

Board of Directors | LWNYS

Dare Thompson
President/Member Services

Dare Thompson is currently Vice President for Membership of LWNYS and Co-President of the Mid-Hudson Region League. She first became an LWV member in the early '70s in Swarthmore, PA, and was elected president soon thereafter. In 1976 she and her husband and 2-year old son moved to Providence, RI where she had another son in 1977. She was RI state president for only a year when the family relocated to Clinton, NY in 1980 where she joined the LWV of Utica/Rome. During her time in central NY she served as the U-R president and also served as secretary of LWNYS. She also served on the committee that researched the feasibility of the state League relocating from NYC to Albany (which LWNYS soon did) and served twice on the LWVUS Long Range Planning Committee.

From 1994 - 98 the family lived near Columbus, OH where she was president of her local League (Delaware Co.) and 1st VP of the state LWV. Her job as head of the arts advocacy organization for the state gave her an office in a building on Capitol Square, a short walk from the LWV Ohio office, and gave her a lot of up-close experience in state politics, including overseeing a paid lobbyist.

When she moved back to NY (Ulster County) in 1998, a long commute to a job in Westchester left her little time for LWV work, although she was almost always a board member of the Mid-Hudson Region League, often as treasurer. When she retired from her job in arts management, she soon became local president and was the first coordinator of state coaches for the LWVUS-LWNYS Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program. She also is very active in local and statewide volunteer work for the Quakers.



Judie Gorenstein
1st Vice President/Voter Services

After retiring from social work, Judie was looking for something meaningful to do and joined the LWV of Huntington in 2004. She soon became a co-chair of the voter service committee at LWV of Huntington and voter service chair of LWV-Suffolk County. In 2008 she was elected President of her local League and served in that position until June 2017 when she stepped down in order to have more time to spend with her five grandchildren, (ages ranging from 16 year old who recently became member of the LWV of Huntington to one year old who was taken with her parents and four year old brother to vote) and energy as well as time to devote to LWNYS.

Judie had been on the state board since 2010 as citizen/education youth program director. Although she enjoyed working in this position and was especially proud of increasing the number of students attending SIA, she was very pleased and honored in 2015 when she was nominated and elected to be first VP of LWNYS and Voter Service Chair. Judie has always seen voter services as core of the league's mission. (It was what attracted to her to become active in her local and then county league.) With politics becoming ever more partisan during the past two years, leagues had a unique opportunity to engage and educate voters.

As voter service chair, Judie saw her primary role as helping local leagues, MALS and ILOs run successful voter registration drives and candidates nights. She engaged members of leagues with surveys (which she was pleased so many completed), teleconference calls, workshops and most recently an online voter service google group allowing two way communication between leagues, each other, and the state. One of the challenges has been to make certain that at all our events, we are not only nonpartisan but perceived in that way. Leagues have been encouraged to share their successes, their formats for candidate nights, invitation letters to candidates, policies for taping. They have also been encouraged to share problems they encountered and concerns.

If reelected, Judie plans on, with the help from others, editing Road to the Voting Booth Part II, paying attention to the concerns and problems that leagues have encountered. She will continue to engage members throughout the state and looks forward to continuing being on the state board. As 2017 is a local election when turnout is especially low, she would like to work with local leagues on increasing turnout especially of our youth. She believes "together we can do so much."



Sally Robinson
2nd Vice President/Issues & Advocacy

Sally started in the LWV Scarsdale and served as its president while simultaneously a member of the LWVUS Task Force on Trade Policy Update. After that she was Grassroots Lobby Director and then 1st Vice President/Advocacy and Issues in 03-04.

Sally is from the small town of Waller, Texas and was the first person in her family to go to college. After graduating from college and law school on the East Coast, she moved to New York City, where she worked as a tax lawyer. After her third child was born and she moved to Scarsdale, she switched to volunteer work, primarily with the League and as Chair of the Planning Board.

Sally is currently a member of the City of New York LWV where she moved in 2006 and completed a graduate tax degree at NYU Law School. She lives on the Upper East Side with her husband, a college and law school classmate. They have plans to spend time both in the winter (skiing) and in the summer (golf) in their new second home in Utah now that they are empty-nesters.



Jane Park

Secretary

Jane joined the Broome-Tioga League in 2003 and found that her first job – newsletter editor—was a good crash course in all aspects of the League. She is a past president of LWVBTC and currently serves as its secretary.

As needed, she has spearheaded local participation in several state and national studies, has conducted community fund drives, and is pretty much available for “other duties as required.” Her League involvement continues her long volunteer career in nonprofit organizations where she draws on her professional background in community organization and organizational administration. She says that serving on the LWNYS board is an honor and a delight.



Lori Robinson

Treasurer

Lori has been a Not-For-Profit accountant for 30 year and currently works full time for The Buffalo History Museum. She has always been passionate about good government and ran for Chautauqua County Legislature in 1993. Lori lived in Phoenix AZ for 15 years where she worked as an Election Site Inspector every chance she could. She has been a member of the Buffalo Niagara League since 2013 and serves as the Treasurer.

Lori is delighted that she “gets to” lead Water Aerobics twice a week at the Buffalo Jewish Community Center.



Carol Mellor

Grassroots Director

Carol Mellor joined the State Board of the League of Women Voters of New York after having served as President of the Hamptons local for four years. A member of the Hamptons local since she moved to the East End of Long Island, she also served on the Board of Directors for two years before becoming president. She was a member of the national study committee on the National Popular Vote.

Carol is a member of the New York State Bar and is admitted to practice before the federal courts in the Southern District of New York and the Eastern District of New York, as well as the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Her practice has, in the past, included litigation of constitutional issues, criminal appeals work and municipal employment law. She now specializes in will, trusts and estates.



Sheila Miller Bernson

At-Large

Sheila has served as Co-President of the LWV of New Castle with Jennifer Mebes Flagg since 2010. She joined the New Castle board as Voter Service Chair in 2007 after she moved to Chappaqua, having spent almost twenty-five years overseas in Turkey, South Korea, the Netherlands and Lebanon. While overseas she worked as a foreign legal consultant at Kim & Chang in Seoul and as a Grants Officer at the Office of Grants and Contracts at the American University of Beirut.

Sheila currently works as a volunteer attorney at Pace Women’s Justice Center’s Family Court Legal Program representing victims of domestic violence. In 2016, Sheila was awarded the Kathryn Gurfein Writing Fellowship at the Writing Institute at Sarah Lawrence College. Sheila graduated from Pace Law School (JD), and Sarah Lawrence College (BA). She has one son who lives in Denver. She and her husband, John, live in Armonk, NY.



Betty Ann King

At-Large

Betty Ann has been a member of the League of Women Voters of the North Country for 17 years and has served on the local leagues Board of Directors for 15 years. She established North Country’s web site and was web master for 15 years. Betty Ann has also been active with youth programs in the league and was instrumental in designing and executing the Leagues Meet Your State Legislators event. She has also been active in all voter service activities and has been Chair and Co-chair of this committee for several years.

Betty Ann is a retired school psychologist with 38 years of experience in the field of education. She is married, has 4 children and seven grandchildren.



**Suzanne Stassevitch
At-Large**

Born in New York City and raised in St. Louis, Suzanne moved to San Francisco in 1976 to pursue her lifelong passion for the performing arts after earning a B.A. in Theater Arts at the University of Missouri, Kansas City and graduate work at the University of Oregon and SFSU (M.A. 1978).

As a member of IATSE, Theatrical Wardrobe Union Local 784, Suzanne built a career in the Costume and Wardrobe Departments in Bay Area Broadway Theatres, Ballet Companies, and San Francisco Opera. As a member of a Local 784 her activities included working as a Union Steward, contract negotiations, Health and Welfare Administrator Local 784 1982-1992, developing an apprentice program and sitting on the Apprentice Board, 1985-1993. Suzanne worked for 15 years at San Francisco Opera as a Wardrobe Department Head and a traveling Costume Supervisor.

In 2001 Suzanne decided to redirect her activities toward community interests and to study and develop her own work in textiles arts. Studies included Adult Literacy and working with for Project Read, an Adult Literacy Project in San Francisco, following her mother's path into the LWV and representing the San Francisco League on the City Ballot Simplification Committee. As Vice President of Voter Service programs for LWVSF, Suzanne and her team expanded content and programs available on the League's website, increased the distribution of Pro Con materials city-wide in English, Spanish and Chinese newspapers, and coordinated a vote-by mail- promotion and ranked choice voting education programs in San Francisco.

The League commitments expanded in 2009 when Suzanne joined the League of Women Voters of California Board of Directors leading a Community Education portfolio. Suzanne broadened her own skills and interests working on League organizational issues and strategies through committee, task force work and collaboration with other League leaders, mentors and facilitators.

Suzanne and her husband moved to New York in 2013 for a busy retirement, and Suzanne fulfilled an ambition to work as one of the LWVUS Observers at the United Nations and to share the work and calls to action from the UN with local Leagues.

Suzanne believes the Leagues mission is as vital today as it ever was and would like to be part of retooling the League to meet the challenges of today and to engage more people in 'Making Democracy work' for everyone. Suzanne also continues to garden on the roof and to work in her studio on textile projects and study the dyers art, which is where she goes when she needs a break from politics.



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