



County Board of Supervisors

Susan Roth presented a "Moment of Inspiration" to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and the Supervisors presented the LWVVC with a certificate commemorating Women's History Month. The text presented by Susan is below.



"Good morning, Chair LaVere, Vice Chair Long, and members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Susan King Roth, Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Ventura County.

Kathy Morgan, President of our League, is currently traveling and asked that I present in her absence.

The League of Women Voters is deeply honored to be here today to present a Moment of Inspiration. March is Women's History Month. During this month we recognize the efforts of all the remarkable women who have contributed to this country and around the world – often in defiance of the expectations of their time. Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of The League of Women Voters is one such woman.

Carrie grew up in rural Iowa and became interested in women's rights at an early age. She questioned why her mother did not go into town along with her father and his farm hands to vote, and recalled her father stating that voting was "too important a civic duty to be left to women." Her father also didn't want her to go to college, believing that a girl did not need that much education.

However, she did get a job and put herself through college, earning a Bachelor of Science degree – the only female in her graduating class. She later became principal of a high school and was promoted to Superintendent of Schools in Mason City, Iowa – one of the first women in the nation to be appointed to such a position.

After she married, she became co-editor and publisher of the Mason City newspaper along with her husband. Unfortunately, after less than two years her husband died, so she supported herself by writing freelance articles, editing newspapers, giving lectures and becoming a paid field organizer – first for the Temperance Society and then for the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association.

In 1890 she married again and had the economic means to devote time to suffrage work. After moving to NYC, she began working with Susan B. Anthony, who later chose her to succeed her as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. She was twice elected to the presidency and became involved in the international suffrage movement. She met with world leaders and was widely quoted in newspapers across the country. Soon her name became familiar in American households.

The struggle for women’s suffrage was a long and bitter fight requiring 72 years of effort. Women who had never had public lives were emboldened to speak out, march in the streets, and protest. Lessons learned about the women’s suffrage movement deeply influenced later American social justice and advocacy movements. Lobbying, public relations, and grassroots organizing techniques developed by the suffragists, including their use of nonviolent protest, became a model for later civil rights movements.

Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters on February 14, 1920, 6 months before ratification of the 19th Amendment. Her vision of the league was that it should be nonpartisan and non-sectarian, working towards securing the enfranchisement of women of every state, removing legal discrimination against women, and making democracy safe. In fact, the motto of the League today is “Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy” and it continues to be nonpartisan, working to educate all of the electorate about issues and candidates, and encouraging informed and active participation in government.



Since its inception, the League has helped millions of women and men become informed participants in government. In the 1930’s, League members worked successfully for enactment of the Social Security Act as well as the Food and Drug Act. After World War II, the League carried out a nationwide public support campaign, at the request of President Franklin Roosevelt, to establish the United Nations and to ensure US participation.

Following the campaign, President Harry Truman invited the League to serve as a consultant to the US delegation at the United Nations Charter Conference. One of

the first organizations officially recognized by the UN as a non-governmental organization, the League still maintains official observer status today.

Throughout history, League members led grassroots movements for universal voter registration, campaign integrity, the right of reproductive choice, civil rights, clean air and water, safe and affordable housing, and child care. Early in the history of the League it was committed to establishing child labor laws and equal pay for women. It fought against discrimination in education, employment, and housing in the 1960's. In the 1970's and '80s, it supported action to clean up the environment, stop the arms race, and promote equality of opportunity.

More recently, the League of Women Voters has worked to eliminate remaining obstacles to voter registration across the country. It supported and advocated for redistricting reform to eliminate partisan or racial gerrymandering, countering misinformation and disinformation, protecting voting rights, and educating voters with the intent of creating a stronger and more representative democracy.

The LWV of Ventura County provides Candidate Forums prior to elections so that voters can hear directly from candidates to better inform their choice when voting. It educates voters about ballot measures based on factual information and conducts Legislative Interviews on zoom with representatives from the State legislature who respond to questions and speak about their priorities while in office.

League members visit Ventura County high schools to explain the voting process and assist students with voter registration. It also awards scholarships to students enrolled at three local colleges.

Although the League of Women Voters has evolved over the last century, it still continues to support the core mission conceived in 1920. I would like to end with a quote from Carrie Chapman Catt: "Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchaseable voice in government."
