

LWVSC POST-CONVENTION REPORT 2017



Co-President JoAnne Day steps down after four years at the helm

The SC League had a very engaged and successful convention at The Inn at USC on April 29th and 30th with record attendance of about 75 people (coming and going!) Do we have a more precise number? The Convention was hosted by the Clemson LWV with lots of help from Columbia. The Inn was lovely, the food was good, the sessions were stimulating, and we all came away energized for another League year and proud of what we have been able to do as a collection of 12 Leagues working together on state and national issues.

We're growing! We welcomed our newest League, Beaufort, to the fold with 20 members and more to come. We honored Greenville for its incredible growth from 25 members to more than 80. Charleston was also recognized for outstanding membership growth at 148 members. Leagues around the state reported that the "official" numbers as of January 31st do not reflect the continued steady and sometimes spectacular growth in membership in most of our local Leagues. Kudos to all those membership chairs, including our retiring state cheerleader-in-chief, VP for Member Services Sue Yearwood.

Focus on Redistricting. Our keynote speaker, Pamela Goodman, President of the Florida League, gave an impassioned presentation of her League's successful court challenge to redistricting over seven years and many court appearances. Everyone present was eager to get started on redistricting in South Carolina, and the State Board is already taking steps to form a coalition and start working on the criteria as a key first step in preparation for the 2020 Census. This presentation dovetailed nicely with the decision to separate Electoral Democracy positions into its own umbrella position, which will have a Board member responsible for study and action on voter access and dark money as well as redistricting. This action also puts us in line with the national League focus on making democracy work. Look for lots of information and suggestions for local League program and advocacy on these issues in the next two years.

Affirming and revitalizing our mission. A particularly inspiring presentation was given by Wylecia Harris, Executive Director of LWVUS whose home base is right here in Columbia SC! The national League is

practicing grassroots democracy by engaging local Leagues in developing and reinforcing our mission of promoting informed citizen participation in government. State Board will be working closely with Wylecia and others as we move the League toward its second century of service in just three short years.

Communication technology. We are also trying to get fully up to speed as a 21st century organization with an excellent presentation by Shawna Howell of the Charleston League on using social media. Many members planned to bring these ideas aback to the local Leagues, and the State Board has added a position of VP for Communications to coordinate and update our channels of communication with members, legislators, and the public.

Democracy in Action. Two scheduled caucuses, one on electoral democracy and one on education, were lively, informative and noisy! We grappled with revising, retaining or adopting several controversial positions including whether to elect or appoint the superintendent of education and requiring a majority instead of having runoffs in primary elections and other single-seat multicandidate elections.



Florida League President Pamela Goodman shares her story of redistricting success



Retired Senator Wes Hayes, recipient of the Spirit of Democracy Award

Spirit of Democracy Award. The League gives a Spirit of Democracy Award when someone in public life goes the second mile to support positions that we have advocated for, especially in our areas of primary interest—education, environment and good government issues such as voter access, transparency, ethics reform, judicial reform, and home rule. This year Senator Wes Hayes received the Spirit of Democracy Award at a well-attended banquet and spoke of his many years of service and collaboration with the League on public issues. This award was given for his tireless work on public education, and the spirit of integrity, intelligence, and generosity of spirit that he brought to the Senate.

Tending to business. We were gathered together not only for education and advocacy and fellowship but also to conduct the biennial business of the League. We adopted a budget and affirmed our program and action priorities after a lively debate. We said a grateful farewell to retiring board members Jeanette Roveri (treasurer), Aggie Edwards (secretary) and Sue Yearwood (Vice President for Members Services). We elected new board members Joyce Franklin (Vice President for Member Services), Fran Holt (Treasurer), Dee Woodward (Vice President for Voter Services), and directors Sally Huguley, Jane Turner, and Pat Forbis. We moved some current board members from chair to chair. JoAnne Day is staying on the board but taking a well-deserved rest from being co-president, with that slot now filled by Holley Ulbrich. Jane Pulling is adding duties as Secretary to her work in education. We mourned the passing of long-time board member Sheila Gallagher and celebrated the long and productive service to the Board by our oldest member, Sarah Leverette, as she approaches the century mark just a few years behind LWVUS.

What next? A second report will be coming your way soon with a wrap-up of the legislative session from Lynn Teague. We are working on an updated state and local board directory and an updated Agenda for Action that will be available by late summer.

(Local presidents, the timing of the directory depends on how soon you can get your new boards to us!). We are appointing a few additional directors to the new board and making portfolio assignments. State Board will be gathering for a retreat at Table Rock State Park in late July to plan the year's work and establish a calendar for the upcoming 12 months. We are excited to be the lead partner in an emerging coalition to work on redistricting in South Carolina, and urge all local Leagues to plan on having a redistricting informational meeting in the fall. 2017-18 looks to be an exciting and productive year for the League at every level!

The League mourns the death of long time state treasurer Dianne Haselton, who died May 29th after a long battle with cancer. She was active in many community organizations in the Clemson-Pendleton Area as well, and was a 47 year member of the Clemson League.

Congratulations to incoming state board VP for Communications Linda Power Bilanchone, who received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award from Wofford College for her long and varied service to the community and the state.

