, and Civil Rights leader. She was a militant journalist who wrote for several black newspapers. Born in Holly Springs, she graduated from Oberlin College, Ohio. Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, she led an anti-lynching crusade, after which a white lynch mob attacked the press for which she published and her press, *The Free Speech and Headlight* was destroyed. Threats to her life forced her to move to Chicago, where she worked for the *Chicago Conservator* newspaper, edited by Ferdinand Barnett, whom she married in 1895. Also in that year she published a book, *The Red Record*, detailing the atrocities of lynching. In 1896, she was a founder of the National Association of Colored Women and of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). A supporter of woman suffrage, she founded the Alpha Suffrage Club for African-American women, the first suffrage club for Black women. She marched in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., but refused to march at the back of the parade as other black women did. She continued to be an outspoken advocate of black women's political activism. The Alpha Suffrage Club, of which Wells-Barnett was president, published a newsletter to educate the black community about issues and candidates on the ballot. The club was influential in electing black politician, Oscar DePriest, to the United States House of Representatives.

Source: *African American Women Leaders in the Suffrage Movement, The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association*, <https://suffragistmemorial.org/african-american-women-leaders-in-the-suffrage-movement/>

League of Women Voters – Jackson Area 2018-2019

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Membership: Elaine Talbott

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Appointed Directors

Social Media/PR: Joy Parikh

National Items: Vacancy

State Items: Annie Reiher

Nominating Committee

Elaine Talbott

Nicki Green

Barbara Powell

Calendar

Mar. 2 **Membership Meeting**
Willie Morris Library
4912 Old Canton Road
Jackson, MS 39211
Speaker: Jill Mastrototaro of
Audubon MS
Topic: One Lake Project

Mar. 12 **Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.***

Apr. 9 **Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.***

Apr. 13 **LWV-JA Annual Meeting**
Location TBA

June 8 **LWV-MS State Convention**
Mississippi Craft Center
950 Rice Rd.
Ridgeland, MS 39157
(Evening reception June 7)

* Unless otherwise noted, all board meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 121 Jefferson St., Jackson. All meetings are open to the public.

LWV-JA Seeks National Issues Director

The League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area board of directors has a vacancy for the appointed position, National Issues Director. This position monitors national issues of interest to the LWVJA and reports to the board at its monthly meeting. The position is a two-year post. If you are interested in this position or have suggestions for someone to fill this position, please contact LWVJA President Carol Andersen, carol.d.andersen@gmail.com

LWVJA Welcomes Your Suggestions for Future Program Topics

The League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area is interested in hearing our members' suggestions for future programs. If there are topics you would like to hear about or speakers you would like to hear from, please send your suggestions, with any contact details, to LWVJA President Carol Andersen, carol.d.andersen@gmail.com.

LWV-JA MEMBER PROFILE

HARRIETT TANZMAN



Harriet Tanzman was born in 1940 in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in a predominantly Jewish part of Far Rockaway in Queens. Tanzman remembers being upset at the prejudiced comments made by some of her neighbors and classmates because they ran counter to the very liberal Jewish set of values with which she had been raised. Tanzman chose to continue her studies at the University of Wisconsin, noted for its reputation for progressive faculty and students. As a member of the W.E.B. Du Bois Club, Tanzman also worked with the local Congress of Racial Equality(CORE)chapter.

Tanzman first considered going south after hearing some [Freedom Riders](#) speak in 1961. In the summer of 1963, she heard Gloria Richardson of the Cambridge, Maryland movement speak during a visit to California about how she endured death threats and physical repression in a violent fight to end school segregation. Tanzman recalls, "*She basically invited us. There is this work to be done and you could participate.*" In September of 1963, she started a graduate program in Social Work at Wisconsin, but after President John F. Kennedy's assassination in November of that year, she quit school and went to work in the Atlanta Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee office. She worked in Atlanta until January of 1964, and then went back to Wisconsin for a semester of graduate work in history. She remained connected to the civil rights movement through her involvement with CORE. However, after hearing Diane Nash speak on campus, she felt a strong pull to return to the South.

From late 1964 to June 1965, Harriet worked with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Alabama. She taught reading and other skills to folks in Selma, later working on a Southern Conference Educational Fund project in New Orleans. She has worked as a historian and chronicler of the Civil Rights Movement with a number of organizations and institutions, including Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, Inc.

Source:

<http://mscivilrightsveterans.com/board-of-directors.html>

Additional biographical material:

Jewish Women's Archive

<https://jwa.org/people/tanzman-harriet>

Civil Rights Digital Library

http://crdl.usg.edu/people/t/tanzman_harriet_shelia_1940/

I visited Harriett Tanzman this week in her home at the Brookdale Memory Care Center and we had the following conversation about her involvement with the League.

Savina Schoenhofer, Editor, The Voter

SS: I know you are an activist in civil rights and progressive politics – what interested you in the League of Women Voters, a non-partisan organization?

HT: The fact that we focus on the vote...protecting the right to vote; educating people about issues and candidates.

SS: Do you see the work of the League being related to your civil rights work?

HT: Yes, I do. Civil rights is about increasing the opportunity to vote...increasing opportunities for people to do many things, and voting is one of them – voting is primary...and so they dovetail. Voting is central to my decision to be a civil rights activist.

SS: What you tell young people about joining the League?

HT: Well, there was a time when there wasn't a right and we had to fight for it. And that time is past...but we still have a lot of fight left! We deserve the right to vote.

SS: What would you want to tell young people about activism?

HT: Get active! It's the only way you can preserve your own rights, and the rights of other people.

SS: What personal rights were you fighting for when you became an activist??

HT: The right to choose who candidates would be.

SS: Why is it important for you to continue to attend LWV-JA meetings?

HT: To get informed about the latest developments in voter rights, attempts to knock down voting rights of people, suppression of the right to vote.

SS: I know you've worked hard for a long time – what positive changes have you seen, of the things you've worked on?

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Member Profile - Harriett Tanzman (continued)

HT: New candidates coming up for office, that was important; extension of the right to vote.

SS: As you reflect on your life as an activist, what are you most proud of?

HT: Seeing young people take the gauntlet.

SS: What else do you think League members ought to know about you?

HT: I worked for the Freedom Democratic Party of Mississippi.

SS: Is that what brought you here?

HT: Yes, in the '60s.

SS: Did you know Fannie Lou Hamer?

HT: Yes.

SS: Could you share a special story or favorite time you remember with her?

HT: Singing with her at meetings...This Little Light of Mine [singing a few lines from a civil rights song. Listen here: https://youtu.be/fmcYVmK_5XQ]

HT: She was wonderful, very special, very inspiring. Her life was very inspiring. A strong woman.

SS: You are a strong woman too. What inspired your strength came from?

HT: From my mother.

SS: What did you learn from her?

HT: Perseverance. Integrity.

SS: Was she an activist in her own way?

HT: Not so much...but one-to-one, she was.

SS: Thank you very much! This is going to be so interesting to our readers. We are proud of you, of your work, and very inspired by you...and humbled too.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Elaine Talbott



This is generally the space where we discuss membership and growing the League in terms of numbers of members. There are two ways to “grow” an organization. One is to add more folks, the other - the one that is more worthwhile is growing the participation of current members. This month think about why you joined the League. What did you hope to gain? What did you hope to contribute? What activities do you enjoy? What would you like to do to become more involved? What would you like to see us do that we aren’t doing now? The leadership team welcomes your input.

Now more than ever with democracy under assault, good government organizations like the League of Women Voters are well positioned to step into the breach between ideology and sound public policy. That work requires all of our members to be engaged and involved. We are glad you are all here, especially new comers. Watch you email inbox for League news and special events in the coming weeks.

Elaine Talbott
Membership Director
LWV-JA

**Photos from LWV-MS Legislative Day
February 20, 2019
courtesy Joy Parikh**



ABOVE: Brent Alexander, lobbyist with Baker Donelson, giving League members a "Lobbying 101" presentation from his two decades of experience.

BELOW: Becky Glover from the new Meridian (members-at-large) League, encouraging local Leagues to host screenings and discussions of the film, "A Backpack Full of Cash."

<https://www.backpackfullofcash.com/>



Update: Initiative 66 on Gerrymandering

Alas Initiative 66, we barely knew thee.

Several months ago Jackson attorney Brad Pigott addressed the LWV-JA. His topic was gerrymandering, something that has been in the national news relating to North Carolina and multiple cases making their way through the courts. After the meeting he approached some of us on the state board about sponsoring an initiative to change the way redistricting is done in Mississippi. After some fits and starts and some help from the Secretary of State's office we realized that the League could not be the sponsor. It has to be a single registered voter. Long story short, that voter turned out to be me, Elaine Talbott.

Ballot initiatives require gathering of some 88,000 plus signatures evenly divided from the five separate judicial districts. That takes some full time staff and a sizable amount of funding to accomplish. Sadly that funding was not secured. Though I-66 is now published on the Secretary of State's web site it appears there it shall remain.

As it so happens a group of six individuals in the Delta sued the legislature over the boundaries of MS Senate District 22. This 102 mile long oddly shaped district landed on Judge Carlton Reeves' docket. On February 13th, 2019 Judge Reeves ordered the district be redrawn as in his opinion it is gerrymandered to disadvantage minority voters. That means that at least two and possibly three districts will have to be redrawn. Add to that the multiple gerrymandering cases being taken up by the Supreme Court in more than one state and it appears the courts may be our best hope to attack this problem. Stay tuned...

Elaine Talbot



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

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

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

