



## **LWVCC History Update: 2016-2023**

Since the earliest efforts to form a Calvert LWV chapter in 1967 and its formal recognition by the US League in 1969, the LWVCC continues to draw a group of curious and committed members from across the county. Our numbers may fluctuate up or down over time, but our determination to serve the residents of the county through regular voter registration and citizen education events has remained constant.

In many ways, early issues, e.g., on education, housing, and the Women of the World annual awards luncheon, continue to be important to this day. The Board of Education observer team begun in 2014 is ongoing, as is our Civics Education for Youth committee. Concerns about affordable housing are highlighted in our current Prince Frederick Master Town Plan update study, while our support of the WOW event is an annual commitment as a participating organization.

The League of Women Voters has always sought to keep up with societal changes related to voting and the social currents that impact how effectively our democracy functions. Since 2020, the murder of George Floyd and others, the disregard for facts in favor of self-serving falsehoods by some political entities, and aggressive attempts on the parts of some to silence citizens by reducing voter access to the polls have brought a new urgency to the work of the League.

The following represents a summary of the major initiatives of LWVCC in alphabetical order for the 2016-2023 period:

### **Bylaws Changes**

#### ***May 2020***

1. "LWV" to replace use of generic term "League." Per LWVUS, this is the preferred form.
2. Effective dates for officers and elected/appointed Board member terms are clarified.

3. The number of members to reach a Quorum is increased from current 10% to recommended 20% of total membership at Annual and General membership meetings.
4. Updates include use of email voting and conference calls, other electronic media, in certain circumstances.
5. Proportional dues structure for new members joining after July 1 is permitted.
6. LWVUS issues and Supporting Principles wording is clarified.
7. Specific leadership duties for 1st and 2nd Vice President positions are assigned.
8. Definition of Associate Member is clarified.
9. The requirement for two general membership meetings per year is clarified, with one meeting being the Annual Meeting.

### ***May 2021***

#### ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of Calvert County. This local League is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of Maryland, hereinafter referred to in these Bylaws as LWVCC, LWVUS, LWVMD, or the LWV.

#### ARTICLE II

Sec. 2. Policies. The policies of LWVCC are:

3. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy. The LWVCC is fully committed to ensure compliance - in principle and in practice - with LWVUS' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.

### ***May 2022***

Article III, Membership, Section 2,

Types of Membership, A. Voting Members, add section "d" Students: Those who are students are defined as individuals enrolled as full or part time with an accredited institution.

Article V, Officers, Section 7, Terms of Office.

Board officers shall serve no more than two consecutive 2-year terms with the exception of the Treasurer for whom there shall be no limit on terms.

There shall also be no limit on the number of terms for other Directors, elected or appointed. The President shall be elected in even-numbered years, and the Vice President in odd-numbered years.

### **Civics Education for Youth**

This committee led by Pat Pease has been involved many activities related to education and youth. In 2016, four high schools joined together to initiate an Advocacy Day partnership in which students took an issue of interest to study and then speak with Legislative officials on a day trip to Annapolis. In 2020, Advocacy Day was cancelled due to the pandemic lockdown, though the group has hoped to expand the program to include local as well as State advocacy experiences.

Closing the Gap which to address inequities in student achievement and the Citizens Advisory Committee comprised of parents and others interested in Calvert's education system are additional groups that LWVCC has followed.

### **Environment and Climate**

Following a two-year study headed up by Dawn Balinski, the committee's report made a recommendation to the County regarding the "greening of Calvert County" that resulted in the formation of the Calvert County Citizen Green Team. Their primary activity became the annual Calvert County Green expo in 2018 that is now called the *Green Life Festival*. This popular event showcases over 100 vendors who offer green products, services, and programs, and affords the League an opportunity to register voters with an interest in conservation.

In 2020, the League conducted a follow-on study of the previous rising sea level forum entitled "Effects of Climate Change on Calvert County," The report was distributed across a broad segment of government officials, non-profits, environmental groups, and other interested citizens. While drawing on established scientific studies and findings, the report also sought to gather input from local Calvert residents who were particularly affected by changes in climate: watermen, farmers, healthcare workers, and disenfranchised populations such as minority citizens and homeless people. The LWVCC did not take any action on this study as it was designed to be an information educational piece for citizens.

### **Membership**

Like every other organization, the League suffered significant impacts from the covid pandemic of 2020-2023. A number of in-person events were shifted to on-line and virtual venues that provided convenience for attendance from any location (requiring cooperating technology), but probably reduced the kind of camaraderie often associated with face-to-face gatherings.

Nevertheless, the Board continued to hold regular monthly meetings online and many activities continued unabated. In the past two terms, a decision was made to

assign the Membership “portfolio” to a League Vice President, signaling the importance of recruiting and retaining members as the lifeblood of the League. Membership interest meetings have attracted potential members, and several ideas for educating new members about the League while quickly engaging them in meaningful ways are being pursued.

Among the pandemic casualties were the popular “Wine & Wishes” and “Eggs & Issues” discussion meetings started in 2016, where members and friends would gather to discuss topics of interest to the Calvert community. Going forward, the plan is to resurrect these meetings as a way to stimulate interest in issues and increase membership.

### **Observer Teams**

Since 2009 when concerns about a lack of transparency on the part of local government were identified (later expounded in a 2014 LWVCC study entitled “Transparency in Governance in Calvert County,” a League observer team has monitored the activities of the *Board of County Commissioners* (BOCC).

John Perryman and Sharron Bickel were highly instrumental in bringing this about, and in recruiting volunteers to take turns attending the meetings in-person or, later, virtually. Their goals were three-fold: to follow emerging issues, to note the level of transparency of governmental groups, and to evaluate whether the entities observed were providing honest information.

Eventually, another Observer team led by Pat Pease was formed to follow *Board of Education* issues such as disciplinary action in instances of uncivil behavior and other developments such as parental involvement in the schools. In 2016, four high schools joined to initiate an Advocacy Day partnership in which students took an issue of interest to study and then speak with Legislative officials on a day trip to Annapolis. In 2020, it was cancelled due to the pandemic lockdown, though the group has hoped to expand the program to include local as well as State advocacy experiences.

A third observer team led by JC Hooker has followed the County *Planning Commission*, focusing on text amendments added to approved budgets, update of the County Transportation Plan, and, in 2018, the draft for the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan.

All three Observer teams continue to watch their respective governmental agencies on a regular basis, and all three meet on the first Monday of the month to cover the issues in lively discussions.

### **Publicity/Communications**

In 2018, Liz Demulling crafted templates for LWVCC communications that followed LWV policy on who and how to speak for the League. Such policy has since guided our letters to the editor, press releases, and other important communications to assure that the message is one approved by the League.

The emergence of social media including FaceBook and Instagram is another venue where our volunteers are able to get our message out to citizens, alongside our website managed ably by webmaster Janet Bellizzi.

In 2018-2019, the LWVCC determined that a change in software infrastructure would better serve our chapter. Miriam Gholl and Pat Hofmann researched options and enabled us to utilize the Wix software rather than the existing LWVMD's NationBuilder program. Several years later, that decision was reversed in order to take advantage of features automatically offered by LWVMD to subscribing chapters. Janet Bellizzi did yeoman's duty in learning and then implementing the transition process while also training LWVCC officers regarding how to use it in their specific roles.

### **Social Justice**

In 2020 following the murder of George Floyd and the emergence of nation-wide protests, the Maryland Legislature passed the Police Accountability Act, revising standard procedures and, most significantly, eliminating the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights. Instead, each county was required to create a Police Accountability Board (PAB) as well as an Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) and a Trial Board to address complaints of police misconduct.

That year, LWVCC organized a public forum to examine issues around police accountability from a variety of perspectives, and formed a Task Force to engage with the County Commissioners around the creation of the required committees through testimony, reviews of draft proposals, and recommendations regarding the selection process to the BOCC.

Once the PAB and ACC members were selected, the Task Force morphed into the LWVCC Social Justice Committee chaired by Mary Ann Zaversnik in 2022.

Committee members continued to observe PAB meetings and make recommendations, but also widened their mission to include other human needs.

The result was a study of employment, under-employment, and unemployment in the County, particularly affecting your adults and families. The Committee obtained data on employment issues in the county, interviewed a variety of personnel who work with those seeking employment, and created a survey to learn what people needing employment or a living wage had to say about their circumstances. A guide incorporating diverse resources has been planned for distribution to help people navigate their way through a sometimes confusing process.

### **Studies**

Since its creation in 1957, the League Education Fund has served as a citizen education and research organization providing a process for thorough and balanced examination of important issues. The Fund's archived studies are available to some 800 national, state, and local Leagues in addition to the public.

From the LWV Education Fund Clearinghouse for studies web page (<https://sites.google.com/a/leagueofwomenvoters.org/clearinghouse/home>):

“Year in and year out, the men and women of the League are committed to providing fact-based information and open discussion forums to help voters make their own decisions...Our goals have always been to widen democratic participation; insist on both governmental and campaign funding transparency; and encourage full researched, fact-based decision-making in both foreign and domestic policies.”

“The League of Women Voters takes action on an issue only when we have a position addressing it. If the members have not studied and come to consensus on it, the League has no position and therefore cannot take action. Studies (whether national, state, or local) are a defined process lasting one to three years, during which we undertake through pursuit of facts and details, both positive and negative, and come to consensus about policy.”

Recent Calvert County Studies are posted on the [lwvcalvert.org](http://lwvcalvert.org) website under “Issues.”

### **Voter Services**

One of the most active of LWVCC committees, and an important “portfolio” for a Board VP, is the Voter Services team. Under the leadership of Gladys White, Voter Services has maintained an energetic and ambitious schedule every year, especially during election years. From numerous registration events at high schools, the

College of Southern Maryland, food pantries, and community events (National Night Out, Community Day at Jefferson Patterson Park, and National Voter Registration Day), to online Vote411.org and print-based Voter Guides managed by Janet Ashby, the committee continues as a reliable source of updated information for Calvert residents.

A 2019 initiative named the “Voters Bill of Rights” saw fruition after consultation with the Calvert Board of Elections. Distributed to the public, especially newly registered voters, the Bill of Rights has been well received and is regularly updated in accordance with changes in legislation regarding voting policies and practices.

### **Changing of the Guard**

Over the past several years, LWVCC has seen the loss of some of its longest-term and most active officers: Annette Funn in 2016, Gracie Rymer in 2018, Barbara Fetterhoff in 2020, Marie Andrews in 2021, and Malcolm Funn in 2022, passed away. Michael Moore, a more recent LWVCC member and well-known Calvert volunteer, also passed away in 2020.

In addition, several key LWVCC officers have moved away to begin new chapters in their lives: John Perryman moved to VA while Roberta Safer and husband Klaus Wilsky moved to CA. Krista Pfunder Boughey moved out-of county. Just two years ago, Maureen Hoffman moved to PA, though technology enabled her to continue on our Board until this past May as our expert in parliamentary rules and bylaws know-how, among other things.

We are now reaching out to younger Calvert residents, as we seek to build a strong base of membership who will continue the respected and informative programs created by our earlier members while updating and changing to meet the needs of the present and future.

## PRESIDENTS OF LWV OF CALVERT COUNTY

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Pat McClain                             | 1967-1969 |
| Dorothy Plummer                         | 1969-1971 |
| Barbara Hinshaw                         | 1971-1973 |
| Pat McClain                             | 1973-1974 |
| Whitall Clevenger                       | 1974-1975 |
| Pat Bash                                | 1975-1977 |
| Ruth Wienczek                           | 1977-1979 |
| Lottie Goettel                          | 1979-1981 |
| Eleanor Prince                          | 1981-1983 |
| Margaret Moran                          | 1983-1985 |
| June King                               | -1987     |
| Kitch Eisenman                          | 1987-1989 |
| Elaine Cochran Dunkle                   | 1989-1991 |
| Gracie Rymer                            | 1991-1993 |
| Mary Kidd                               | 1993-1995 |
| Barbara Fetterhoff                      | 1995-1997 |
| Marie Andrews                           | 1997-1999 |
| Marlyn Kefauver                         | 1999-2000 |
| Marie Andrews & Barbara Fetterhof       | 2001-2003 |
| Barbara Fetterhoff & Annette Funn       | 2003-2005 |
| Annette Funn & Kathleen Riley           | 2005-2007 |
| Kathleen Riley                          | 2007-2009 |
| Anne Mychalus                           | 2009-2010 |
| Kathleen Riley                          | 2010-2011 |
| Norma Imershein & Anne Mychalus         | 2011-2013 |
| Debbie Harris & Roberta Safer           | 2013-2014 |
| Annette Funn & John Perryman            | 2014-2016 |
| John Perryman                           | 2016-2018 |
| Krista Pfunder Boughey & Sharron Bickel | 2018-2019 |
| Judy "JC" Hooker                        | 2019-2023 |
| Sandra Raviv & Gladys White             | 2023-2025 |



## **PRESIDENTS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND**

Mrs. Charles Ellis Ellicott 1922-39  
Virginia Williamson 1939-41  
Alice Hostetler 1941-43  
Irene Sandifer 1943-45  
Gladys Barber 1945-47  
Betty Downs 1947-49  
Ruth Hirschmann 1949-53  
Gratia Woods 1953-55  
Caroline Wood 1955-59  
Marion Satterthwaite 1959-63  
Helen Koss 1963-67  
Ilse Darling 1967-69  
Gloria Cole 1969-73  
Bert Booth 1973-74  
Dale Balfour 1974-77  
Lois Stoner 1977-81  
Marjorie Johnson 1981-83  
Kathleen Ellett 1983-85

Betsey Cullen 1985-86  
Millie Tyssowski 1986-87  
Priscilla Hart 1987-91  
Patty Pollard 1991-95  
Joan Paik 1995-99  
Joan Trafton 1999-01  
Judy Morenoff 2001-05  
Lu Pierson 2005-09  
Nancy Soreng 2009-13  
Susan Cochran 2013-14  
Barbara Schnackenberg &  
Nancy Soreng 2014-17  
Elaine Apter & Richard  
Willson 2019-21  
Deborah Mitchell & Nancy  
Soreng 2021  
Nancy Soreng 2022-2023  
Linda Kohn 2023-2025

## **PRESIDENTS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE U.S.**

Maud Ward Park 1920-24  
Belle Sherwin 1924-34  
Marguerite Wells 1934-44  
Anne Lord Strauss 1944-50  
Percy Maxim Lee 1950-58  
Ruth Phillips 1958-64  
Julia Stewart 1964-68  
Lucy Wilson Benson 1968-74  
Ruth Clusen 1974-78  
Dorothy Ridings 1982-86  
Nancy Neuman 1986-90

Susan Lederman 1990-92  
Becky Cain 1992-98  
Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins  
1998-02  
Kay Maxwell 2002-06  
Mary Wilson 2006-10  
Elisabeth McNamara 2010-  
2016  
Chris Carson 2016-20  
Deborah Ann Turner 2020-