



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

July 2018

In Sympathy

Reverend Albert Lee Hezekiah Hyche

We extend our sympathy to LWVGB former president Ida



Tyree-Hyche, daughter Shade', and son-in-law Jiwann Dixon in the death on May 30th of former LWVGB board member Rev. Albert Lee Hezekiah Hyche. Rev. Hyche was a much-loved and much-respected presiding elder within the AME church, and his celebration of life on June 9th was a powerful testament to the many lives

that he touched. In addition to leading three different church districts, Rev. Hyche also led the Birmingham City Schools Adult Education Program, and he was a stalwart supporter of Ida's military and civilian careers.



2018 LWV Convention

Chicago, IL

Creating a More Perfect Democracy

Watch this [video](#), broadcast at the 53rd National Convention, which tells the collective story of the LWV.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Mark your calendar. See this issue or [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for event details.

- Jul 12:** Absentee Ballot Application Deadline
- Jul 16:** Deadline to cast Absentee Ballot
- Jul 17:** AL Party Primary Runoff Elections
- Jul 17:** LWVGB Board Mtg (tentative)
- Aug 26:** Women's Equality Day
- Aug 28:** LWVGB Board Mtg (tentative)
- Sep 2018:** Dues Renewal Month
- Sep 17:** Constitution Day
- Sep 21:** UN Day of Peace
- Sep 25:** National VR Day
- Sep 25:** LWVGB Board Mtg (tentative)
- Oct 23:** LWVGB Board Mtg (tentative)
- Oct 24:** United Nations Day
- Nov 03:** Absentee Ballot Application Deadline
- Nov 05:** Deadline to cast Absentee Ballot
- Nov 06:** ELECTION DAY
- Nov 27:** Annual Giving Tuesday
- Dec 01:** LWVGB Holiday Luncheon

Meet New Member Barbara Lewis

Leslie O'Neil, LWVGB Board of Directors

Before she retired, Barbara was a faculty member in UAB's School of Education, where she taught courses in methods for teaching language arts. Her higher education began at Winthrop College, at that time an all-women's college, where she had the opportunity to develop leadership skills and to establish lifelong friendships. After receiving a Master's degree at UAB, she received a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Alabama.

Barbara is active in the American Association of University Women and is interested in yoga, reading, cooking, and gardening.

Prior to becoming a League member, Barbara volunteered to register voters with the LWVGB. She is particularly interested in prison reform and in housing for the mentally ill.



PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Leonette Slay

Birmingham mayor Randall Woodfin met over 70 League and community members on Thursday, May 17th, at Beloved Community Church in Avondale. After introductory remarks about his goals and ongoing projects, Mayor Woodfin entertained questions from a wide variety of attendees. Questions dealt with the new city budget, relations with the Birmingham Transit Authority and "on demand" transportation options, gentrification of some Birmingham neighborhoods, and efforts to assist the homeless. Unanswered questions were later forwarded to the mayor's staff for follow up. It was a spirited and thought-provoking evening, thanks to efforts by Vice President Mikesha Harvill and past president Ida Tyree-Hyche, live streaming of the mayor's remarks by Jean Johnson, as well as the hospitality of Rev. Jennifer Sanders and Beloved Community Church. The League told Mayor Woodfin we may be asking for another discussion in the coming months.



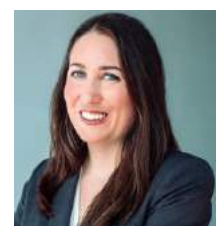
Five board members and two off board members gathered at the Springville cabin of LWVGB member Michael O'Donnell on June 10th for orientation and planning of League events for the upcoming year. The board reviewed history and principles of the League, including the significant role that Birmingham native Pattie Ruffner Jacobs played in the national suffrage movement (see article on page 3). Three key policies related to nonpartisanship, support of diversity, and prohibition against meeting in exclusionary establishments all were readopted unanimously.



The orientation included a review of responsibilities of board members and restrictions on partisan involvement by the president, Voter Service and Advocacy chairs. After discussion of community and member concerns, Connie Arnwine volunteered to chair the Environmental area of interest. Haley Colton Lewis had earlier volunteered to oversee Transportation, and she was assigned that area of interest. Maria "Vet" Hawkins was unable to attend, so her area of interest is not yet confirmed. Area of Interest chairs will develop one general meeting program during the year.

Board members agreed to a teleconference on July 17th, with future face to face meeting venue TBD. The board selected Saturday, December 1st for the Christmas luncheon, location TBD, and Vice President Mikesha Harvill will oversee the venue for our September membership social. LWVGB members are encouraged to contact Voter Services, Transportation, and Environmental chairs to volunteer or suggest possible program topics.

Congratulations to LWVGB member and LWVAL board member Robyn Hyden on her recent selection to become the Executive Director of Alabama ARISE. She will take over from long-time director Kimble Forrister on July 2nd. Robyn had previously worked as an ARISE organizer for North Alabama before joining United Way/Central Alabama in 2017. LWVGB's loss will be a tremendous gain for the League in Montgomery, AL ARISE, and all Alabamians. Well done, Robyn!



Pattie Ruffner Jacobs

Connie Arnwine, LWVGB Board of Directors

Next year our state will celebrate its 200th birthday and in 2020, we will celebrate one hundred years of women earning the right to vote. In view of this, we thought it might be a good time to look back at our state's early suffrage movement and recall the contributions of Pattie Ruffner Jacobs.

As a league member, you may have heard the name Pattie Ruffner Jacobs as she is credited with being one of the founders of the suffragist movement in Alabama. The following is a brief account of her life and contributions taken from an article in Alabama Heritage magazine by Marlene Hunt Rikard and Wayne Flynt¹ and from the Encyclopedia of Alabama².

Pattie Belle Ruffner was born in Malden, West Virginia, October 2nd, 1875, to Lewis Jr. and Virginia Ruffner. She was the youngest of their six children. Her family moved to Nashville in 1881 where she attended the Ward Seminary for Young Ladies. As the years went by, the family experienced financial problems and eventually Pattie and her mother moved to her married sister's home in Birmingham, leaving her father in Nashville. (Some accounts say he died before their move but Rikard and Flynt state otherwise). According to her diary, she desperately wanted to attend college but there was no money. She even asked her mother's brother for money for college but he refused her: "Uncle Wash does not approve of women doing anything of the sort. He thinks her sphere much narrower and more limited than that."



Courtesy BPL Archives

Rikard and Flynt suggest that her frustrations with the limitations placed on women at the time helped to shape her feminist philosophies. She was a talented young woman who was able to raise extra money for her family by singing for local church choirs and from the sales of hand painted cards. She even held a job with a local newspaper writing their society column. Pattie had a very active social life and eventually met and married Solon ss, a native of Kansas, who was described as a "rising young businessman." He started the Birmingham Slag Company after recognizing that slag, a byproduct of coke, would be in demand for paving roads with the advent of automobile travel. Naturally, his business flourished. Solon later sold his company to the Ireland family where it eventually became Vulcan Materials.

Historians characterize the Progressive Era (1890 - 1920) as a time when the woman's club movement served as a catalyst for the suffragist movement. Women lobbied not only for prohibition but also for reforms in child labor laws, education and public health. This certainly held true for Pattie. She was the first president of the Birmingham Art League and vice president of the Music Club. She was also very active in charity programs through the Independent Presbyterian Church. She advocated for ending the convict lease law and for reforms to child labor. As the wife of a wealthy and influential businessman, she was socially connected to Birmingham's wealthy families. Rikard and Flynt point out that her family status, coupled with her music performances and woman's club experiences, helped prepare her to become a competent and poised political organizer for the women's suffragist movement.

¹ Rikard, Marlene Hunt and Wayne Flynt. "Pattie Ruffner Jacobs and the Transformation of Women's Rights." Alabama Heritage, Number 109, Summer 2013, pp. 34-41

² Burnes, Valerie Pope. "Pattie Ruffner Jacobs." Encyclopedia of Alabama, August 24,2017, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1107> and "Alabama Equal Suffrage Association." May 23,2017, article/h-1150

Pattie Ruffner Jacobs, continued

By most accounts, Alabama's suffragist movement started in 1892 with a small club in Decatur. After a proposal for women's suffrage failed to pass by a four-to-one margin during the 1901 Alabama Constitutional Convention, the movement went dormant. However, interest in women's suffrage revived in both Selma and Birmingham around 1910 with Pattie leading the cause in Birmingham and Hattie Hooker Wilkins likewise in Selma. Wilkins went on to be the first woman elected to serve in the Alabama Legislature. Pattie helped establish both the Birmingham Equal Suffrage Association (BESA) and the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association (AESA).

The state group initially included 350 members described as white, upper-class men and women predominately from Birmingham and Selma but also included members from Montgomery, Auburn, and Marion. At the time, there were two active women's suffrage organizations advocating for women's suffrage in the South. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was the largest organization. It was organized on February 18th, 1890, with the merger of two existing older organizations. Susan B. Anthony was the early leader. A second group, the Southern States Women Suffrage Conference (SSWSC,) advocated for state action as opposed to an amendment to the constitution. While the two groups stated their cooperation, they held differing viewpoints on who should vote and the path to follow. Pattie aligned with the NAWSA. (More about the SSWSC in a later article).

Solon, who was ten years older than Pattie, was very supportive of her many activities at a time when many Southern men frowned on women being out in public. With his financial support, she was able to hire meeting halls, provide monetary prizes for essays on suffrage and provide for the free distribution of the *Woman's Journal*, a publication of the NAWSA. The BESA actively recruited young working class women who could come in to the meeting halls to relax and eat their lunches. They held "voiceless demonstrations" and submitted letters to the editors of newspapers around the state. By 1915, there were 69 suffrage clubs in Alabama with 3000 members. The national organization was so impressed by Pattie's organizational skills that they asked her to testify before the House Rules Committee in Washington D.C. There she had to listen to J. Thomas Heflin, Congressman from Alabama, ridicule the suffragist movement before she gave her testimony.

According to Rikard and Flynt, the congressman, known for his oratorical skills, talked for an hour lambasting woman's suffrage as a threat to family life, Christian religion and the American home. They state that Pattie was undaunted by Heflin's bombastic speech. She successfully countered his arguments, even satirizing them. Because of her strong oratorical skills, NAWSA recruited her to speak at rallies across the U.S. on behalf of ratification of the 19th Amendment. She was later elected NAWSA secretary.

After the 19th Amendment became law on August 26th, 1920, Pattie was elected the first secretary and later vice president of the newly formed National League of Women Voters. She was also elected as Alabama's first female Democratic National Committee Member. Rikard and Flynt note this must have been a bitter pill for some of the state's anti-suffrage Democratic members. She supported the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt for President. He later appointed her to head the Women's Division of the National Recovery Administration and also as the first woman to serve on the governing board of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Rikard and Flynt note that credit must be given to Solon as for supporting Pattie's many endeavors during their marriage. Pattie Ruffner Jacobs died from a heart attack on December 22nd, 1935. She did not live to see Alabama ratify the 19th Amendment on Sept 8th, 1953.

Of note, Mississippi was the last state to ratify the 19th Amendment on March 22nd, 1984.

Women's Right to Vote in Costa Rica – Thanks to Alabama's Own Henrietta Boggs-MacGuire

Joyce Lanning, LWVGB Member

In 1949, following a 44-day revolution, a junta leading the Costa Rican government gave women the right to vote, 29 years after women won that right in the U.S. There's a 100-year-old Alabama story behind those vital events, and it's beautifully packaged in a witty and provocative writer and activist who now lives in Montgomery and still writes for the River Region Living magazine she founded in the 1980s.

Birmingham resident Henrietta Boggs (Figueres) MacGuire was just Henrietta Boggs and a 22-year-old junior at Birmingham-Southern College back in 1940. Always an adventurous sort and more than ready for a different view and a wider world, she accepted the offer of a summer visit to her aunt and uncle on their coffee plantation in Costa Rica. She spoke little Spanish and found the country charming but challenging and the expectations and restrictions on women in that culture to be somewhat daunting.

It was actually a motorcycle that liberated Henrietta, or more specifically, the remarkable coffee producer and processor who rode up on his cycle to talk business with Henrietta's uncle. Fortunately, Jose "Pepe" Figueres spoke good English. Conversation between the two ensued, followed by many shared motorcycle rides. That was the only place the pair, soon to be a couple, was allowed to be together without some kind of a chaperone. They married in 1941 – the motorcycle played its part.

Henrietta followed Don Pepe into exile from 1942-44 after he was arrested for a radio broadcast she encouraged in place of a written article urging reforms in the mismanaged and corrupt government. Children Jose Marti and Muni had joined the family when, in 1948, a previous president refused to cede power to the newly elected president. Don Pepe decided the time had come for a necessary revolution and the civil war he'd been planning began. Henrietta and the children escaped from the first battles on foot in a harrowing and difficult trek.



Joyce and Henrietta

The rag-tag revolutionaries won the 44-day war. Don Pepe and allies formed a junta to rule the country, with him at the head, and Henrietta became First Lady at age 29. When I asked her how it was that, in addition to abolishing the military, the bane of many fledgling democracies in Latin America, and providing universal education and improving health care her husband gave women and the right to vote (and wear pants), she laughed. "I asked him 55,000 times – how can you call this a democracy if people aren't educated and half the population is kept from voting?" And she would add – if you have that right, be sure to use it!

This May, Henrietta again returned to her beloved Costa Rica for the celebration of her 100 years and the 70th anniversary of the return of democracy to her adopted country, as well as her part in the reforms of 1948 and 1949. Surrounded by family, friends, admirers (including me) and the Spark Media film crew who made the remarkable documentary, "First Lady of the Revolution", Henrietta turned 100 on May 6th. And it turns out that one of the celebrants who came from Montgomery first met Henrietta in Nashville many years ago at a League of Women Voters luncheon!

Now somewhat more comfortable with being the center of attention than when she became Costa Rica's First Lady at 29, Henrietta nevertheless was astounded that so many would come from the states to celebrate with her and her remarkable extended family.

There were two celebrations - an elegant luncheon May 5th at a beautiful show-horse farm at the in-laws of one of her grandsons, complete with a mariachi band and dancing marionettes. On May 6th, her son Marti and daughter-in-law Cecelia hosted a multitude of family and friends at their home and farm in the countryside near San Jose. And daughter Muni, former Costa Rican ambassador to the U.S., played a big role in the arrangements.

Women's Right to Vote in Costa Rica, continued

In my brief interactions with Henrietta before, during and after her 100th birthday celebration, several things stay with me. The love for Henrietta and the joy her wide-ranging extended family and friends take in her is obvious. Though her marriage to Don Pepe ended in 1952 as she realized that the patriarchal society and the role of political wife and mother were not a good fit for her, she and her children and their families remain close to their Costa Rican connections, including the four children and their families from Don Pepe's second marriage.



Courtesy Spark Media

Also, Henrietta's remarkable deft and wit when defying any pigeonholes folks would want to tuck her into is a pleasure to experience. But most of all she remains passionate about equality and justice now and for the future – the same qualities that made her a force helping shape Costa Rica's modern democracy and the reforms following the 1948 revolution. Birmingham-Southern College recognized those qualities, which the League of Women Voters also supports, when they awarded her an honorary Doctor of Humanities "to acknowledge her lifelong promotion of social change and equality."

Her book about her marriage and the return of democracy has been required reading for Costa Rican schoolchildren. The documentary of her life is being shown in all Costa Rican embassies to celebrate their 70th anniversary of the return of democracy. To get the remarkable backstory of Henrietta's role in Costa

Rica's 44-day revolution and the voting, education, health care and other reforms that ensued, read her 1992 book, [Married to a Legend: Don Pepe](#), and view the documentary [First Lady of the Revolution](#).

VOTER SERVICES

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Board of Directors

The LWVGB had no voter registration events in June, but in May, several were held in advance of the June 5th Alabama Primary Elections. These were at the MAX Central Station, Bluff Park United Methodist Food Pantry, Church of the Reconciler, and Firehouse Shelter. Also we offered voter registration opportunities at Lawson State Community College's Bessemer and Birmingham Campuses and Jefferson State Community College's Shelby Campus in April.

Now it's time to rev up for the fall and help as many as possible be prepared for the state and local elections in November. That will mean participation in the National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, September 25th, at as many locations as possible preceded and followed by other voter registrations. Our aim is to be at sites less served by others and/or to reach more marginalized citizens. We hope that will include **The Lovelady Center**, which has indicated interest in inviting us. Residents there and at other sites may be able to benefit from information and counseling regarding existing and restored voting rights.



Voter Services is currently in conversation with the Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham about co-sponsoring a public forum on voting rights of persons with histories of convictions as well as other matters regarding voting. We thank LWVGB member Margie McDermott this invitation. We hope this event can be LWVGB's general membership meeting in September.

Members and friends: please look out for notices of need for help at Voter Registration events. If you have not received such notices (by email) from me in the past or know someone who can help, please be in touch. I can be reached at magoriannancy@yahoo.com or 205-613-6569. Thank you!

Board of Directors, 2018-19

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Haley Colson Lewis	Director (2020)
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Board Appointee (TBD)	Advocacy
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QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost."

~ *John Quincy Adams*

"The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it."

~ *Neil deGrasse Tyson*

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