

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE HOUSTON AREA

99TH ANNUAL MEETING

Report to the Membership
AND WORKBOOK

2019



AMERICAN REPAST | John Ross Palmer

The League of Women Voters of Houston, a nonpartisan organization, encourages informed and active civic participation in government and increased understanding of major public policy issues. We never endorse or oppose any political candidate or political party.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE HOUSTON AREA



**99th Annual Meeting
League of Women Voters of Houston**

**Monday: June 3, 2019
5:30 pm**

**Keynote Presentation
Douglas Ray
Special Assistant to the Harris County Attorney
*Voter Registration in Texas***

Annual Meeting follows immediately.

Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet Street
Houston Texas 77074

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The presence of 18 members will constitute a quorum, enabling us to conduct business at this Annual Meeting.

Order of Business

Call to Order

Linda Cohn

Organization

Linda Cohn

Appointment of Parliamentarian

Appointment of Timekeeper

Appointment of Committee to Approve Minutes

Adoption of Order of Business

Adoption of Rules

About our Organization

Linda Cohn

The Year in Review; The Years to Come

Treasurer's Report

Zak Miller

Local Issues: A Program for Study and Action

Phillip Yates

Adoption of Program, 2019-2020

Report of the Budget Committee

Katie Campbell

Adoption of the Budget, 2019-2020

Awards and Appreciations

Jeff Reichman

Report of the Awards Committee

President's Remarks

Linda Cohn

Report of the Nominating Committee

Sharon Cunningham

Election of Officers and Directors

Call for Recommendations to the Board

MaryJane Mudd

Announcements

MaryJane Mudd

Adjourn

MaryJane Mudd

Minutes of the 98th Annual Meeting

May 15, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:28 pm by President, Linda Cohn. A quorum of more than 24 members of the League was present.

Albert Benifeld was appointed Parliamentarian

Liza Alonzo was appointed Timekeeper

Isabel Longoria and Michelle Shabani were appointed as the committee to approve the minutes.

The Order of Business, as printed in the meeting workbook, was adopted by acclamation

The rules, as printed in the meeting workbook, were adopted by acclamation

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Leslie Taylor, was out of town. Zak Miller delivered the Treasurer's report. He noted an overage due to the expanded printing requirements of the *Voters Guide*.

Local Issues: Study and Action

The VP of Study and Advocacy, Jeff Reichman, was unable to attend the meeting. President, Linda Cohn delivered the report, as written in the workbook, and added that studies are completely independent from outside influence and time must be taken to perfect it. The program of work was adopted by acclamation.

Bylaws Committee Report

Bylaws Committee Chair Nancy Parra presented the Bylaws Committee Report. Nancy noted that one recommended change was to have the officers take office at the beginning of the next fiscal year, as opposed to immediately, as this is what was occurring in practice. Nancy Parra moved that the bylaws committee report be adopted. Recommendations were adopted by acclamation.

Budget Committee Report

Budget Committee Chair Sharon Cunningham noted that the membership adopts the LWV-HA budget, but the trustees will adopt the Education Fund budget at their first meeting. Cunningham noted that the \$3,936 deficit is partly owed to the LWV HA split of dues with LWV ed fund being removed this year, as Ed fund needed to cover the expense of the voters guide printing. Cunningham noted that our bookkeeper finds the LWV HA to be financially sound. The organization has funds to cover 3.5 years of operating costs (nonprofits are recommended to have at least 6 months of operating costs).

Awards and Appreciations

Judy Hollinger presented the report of the Awards Committee.

Five members who passed away were recognized: Henry Horne, Yvette Calloway, Patsy Cunningham, Hooker Wood, and Jeannie Kamrath Gonzalez

Two fifty year members were recognized – Laura Blackburn and Mary Dix.

Distinguished Achievement Awards – For Repast: Aimee Bertrand, Mary Benton and Lindsay Munoz; for Rising Stars program: Liza Alonzo, Isabel Longoria and Zak Miller

Sam Keeper Award for Excellence in Voter Services – Jackie Alfred (accepted by Jennie Tran on her behalf)

Helen Hunter Award – Ann Herbage

President's Remarks

President, Linda Cohn, addressed the attendees. She thanked outgoing board members for their service and continued support of the League. She touted the League's successes for the year and invited Aimee Woodall up to speak briefly about the communications plan for the coming year. Woodall conveyed that the League has a strong story and it needs to be told. Cohn noted that use of the association management firm, Manifest Creative, is amplifying League volunteers' efforts and service to the community.

Nominations Committee Report

Laura Blackburn presented the following slate for approval by attendees:

Treasurer (2018-2020) – Zak Miller

Vice President for Marketing (2018-2019, completing an unexpired term) – Aimee Woodall

Vice President for Membership (2018-2020) – Marisol Valero

Vice President for Civic Engagement (2018-2019, completing an unexpired term) – Reda Hicks

Vice President for Study and Advocacy (2018-2020) – Phillip Yates

Director at Large (2018-2019, completing an unexpired term) – Isabel Longoria

Director at Large (2018-2019, completing an unexpired term) – Judy Hollinger

Director at Large (2018-2020) – Jeff Reichman

Director at Large (2018-2020) – MaryJane Mudd

Director at Large (2018-2020) – Liza Alonzo

Director at Large (2018-2020) – Marissa Marquez

Nominating Committee Chair (2018-2019) – Sharon Cunningham

Nominating Committee Member (2018-2019) – Nancy Sims

Nominating Committee Member (2018-2019) – Franny Oxford

The slate was approved by acclamation.

Recommendations from floor:

- More issue related forums
- More advocacy opportunities
- More youth engagement
- Better utilization of voter registrars (to visit high schools to register students)
- Happy comments were given to the opportunities to participate in the voters guide outreach to candidates and the election day phone bank.
- County Clerk Stanart was recognized as attending the event.
- Tom Berg noted the citizenship ceremony to be held the following day would feature board member Marisol Valero's taking the oath of citizenship

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm

-Reported by Aimee Bertrand, Secretary

-Reviewed and Approved by Isabel Longoria and Michelle Shabani-Ritchel

Proposed Rules for the Annual Meeting

Composition

Admission to the Annual Meeting is open to voting members, associate members and guests. Only members may have the privilege of the floor and vote.

Quorum

Eighteen members must be present to conduct business at this meeting. This number represents the required eight percent of active members as of January 31, 2019.

Debate

Only voting members have the privilege of the floor. No person may speak twice until all who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so. Each speaker shall identify herself or himself. Each debate speaker shall be limited to one minute, plus the time required to complete a sentence.

Closing Debate

A motion to halt debate is stated as "I move the previous question." This motion, which must be seconded, is not debatable and must be put to an immediate vote. A two-thirds vote is necessary to adopt this motion. If adopted, debate is immediately ended, and the motion under debate is voted upon.

Voting Procedures

A majority of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election of officers. Nominations for officers may be made from the floor by any voting member at the appropriate time, provided the consent of the nominee has been secured.

Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting, provided the amendments have been submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance.

Annual dues

Annual dues are determined by a three-fifths vote of those present and voting.

Budget

Adoption of the budget requires a majority vote.

Governing Rules

The Rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised" shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Bylaws.

Report of the President

Linda Cohn

Welcome to the 99th Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Houston.

We gather today to celebrate another year of outstanding service, to affirm our civic mission and to talk about our plans for the years to come.

We are well on our way to a new organizational profile, operating as an entity to be known as the League of Women Voters of Houston. Our predecessor organizations, the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area and the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund are destined to become dormant. This refinement is in keeping with present regulations governing non-profits and with trends among local and state Leagues, offering the advantage of streamlined, efficient management and a public presence that more accurately reflects the scope of our work. In anticipation of this new day, our annual meeting will feature determinations on budget and other matters spanning the whole of our organization.

We continue to employ Manifest Creative as a provider of professional administrative services, allowing League leaders to work efficiently and effectively toward our civic engagement goals.

The Board of Directors has developed and adopted a Code of Conduct to guide our commitment to the highest standards of non-partisanship and civil deportment, to be presented at this Annual Meeting.

Our Vice President for Marketing, Aimee Woodall, has continued with a professional pro bono assessment of our mission/vision/values so that we can better understand what we are and what we can become. A new website, new tools for communication and refreshed branding are under development and will soon be launched in full.

As you review the reports of our several Committee Chairs and League Officers please take care to consider their assessments. We remain steadfastly attached to the idea that civic engagement is a proven path to a more perfect public life, and that, most certainly, remains our greatest strength. And especially as we approach our centennial year, please remember that we are living the suffragists' dream.

Reports on Special Projects

Rising Stars Program

Chair: Michelle Shabani-Ritchel

The Rising Stars class was selected during the summer of 2018, in what proved to be a very competitive selection process. As in years' past class members were invaluable in the search for qualified and interested candidates. As we open the applications for the incoming class, we will reach out to them again, as well as current LWV Houston members.

The applications were reviewed by four members of the 2017-2018 Rising Stars class; Board Member Phillip Yates, Franny Oxford, Dolores Colunga-Stawitz, and Michelle Shabani-Ritchel. In addition, Board Members Liza Alonzo, Isabel Longoria, and Zak Miller also participated in the candidate selection process. The diverse class was selected based on their previous community involvement, and their level of interest in continued participation in public service. A letter was sent out to each applicant letting them know whether they were accepted to the program, or not, in early September. The 15 chosen were invited to attend the Women's Equality Day celebration at Rice Media Center as guests of the LWV Houston. They were welcomed in a short ceremony at that event after presentation of the first Sarah Schimmer Award.

Official List 2018/2019 Rising Stars

Ariz Karim	Tim Lankford	Yingying Sun
Esther Noh	Chris Phillips	Michelle Levi
Will Norwood	Kathryn Campbell	Giovanni Rosselli
Steven Wu	Diana Alexander	Carly Milner
Megan E. Ortiz	Joy Harris	Vanessa Charlot

Continuing with the monthly leadership development workshop model from last year's class, there were several successful sessions which focused on LWV fundamentals. The regular monthly meetings consisted of VDVR Training, a session which focused on the history and creation of the Voters Guide with guest speaker Board Member Jackie Alfred, a session with guest speaker Board Member Jeff Reichman on the issues being studied by the LWV, and more. There were several opportunities for the Rising Stars to get involved in the League's activities immediately upon their admittance. By communicating with board members and the League president on a regular basis, much needed volunteer help for many of the League's activities came from among the current class members. From working with Mr. McKinney's History Bus on Election Day, participating in a Citizenship Ceremony, to being an integral part of the Repast Committee; the Rising Stars program has been an active part of much of the League's work this past year.

In addition, this year we added a Rising Stars Holiday Fundraiser to the program. With additional help from Board Member Amy Carl, several of the Rising Stars put this event together quickly and it turned out to be a great night of socialization and civic engagement at the Houston Arboretum. This new part of the Rising Stars program had the goals of getting the membership

together to interact on a social basis, introduce the Rising Stars to long standing members, and of course raise money for the LWV Houston. We're proud to announce that this fantastic event has been added to the curriculum for future classes, and we eagerly await the 2019 edition of this rousing success!

As the program continues new sessions will be developed to keep the overall program well-rounded and engaging. We will be focusing on getting the Rising Stars to continue participation throughout the year, by keeping the topics lively and engaging. We also want to continue building their participation with the League even after their class has concluded. This is always a challenge, as our volunteers are generally successful early to mid-career professionals with several commitments outside of the LWV.

To that end, the February class session was opened to former Rising Stars to come back and discuss what they had been doing since their time year ended, and how they are continuing to use the experience and knowledge gained during their time in the program. Two previous Rising Stars accepted the invitation, and it was one of the highlights of that session. This is something that will also be continued. The Rising Stars program will continue to help the participants grow in their civic engagement, foster the growth of the LWV Houston, and nurture the leaders of tomorrow.

Women's Equality Day
Celebrating Women in STEM
Chairs: Annie Pope, Julia Retta, Liza Alonzo

This annual event honored three of Houston's most prominent women in STEM: Dr. Shannon Walker, NASA astronaut; Dr. Carolyn Sumners of the Houston Museum of Natural Science; and Samantha Snabes, aerospace entrepreneur. We also recognized the Rising Stars Class of 2018-2019 and hosted a special screening of the 2016 hit movie "Hidden Figures," based on the real-life story of three remarkable African-American women, mathematicians who calculated trajectories at NASA in the 1950s and 1960s.

Rising Stars Holiday Social
Chairs: Kathryn Campbell, Amy Carl, Michelle Shabani-Ritchel

On Tuesday, December 18, 2018 the Rising Stars, League members and supporters gathered for a holiday social at the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center. Beer, wine and light bites were provided, courtesy of generous local sponsors, and the Rising Stars' own Katie Campbell led a special night hike for adventurous attendees. The event raised approximately \$800 for the League of Women Voters Education Fund, which enables the League to serve Houston with indispensable, nonpartisan voter services, including voter registration, candidate debates, forums, and our popular Voters Guide to the Election and the Candidates.

The event would not have been possible without our generous sponsors: Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, Eureka Heights Brewing Company and Baker Noel. Eureka Heights donated several cases of locally-brewed craft beers, and Baker Noel's sweet treats didn't last long! A bit

more about our generous host: The Houston Arboretum & Nature Center is a 155 acre nature preserve with 5 miles of hiking trails located on the western edge of Memorial Park. They are known for unique trails, wildlife viewing, opportunity to escape the hustle and bustle of city life, and for renowned educational programming. Find out more information about upcoming programs and fun events at www.houstonarboretum.org.

Repast

Chairs: Amber Burton, MaryJane Mudd

Our 18th Annual Repast Fundraising Luncheon will be held on May 29, 2019, this year celebrating the accomplishments of immigrant Americans. Our distinguished honorees are Lina Hidalgo, M. J. Khan, Ana Hernandez, Mustafa Tameez, Grace Olivares and Hugo Ortega. Repast 2019 is sold out as of press time. An addendum to this Annual Report will be added after the event.

HMS-TV Telecasts

Chair: Gene Preuss

LWV-Houston produces and hosts an hour-long public affairs program on the first Thursday of every month, telecast live from the studios of Houston Media Source.

On February's show, education was our focus. The guests, Juliet Stipeche, Director of the Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's Office of Education; Lawrence A. Allen, Jr, a current member of the State Board of Education and Director of Special Projects for HISD; and former State Board of Education chair Thomas Ratliff, all have tremendous experience in public education at the local and state level. Their perspectives on funding and curriculum brought a wealth of experience to the program.

In March, the program dedicated the first segment of the show to the state's efforts to remove almost 100,000 people from the Texas voter roles who were believed to be ineligible. Dr. Deborah Liles, PhD, a resident of North Texas whose registration status was in question; and Special Assistant County Attorney. Douglass Ray were the guests. The second part of the show was devoted to International Women's Day events planned in the Houston area. Our guests Dan Stoecker and Noël Bezette-Flores of United Nations Association Houston told the panel about the upcoming festivities. Our guest hosts were attorney Graciela "Gracie" Saenz, Dr. David Branham, UHD Professor of Political Science and UHD Honors Program student Jocelyne Torres.

On the April program, we began by discussing women's health issues with guest Evelyn Delgado, President of Healthy Futures Texas & Chair of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition. For the second part of the program we discussed prejudice, bigotry, and hate crimes with Dr. Thomas E. Ford, professor of Social Psychology at Western Carolina University. Philip Yates, Vice President for Study and Advocacy, League of Women Voters Houston Area; Dr.

Heather Goltz, UHD Associate Professor of Social Work; and, Dr. Mari Nicholson, UHD Director of University Honors Program co-hosted the conversation.

On the May show, a panel discussion with Dr. Christina Hughes, Assistant Professor of Political Science, and Archie Gayle, University of Houston-Downtown Honors Student co-hosted the discussion with our two guests, Maisha Colter of Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, and Roxanne Werner of the Harris County Clerk's Office. For the first half of the program, the panel talked about the very serious problem of Domestic Violence in Houston. For the second half of the program, the panel discussed a new way of voting at any open polling location on election day, and not just in your precinct, and other information about voting in Harris County

On April 17, we co- hosted with BakerRipley's Graciana "Graci" Garces a Conversations with the Candidates for Pasadena city council, including Steve Halvorson for District B; Don Harrison of District C; District E's Cody Ray Wheeler, and Lori Laird and Thomas Schoenbein, both candidates for District H. UHD Honors Program student Archie Gayle also joined the conversation.

Report of the Treasurer

Zak Miller

A full report and financial data will be presented at our Annual Meeting.

Report of the Vice President for Membership Affairs

Marisol Valero

Committee: Jill Campbell, Marissa Marquez, Ashley Shepherd, Phillip Yates, Heidi Tso

Goals:

1. Streamline membership on-boarding / orientation experience for new members.
2. Activate current members through volunteer opportunities and social interactive mixers
3. Increase LWV-HA's membership to reflect Houston's demographics

Total membership as of 5/11/2019: 220

In 2018 we set out on a very ambitious agenda and with much hope to engage new and existing members however the reality was (and still is) that first, we must needed to know who was part of our membership and how they were seeking to become active members. There is currently zero data on demographics which disables us from properly planning events that are attractive to members. Without this information, we also don't know how members like to receive news from us or any information really, that they'd like to receive.

Our board has undertaken an overhaul of issues we have found that have limited our reach to existing members and members of the general public. Thus our committee has been focusing on working with both the marketing and budget committees to ensure we address our needs. At the end of these projects the membership affairs committee will have the necessary tools to move forward with our goals effectively. Tools will include automated Welcome notices with information on onboarding dates for new members and opportunities to immediately plug in and volunteer, quick access to important information like our bylaws, and access to accurate resources for voting information and education.

As some of you may have noticed, neither a membership newsletter nor a membership directory was published this year. It was brought to our attention that we must centralize and streamline the communication that goes out to our membership as well as the frequency. So, it was determined that the newsletter was an ineffective way to communicate since there were other better and quicker ways that our membership was already receiving information. The membership directory was placed on pause until we can effectively ensure that all members have a decision in what information is shared about them. This is to address safety of all members since we don't conduct background checks on people who join the league and the directory publishes home addresses. In the future, a member will be able to provide input upfront on what information can be shared with other members, until then, the directory will

not be published.

Thank you all for your patience as our board and this committee continues to work on making our organization better equipped to lead our members in 2019. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at marisolvalero@lwvhouston.org.

Report of the Vice President for Issues: Study and Advocacy

Phillip Yates

The Board of Directors has recommended this course for the 2019-2020 League year:

1. Our Election Cybersecurity study, begun in 2017, will be concluded with a report at this Annual Meeting.
2. A proposed Environmental Study, with special reference to coastal issues, first activated in 2017, will become dormant.
3. Updating existing *local* positions will continue.

Report of the Vice President for Civic Engagement

Reda Hicks

In the 2018-2019 League year LWV-Houston has:

*conducted an **on-the-spot voter registration service at all Houston Area Naturalization ceremonies, welcoming 22,007 new Americans to the electorate** within minutes of their citizenship oath. This represents an 81% rate of response among those newly eligible.

*conducted a televised series of *Conversations With The Candidates* leading up to the November, 2018 general election. More than 1,300 viewers got to know local candidates through this televised series of *Conversations*.

*staffed an all-day viewer call-in **telephone helpline** at KPRC/Telemundo television for the 2018 general election, fielding over 2,200 individual election queries in both English and Spanish.

***compiled, published and distributed Voters Guides for the November general election in print, electronic and interactive formats, in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.** Over 30,000 print copies of the *Voters Guides* were distributed to the general public at no cost via libraries, schools, universities, neighborhood centers and civic organizations as well as to sponsoring organizations. Non-profit and commercial media, universities and civic organizations embedded

or referenced the *Guide* at their website, and everyone was, as always, invited to read, download, link and share.

*provided a **build-your-personal-ballot website, VOTE411.org**, featuring our *Voters Guide* content in an interactive format so voters could easily select the candidates whose policies most closely align with their own. In advance of the November, 2018 election, more than 81,000 earnest voters found impartial candidate information at www.VOTE411.org.

*served more than 23,000 visitors at our **website**, offering impartial information about the candidates via our legendary *Voters Guide*, published in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. In October, 2018 we reached an all-time high for website visits per month.

*maintained **social media feeds** tallying up to over 5,000,000 Election Season impressions with encouragement and essential information.

Voters Guide Chair: Jackie Alfred

November, 2018 *Voters Guide* by the numbers:

Number of Pages – 68 pages long (a record number of pages)

Number of General Election Candidates (in opposed races) Responding - 245 (94% response rate)

Languages – English, Spanish and Vietnamese

Formats – 3 – Print, Electronic, Vote411 Interactive platform

Number of Printed Copies Produced and Distributed: 23,000 English, 6,300 Spanish, 1,500 Vietnamese

Number Users of the Online Electronic Editions: 23,000

Number of Impressions on Twitter: Primary: 5 million (Many public officials, including Mayor Sylvester Turner, re-tweeted our VG links.)

Number of Vote411 Users: 81,000

Number of Volunteers and Staff – Over 45 volunteers; 12 paid for their services including: Graphic Design team, IT Support; Translators, LWV Office Support and Printer

Number of Area Leagues Collaborating/Coordinating with LWV Houston – 6 (Austin, Bay Area, Brazoria County, CyFair, Fort Bend, Montgomery County)

Notable “First”:

- 1) In addition to translating responses from local candidates into Vietnamese, we also translated the responses from Statewide Candidates into Vietnamese and made these translations available to all Texas Voters who used Vote411.
- 2) LWV Houston was the first League in the country to publish candidate information in 3 languages on Vote411.
- 3) Major new funding and distribution partners including Houston Area YMCA, Boat People SOS (serving the Vietnamese-American community), Avenue CDC, and Houston In Action joined longtime funding and distribution partners like the Houston and Harris

County Public Library Systems, Mi Familia Vota, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

Moving into 2019 and Beyond:

- 1) Plans are being developed to add a Chinese-language edition of the *Voters Guide* for the November 2019 Election, making Houston the first League in the country to provide a candidate information on Vote411 in four languages.
- 2) Adding a Chinese language edition will also mean that we will provide the *Voters Guide* in every language in which the ballot is available to Harris County voters.
- 3) New community partners are being recruited to assist in distributing and publicizing the VG.
- 4) New funding sources and updated procedures for VG users to make donations in support of the Guide are being developed.
- 5) Design modifications for our electronic edition are being pursued to make future VGs easier for all users to navigate and more accessible to individuals who use special assistive programs and devices.

Voter Registration Report for 2018

Chair: Judy Hollinger

The LWV-HA sponsored and coordinated VR drives at 26 separate venues (some more than once) registering or reregistering (change of address) 583 voters.

High schools- 120 voters

Colleges- 229 voters

Other- 234 voters

DVDR's participating- 77

Especially noteworthy were the efforts of Joan Glover who coordinated 8 separate events at Montrose/Freed Library on Saturday afternoons from August 18-Oct 6

In addition to assisting with voter registration volunteers answered numerous questions about the election process, especially Early Voting, Voting By Mail and Voter Registration Status.

Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies

Chair: Judy Viebig

Committee: Lauren Blanton, Rosalie Buggs, John Byrd, Beni Gutierrez, Judy Hollinger, Ann Wood

The number of petitioners for Naturalization increased significantly following the 2016 Presidential election. By May 2018, there were increases in the numbers of new voter registrations and also the number of enthusiastic new Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrars (DVRs).

To accommodate the increases in numbers, several League of Women Voters Naturalization DVRs teamed together to provide more structure to the Naturalization voter registration process. The current process involves a more formal written procedure, more extensive emailed information, a short required orientation training for new volunteers, and more oversight and follow-up.

The results of the efforts from June 2018 through April, 2019 are illustrated by the following:

Number of Naturalization Ceremonies	13
Number of DVRs working to register voters	161
Number of new DVRs	110
New citizens naturalized	31,392
Voters registered	26,241

These numbers include the registration of 90 per cent of petitioners during the last three ceremonies.

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020
Report of the Budget Committee
Chair: Katie Campbell

Please [click here](#) to review the Budget Committee's draft report.

Report of the Awards Committee

Chair: Jeff Reichman

This year, we are honored by the outstanding service of our League members. The awards cover the true diversity of activities and interests of our local league, from refreshing our public image to retooling our internal processes that make our League function. You'll recognize some familiar names and faces on the awards roster this year, but you'll also meet some new League members who are making a big entrance. In keeping with tradition, 2019 recipients will be revealed at the Annual Meeting.

Outstanding Achievement Awards are presented for notable accomplishment, recognizing individuals who, over the course of the League Year, have shepherded a significant program or project to great success. The number of Outstanding Achievement Awards is not limited but the Awards Committee takes great care to maintain the highest standards. These recognitions must remain a distinctive and meaningful honor.

The Helen Hunter Award was established in 1995 to honor Helen Hunter, LWV-Houston president from 1982-1985, and to recognize and encourage exemplary leadership. The Helen Hunter award is not presented every year, but rather only when the Awards Committee is able to identify a candidate of exceeding merit. The citation celebrates an individual who, *over the course of League membership, has epitomized the exemplary spirit of Helen Hunter in furthering the mission of the League of Woman Voters in a cordial, steady and effective way; who has brought great credit to the League of Women Voters of Houston; and who has thereby brought great benefit to the community we serve.*

The Awards Committee is pleased to recall this honor roll of Helen Hunter Award recipients:

1995 Claudia Kemondo	2017 Laura Blackburn
1996 Melba Drake	2018 Ann Herbage
1997 Margaret Kolodzie	
1998 Mary Gillete	
2002 Bette John	
2003 Alice May Berthelsen	
2004 Jan Wilbur	
2005 Barb Swartz	
2006 Gwen Essinger	
2008 Judy Hollinger	
2009 Millie Whittington	
2010 Linda Cohn	
2011 Sharon Cunningham	
2012 Nany Parra	
2013 Jacqeline Alfred	
2015 Tom Berg	
2016 Novelle Doherty	

The Sam Keeper Award for Excellence in Voter Services was established by Board resolution in 2015 in honor of *Sam, The Voter Man*, our beloved Voter Registration chair.

Beni Gutierrez and Mary Titus shared the inaugural Sam Keeper Award in 2016 in recognition of their fine work in registering newly naturalized Americans. In 2017 the Sam Keeper Award was shared by Judy Viebig, Pam Gaskin, Reda Hicks and Claudia Ortega Hogue. In 2018 the Sam Keeper Award was presented to Jackie Alfred, honoring her accomplishments as *Voters Guide* chair.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Chair: Sharon Cunningham

Committee: Liza Alonzo, Franny Oxford, Jeff Reichman, Nancy Sims

Nominations

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present this slate of candidates, nominated to serve as Officers and Directors and the Nominating Committee of the League of Women Voters of Houston. Election will be by majority vote of the membership at the Annual Meeting on June 3, 2019. Short biographies of the nominees are attached.

Officers

MaryJane Mudd, President (2019-2021)

Aimee Woodall, Marketing Vice President (2019–2021)

Annie Benifield, Voter Services Vice President* (2019–2021)

Marissa Marquez, Secretary (2019-2021)

*Since everything the League does can be described as “Civic Affairs,” Voter Services better describes this vice president’s duties.

At-Large Directors

Tom Berg (2019-2020) (unexpired term)

Amber Burton Alfred (2019 – 2021)

Amy Carl (2019-2020) (unexpired term)

Renee Cross (2019 – 2021)

Tiko Reynolds-Hausman (2019 – 2021)

Courtenay Siegfried (2019-2021)

2020 Nominating Committee

Franny Oxford, Chair

Aimee Bertrand, Member

Nancy Sims, Member

Officers and Directors Whose Terms Continue Another Year

The following Officers and Directors who were elected by the membership at the 2018 Annual Meeting will return to complete their terms of service:

Marisol Valero, Membership Vice President (2018-2020)

Phillip Yates, Study and Advocacy Vice President (2018-2020)

Zak Miller, Treasurer (2018-2020)

Liza Alonzo, At-Large Director (2018-2020)

Jeff Reichman, At-Large Director (2018-2020)

The newly elected Board will have the opportunity to appoint additional At-Large Directors for a one-year term.

Accomplishments, Observations, and Recommendations

Working with the Board, the Committee developed a new Board member application which worked quite well. Two new questions are particularly useful. They gather information as to the applicant's areas of expertise and which League activities the individual thinks are a good match for her/his skills.

I attended several Board, Executive Committee and other meetings to better understand the organization's needs. The Nominating Committee worked well together, sharing the various tasks. Few face-to-face meetings or telephone conferences were required. Most communication was via email. Each candidate was interviewed. I relied heavily on the others in this regard as I was ill some and my dear husband George died. Everyone was very helpful. Jeff and Liza, as current Board members, were a valuable resource.

This has been a strong and stable Board year in which much work was accomplished. The Executive Committee, the Marketing Committee, and other committees were utilized to high accomplishment, especially by strengthening the structure of the organization. The Board Manual was updated, giving us current position descriptions.

The change in the Bylaws to allow for a flexible fifth vice president position is applauded. Now, each year, the Board can name one vice president to serve for one year and focus on the organization's most demanding current need.

To effectively accomplish the 2019- 2020 agenda, we recommend that all levels of the organization – Membership, Rising Stars, and the Board actively recruit, orient and develop their members. We strongly recommend the continued use of committees.

In this fast-paced world with many career and volunteer opportunities, we are thankful for the commitment of our officers and Board members.

Biographical Information on Nominees

Dr. Annie Johnson Benifield, Director. Term 2018-2019, 2017-2015, 2012-2015. Degrees: Ph.D in Political Science, Univ. Of New Orleans; M.A. in Political Science, Clark Atlanta Univ.; B.A. in History, Alabama A. & M. Univ. Experience: Chair of Social Sciences Dept, Professor of Political Science at Lone Star College, Tomball. 21 years teaching Political Science. Expertise: Work with LWV HA on voter registration projects (Naturalization Ceremonies) for 18 years, KPRC Elections Phone Bank (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 & 2018), Secretary, LWV-HA, LWV-HA Nominating Committee 2015 & 2017. Member, TCCTA & served in Executive positions: Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President, President-Elect, President & Past President of Texas Community College Teachers Assoc.(statewide organization) included being responsible and informed about legislative issues and education advocacy, for more than 20 years. Chair, TCCTA Foundation Board, Chair, TCCTA Nominating Committee, member, TCCTA Adjunct Adhoc Committee, Member, Houston Alumni Chapter of Alabama A. & M. Univ. 2001-present, Secretary, Houston AAMU Alumni Chapter 2016-present.

Tom Berg is a longtime League member, having served at large on the Board and as VP for civic engagement. He's been particularly active in voter registration, the Voter Guide, and engagement with the Spanish-speaking community. Tom is a retired colonel from the Army Reserve and a veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns. He is a previous recipient of the Helen Hunter award from the League.

Aimee Bertrand is a native Houstonian. She has a degree in Journalism from the University of Mississippi. Aimee previously served on the LWV Houston executive board, as Secretary, as co-chair of the Rising Stars program, as co-chair of Repast, and as co-chair for the inaugural Women's Equality Day fundraiser.

Amber Burton Alfred has a 20-year background in governmental affairs, grassroots advocacy and community relations. Amber is the Director of Governmental Affairs and Advocacy for the Houston Association of REALTORS®. Amber works with elected officials, community stakeholders and other business coalitions to coordinate policy and legislative efforts at the local, state and federal level to advocate for the real estate industry and homeowners. Amber received her Juris Doctorate from South Texas College of Law-Houston. After law school, Amber worked with several large law firms and then started a political and business consultancy where she successfully managed numerous political and issue campaigns. Prior to law school, she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Texas State University. She is happily married and the mother of 4 children, ranging from ages 20 to 6.

Amy Carl is a Regulatory Analyst at Targa Resources, a Fortune 500 provider of midstream services, where she provides regulatory compliance support and guidance to Targa's legal department. She was named a Rising Star in 2015 and chaired the League's annual Repast Luncheon in 2017, becoming an At-Large Director the same year. She is a volunteer driver for Clinic Access Support Network, a Houston-based nonprofit that provides free transportation, emotional support, and accommodations to people seeking abortion care. She is a native Houstonian and graduated as valedictorian of the University of Houston's Jack J. Valenti School of Communications in 2012.

Renée Cross serves as the senior director of the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston, overseeing overall operations, managing external relations, working on research projects, and directing various internship and professional programs. Renée also teaches Urban Politics, Texas Politics, and Democracy and Participation in America. She is quoted in newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal, the Chicago Tribune, the Houston Chronicle, the Austin-American Statesman and the Dallas Morning News, and is featured on local radio and television. A native of Houston's East End, she earned degrees from the University of Houston and the University of St. Thomas. Renée and her husband Stan live in their never quite restored home in the Woodland Heights with dogs Simone, Enza and Lina, and too many cats to name.

Marissa Marquez has a Bachelor of Arts from Baylor University and a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. She is a Human Resources Business Partner at Legacy Community Health. Prior to joining Legacy, she was a Senior Employee Relations Consultant at Texas Children's Hospital and has also served as Deputy Senior Legal Counsel to Hope Andrade,

a Texas Workforce Commissioner Representing Employers. A passionate advocate for children, Marissa is on the Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) board. In 2018, Marissa received an award from the State Bar of Texas, for her article "'Are you an Attorney, Too,?' The Impact of Intersectionality on the Career Advancement of Women of Color." She has been honored by the National Head Start Association as a star alumna. In 2013 and 2014, she was nominated for the Austin Under 40 Awards for Legal, Government & Public Affairs, and Community Service. She is a member of the Houston Bar Association's Gender Fairness and the Minority Opportunities in the Legal Profession committees and volunteers with the Houston Livestock and Rodeo Show. Marissa was born and raised in Laredo, Texas and is fluent in Spanish. She served on the League's 2018-2019 board.

MaryJane Mudd, Principal of MJM Communications, is an award-winning communicator whose work has positively impacted corporations such as Shell Oil, ConocoPhillips, Air Liquide America and Dow Chemical as well as non-profits including the American Red Cross, University of Houston Downtown and the Houston Technology Center. As communications officer for the Red Cross, she led local Public Affairs activities for Hurricane Harvey, representing the organization in approximately 60 television, press and radio interviews, including national interviews with CBS, ABC, NPR, the Wall Street Journal and USA Today. MaryJane serves on the Board of Directors of Leadership Houston, the national Tuberos Sclerosis Alliance and the Purdue University Parent & Family Advisory Board, and is on the Advisory Board for Houston Responds. She previously served as president of the Houston Chapter of the American Marketing Association, the largest AMA chapter in the nation. MaryJane is the mother of three beautiful young women, including one with special needs. She advocates for those with special needs through creative writing and public speaking. She has been on the LWV-Houston Board for one year.

Franny Oxford is the VP of Human Resources for a rapidly-growing private-equity backed company focused on serving children with autism. A native Texan, Franny grew up in Beaumont, attended college at the University of Texas at Austin for both her Bachelor's (Anthropology and Business) and her Masters (Human Resources.) Franny has resided in Houston since 2001, and is active in her local neighborhood. She is a representative for the Westbury Civic Club and works informally through social media, neighborhood block parties, and her little free library to foster a sense of community and collaboration at a hyper-local level. Franny is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and is also a member of the Daughters of Early American Witches, Salem. Franny participated in the League of Women Voter's Rising Stars program in 2018. She also participated in Leadership Houston in that same year.

Tiko Reynolds-Hausman is the President of TKO BizSolutions Inc. and has over 17 years of experience ensuring the growth and success of Houston area small business. Her expertise in business development, program management, community relations, and federal government contract compliance has resulted in the implementation of over 30 programs in partnership with local governments, corporations, business associations, and independent school districts. She also serves as a mentor for SCORE, a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) providing assistance to entrepreneurs through mentoring, workshops and educational resources. Tiko currently serves as the Vice-Chair of the Economic Development

Committee for the Greater Houston Black Chamber. She is a former Rising Star and the recipient the Walker's Legacy Power25 Award, which celebrates recipients' dedication to improving and innovating the Houston community and most recently named one of Houston's Top 50 Influential Women. Tiko is a founding member of Higher Heights for America and an Alumnus of Leadership Houston Class XXXII. In her down time, Tiko enjoys traveling with her husband and two kids.

Courtenay Siegfried is Vice President of Communications and Impact at Alice, a technology company helping business owners find the right path to start and grow their companies. Prior to joining Alice, Courtenay was owner and president of communications firm 20K Group and a partner in corporate training company Launchpad Skills for Success. She is one of Houston's biggest fans and strives to make it a community that works for all through community service, including as a board member of the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area and a member of the Discovery Green Programming Committee. She has previously served on the boards of Our Global Village, One Voice Texas, and the Houston Downtown Alliance.

Nancy Sims, a native Texan, is a straight-shooter, who calls it like she sees it. With relationships as deep and wide as the Lone Star State, it's challenging to go anywhere and mention Nancy's name without running into someone who knows her. It's this blend of personal relationship, deep communications expertise and straightforward approach that makes Nancy a successful leader. Owner of Nancy Sims, LLC, she capitalizes on her strategic instincts to guide clients from energy companies to top retailers on reputation management, crisis communications, civic engagement, government relations, stakeholder communications and more. She spent 16 years with Pierpont Communications and 15 years previously running her own businesses. She is recognized by the media for her critical insights and political analysis. She currently serves as one of the analysts for KUHF Radio and is a regular on their show, Houston Matters. Nancy earned her MLA from the University of St. Thomas and her BA in Government from Sam Houston State University. She serves as a Lecturer at the University of Houston in Political Science. She serves on numerous non-profit boards and engages in community work throughout the Houston region.

Aimee Woodall leads The Black Sheep Agency, a cause-driven brand strategy firm that works with impactful companies and organizations to activate communities around things that matter. A tireless advocate for social change and a firm believer in the power of creativity to solve any problem, Aimee focuses her company's efforts solely on impact—serving nonprofits, civic organizations and for-profit companies who prioritize social responsibility and balance purpose with profit. A founding member of The Creative Alliance, her clients include The CW Network, Houston's Downtown District, the Houston Parks Board, UT Health and grassroots causes across the nation.

**The League of Women Voters of Houston
Board of Directors, 2019-2020**

Position	Officer/Director	Term of office
President	MaryJane Mudd	2019-2021
Secretary	Marissa Marquez	2019-2021
Treasurer	Zak Miller	2018-2020
Vice President: Membership Affairs	Marisol Valero	2018-2020
Vice President: Voter Services	Annie Benifield	2019-2021
Vice President: Study and Advocacy	Phillip Yates	2018-2020
Vice President: Marketing	Aimee Woodall	2019-2021
Director	Liza Alonzo	2018-2020
Director	Jeff Reichman	2018-2020
Director	Amy Carl	2019-2020
Director	Tom Berg	2019-2020
Director	Renee Cross	2019-2021
Director	Amber Burton	2019-2021
Director	Tiko Reynolds-Hausman	2019-2021
Director	Courtenay Siegfried	2019-2021
Nominating Committee: Chair	Franny Oxford	2019-2020
Nominating Committee: Member	Aimee Bertrand	2019-2020
Nominating Committee: Member	Nancy Sims	2019-2020
Nominating Committee: Member	Board Member (TBD)	2019-2020
Nominating Committee: Member	Board Member (TBD)	2019-2020