

THE VOTER

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

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

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

MARCH 2020

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Carol Anderson



Much has changed for how we go about our daily lives since our last *Voter* newsletter. While we adapt and learn to navigate our new reality under a COVID-19 state of emergency, the board of the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area will work as hard as we can to keep you informed of developments in our democratic processes: how and where to register to vote; how and when absentee voting may be necessary; developments with the Mississippi Legislature; and any other news relevant to voting and participating in the democratic life of our cities, our counties and our state.

The national staff of the League of Women Voters has developed a useful resource for understanding our options for voting and participating in elections during this period of intense social distancing: [Voting in a Time of Coronavirus](#). I encourage you to read and bookmark this resource to return to as needed.

In response to the Mississippi State Department of Health's advice, we have canceled all upcoming League activities and public programs, but we will continue to communicate regularly with you, through this Newsletter, our [website](#) and via our social media ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)). Uncertainty can quickly turn into confusion, so we will strive to maintain consistent, informative contact with you. If at any time you wish to reach out to us directly, please email us at lwvjacksonarea@gmail.com. We will do our utmost to stay responsive.

For now, stay healthy and stay connected with us via our online platforms.

REPORT OF THE LWVJA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Dierdre Payne (chair), Barbara Powell, and Joy Parikh

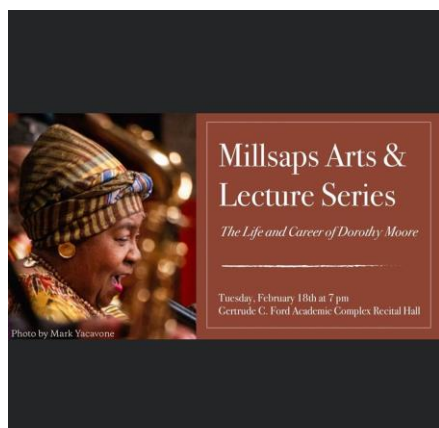
According to the LWVJA by-laws *the president, the secretary, and the Voter Service vice-president shall be elected in even-numbered years. No officer shall be elected in one capacity for more than two (2) consecutive terms. We should elect two (2) directors each year, with a maximum of four (4) elected directors on the board at one time.*

This requires an election at our May 2nd Annual Meeting. The following members have accepted nomination for these offices:

President – Kay Brodbeck
VP–Voter Services – Willie Jones
Secretary – Megan Tidwell
Social Media and Public Relations Director - Joy Parikh
National Issues Director - Emily Stanfield
Nominating Committee – Margaret Barnes, Dierdre Payne, Martha Phillips

Officers continuing on the board (elected for a two-year term in 2019):

Administrative Vice-President -- Deloris Lee
Treasurer -- LaKeeta Jones
Membership Director — Elaine Talbott
The Voter Editor — Savina Schoenhofer



LWV-JA member Dorothy Moore was featured in a recent Millsaps College Arts & Lecture Series. The well-attended event included an interview with Dorothy conducted by Peggy Brown, performance by Dorothy and her band, and a display of some of the honors she has received over the years, including her Gold Record of *Misty Blue*.

LWV-JA MEMBER PROFILE

MARGARETT BARNES



LWV: Tell me a bit about yourself (full name, where you live now, where you are from, family)?

I currently reside in Byram, Ms. Born and reared in Waynesboro, Ms. Married to Robert I. Barnes, we have four children and five grandchildren.

LWV: How long have you lived in the Jackson area and what have been your activities since living here (jobs, other organization memberships, etc.)?

In 1993, after accepting a position with the Mississippi Supreme Court as Deputy Director of the newly created Administrative Office of Courts, I moved from the Gulf Coast to Ridgeland, Ms. I was hired by the Mississippi Department of Education to oversee publication of the first Mississippi School District Report Card. Retired from the State in 2007 and immediately called to Active Duty with the Army until retirement in 2014.

Appointed as an Army Reserve Ambassador for the State of Mississippi, volunteer with the Mississippi Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Life Member of the University of Southern Mississippi Alumni Association, member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., life member of the Reserve Officers Association, life member with the Military Order of World Wars. Volunteers as co-chair of the DOD sponsored Well Prepared pilot initiative. Volunteers in JPS with the Arise2Read program, and NMHS Unlimited Film Productions.

LWV: When did you join the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area, and what drew you to the organization?

I joined the LWVJA in 2019 because I wanted to receive information and be educated in a nonpartisan environment on the issues of voter registration, education legislation, redistricting and gun safety. I also wanted to get involved in voter registration campaigns and protection of voter rights movements.

LWV: Describe your involvement in the League over the years (offices held, committee work, etc.).

Currently, no office held, however, I am willing to work on any committee, where I am needed within the League.

LWV: What are current political issues that particularly pique your interest?

Voting, redistricting, gun laws, and public education.

(con't on P. 4)

LWV: What do you see as the strengths of the League of Women Voters? What keeps the League relevant?

Diversity in membership, education component, partnerships established with other organizations, being nonpartisan.



LWV: Anything else you would like for us to know about you?

In 2011, I was the first African American Female to be promoted to Brigadier General in the US Army from the state of Mississippi. I retired in 2014 with 30 years of service to the Army Reserve. I served as Commander of a company size Army Reserve unit during Desert Storm and I commanded a deployed Battalion during Iraqi Freedom. I received the Bronze Star during Iraqi Freedom. I have a Private Pilot License (single engine land). I graduated from the University of Southern Miss with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science, received a Master's in Public Administration from the University of South Alabama, and a Master's in Strategic Military Studies from the US Army War College.

LWV: Thank you for your service, General Barnes, and thank you as well for sharing something of your life and interests.

MS LEGISLATURE

Dierdre Payne



The Mississippi Legislature has suspended its session until 2 PM April 1 at the suggestion of the state health director because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senate met March 18th to finalize the suspension; the House had done so the previous day. Before adjournment, the legislators passed a bill giving local governments and school districts the authority to continue the salaries of hourly workers placed on administrative leave during this crisis. Gov. Tate Reeves signed an executive order earlier that allowed state agencies, boards, commissions and other state entities to offer their employees administrative leave with pay.

One bill has been signed by the governor. HB1 provides additional funding for teachers' salaries. Several resolutions were adopted, but the majority of bills are still in committee and will be taken up when the session resumes.

Once the legislators are called back to session, you can follow the action at <http://www.legislature.ms.gov/>

PEOPLE-POWERED FAIR MAPS™

Ray Mikell



Redistricting: It is something that state legislators do every decade, not to mention the main purpose of the census. But most voters scarcely pay the process any mind. If you are worried about the survival of American democracy, however, or just want a fairer process for all the country's people, you should be concerned with how lawmakers create federal, state, and local election districts.

Understanding this, the League of Women Voters has undertaken a new redistricting program, People Powered Fair Maps™, in the hopes of shifting policy and conversation about the process at the national level and in all 50 states, including Mississippi, and communities within those states.

In some states, League chapters are pushing for state ballot initiatives and referenda, or for constitutional changes, that would ensure a fair reapportionment process, with less partisan gerrymandering of districts.

In Mississippi, by contrast, the League will focus its efforts in two areas: First, in ensuring the continued enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, created to end the practice of racial discrimination in voting. It did so by outlawing voter suppression efforts such as literacy and constitutional tests. Federal courts have, meanwhile, come to see the dilution of racial minority voter strength in reapportionment as something the act prohibits. Amendment to the law reinforced this idea. A Supreme Court ruling from 2013, *Shelby County v. Holder*, made stopping such dilution harder, but state election plans can still be challenged under the law.

Otherwise, the League sees civic engagement and education regarding redistricting as the foundation of its program. To draw districts fairly, the League believes, the people impacted by reapportionment need to be involved. Then, citizens and state and community leaders must be educated about redistricting issues and know how to work with one another on solving them.

The People Powered Fair Maps™ program promises to be a long-term effort in Mississippi and elsewhere. Expect to hear more about it from local League leaders and civic events near you soon. Look for future action calls, and note that the League could use you for volunteer efforts.

<https://www.lwv.org/peoplepoweredfairmaps>

<https://my.lwv.org/mississippi/article/mississippi-league-women-voters-joins-others-calling-fair-maps>

RAY MIKELL is Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science at Jackson State University where he teaches American politics, government and U.S. judicial politics. His interests are American politics and policy, with a focus on urban and local affairs.

League of Women Voters – Jackson Area
Making Democracy Work



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION...



Sites like The Bitter Southerner and The Academy Stories remind us of the work still to be accomplished in relation to the LWV commitment to “create a more perfect democracy” (<https://www.lwv.org/about-us/history>). Read about an upcoming documentary, “Fannie Lou Hamer’s America”, A film that will bring the power of her voice for justice and equity to new generations” [here](#). [The Academy Stories](#) “is a space for public reflection on the persisting impact of the South’s academies on its past and present” - reflection that is necessary though painful if we are to gain ground toward that more perfect democracy we envision.

League of Women Voters – Jackson Area 2018-2019

Officers and Board of Directors

President

Carol Andersen

1st Vice-President

Program/Administration

Deloris Lee

2nd Vice-President

Voter Services

Willie Jones

Secretary

Megan Tidwell

Treasurer

Laketta Jones

Elected Directors

Membership: Elaine Talbott

Voter Editor: Savina Schoenhofer

Appointed Directors

Social Media/PR: Joy Parikh

National Items: Emily Stanfield

State Items: Annie Reiher

Nominating Committee

Dierdre Payne, Chair.

Barbara Powell

Joy Parikh

Calendar

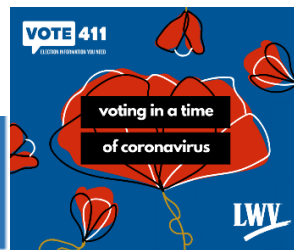
NOTE: All LWV-JA and LWV-MS EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED OR PLACED ON HOLD UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. WHEN MEETINGS AND EVENTS RESUME, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED BY EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE.

- March 25 LWVMS anniversary event at the Capitol (canceled)
- March 26 Marjorie Spruill lecture at Millsaps College (canceled)
- March 31 Backpack Full of Cash screening and discussion (postponed, but no new date set yet)

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

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

June 8
Suspended **LWV-MS State Convention**
Mississippi Craft Center



The National office of the League of Women Voters is providing State and Local Leagues with useful information and support as we consider ways to engage our mission effectively during the national emergency. Here are two important messages excerpted from a recent communication from National League.

“This is a critical time in a busy election year and primary voters are casting ballots every week. This virus could have a major impact on our ability to reach voters, and, when possible, we want to encourage people to take advantage of early and absentee voting options. We’ll be keeping VOTE411 up-to-date with any election changes related to the virus that may impact election administration.”

“We will continue to update the [Coronavirus Prevention Guidance](#) for Leagues with additional information and talking points about voting during this outbreak.

Wondering how you can continue contributing to the mission of LWV? [Check this out!](#)

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Elaine Talbott



We have three new members who have joined since our last The Voter was published. Please welcome Janet Shanks, Jo Lynn Bridges and Sarah Boone to the League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area.

Shortly, I will send out email reminders to those of you whose joining anniversary date falls in the first quarter to pay your 2020 dues in case you haven’t already done so. You can mail your check for \$50 for a single membership, \$75 for a household of two, or \$5 for a student membership to: LWV-JA; PO Box 68214; Jackson, MS 39286-8214. You can also pay online with a credit or debit card or your PayPal account. <https://my.lwv.org/mississippi/join-online>. The page is a bit confusing so I will walk you through the process. When you click on the link it will take you to the membership page. Scroll down to fill in the membership application. If you are already a member simply type “On File” in all the spaces that remain the same. If you have new information, please update for us. Next verify that you are not a robot and click submit.

On the next page click the bubble next to League of Women Voters of the Jackson Area. In the drop down box select individual, household or student. Click the buy button. On the payment page you can specify PayPal or click the grey button under it to enter your credit/debit card information.

Until next time, stay safe and be well.

LWV-JA Resource for JSU International Studies Program

Maxine Phillips Blackman, Secretary, LWVMS

On Wednesday, March 11th, I met with eight visitors from the U S Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program to talk about League in Mississippi. Every year, participants journey to Jackson State University and other sites around the country to learn about democracy in action. In the past, Dierdre Payne has generously represented LWVJA in the program. This year's delegates, accompanied by their State Department Liaison, came from Armenia, Ethiopia, India, Israel, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tunisia.

Professional objectives as outlined by the Department of State included: examining leadership strategies and communication skills used to manage political and social challenges while balancing divergent social demands and interests; exploring advocacy strategies that facilitate social empowerment and justice; (and three more).

I reviewed with them the history of the vote in America, of the League in Mississippi, and responded to questions about the economy, education and advocacy. Resources provided to the delegates included links to the LWV website, a listing of LWVMS legislative priorities, People Powered Fair Maps cards, and a copy of The Voter.

To the question, "Wherelies your hope?", my answer was, "in voting/education, engagement, protection of the vote, exercising one's right and responsibility to vote."

