



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Miami-Dade Voter

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Making Democracy Work

Spotlight on LWV Member: Dr. Betty Metcalf

A League member for almost 60 years, Dr. Betty Metcalf first joined the LWV in 1949 while working on her doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology in Iowa City, Iowa. When she moved to New London, Connecticut with her new husband, George, and her daughter, Tina, and later to Washington, D.C., Jacksonville, Florida, and Miami, Metcalf continued her involvement with the League. While in Miami, she served as President of the LWV of Florida from 1975 to 1977, and was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1978, serving in this capacity until 1984.

Metcalf credits the LWV with providing her the leadership skills and knowledge of public policy issues that prepared her for public office. A civic minded activist, she has held other leadership positions: as President of the Florida Mental Health Association and President of the South Florida Chapter of the Girl Scouts. She now lives in the East Ridge Retirement Village in Cutler Bay, and has been recognized by our League as a Member Emeritus for her long standing service to the LWV. She remains active to this day, serving as Parliamentarian at our Annual Meeting in June 2008.

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If you are receiving this issue of *The Voter* by U.S. mail, please send us your e-mail address if you have one! Help us lower our mailing expenses by sending you *The Voter* and other timely information and notices via e-mail! Please send an e-mail to Terry Coble, Associate Editor, *Miami-Dade Voter*, at terryarose@bellsouth.net so we can add you to our e-mail distribution list.

Thank you!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

LWV of Miami-Dade County Board Holiday Party
Monday, December 15, 2008
6:30 pm , 10715 SW 74th Court, Miami, FL 33156
RSVP - 305.661.3906

Hot Topic Luncheon: 2008 Ballot Questions
Wednesday, Jan. 28, 12:30 pm
94th Aero Squadron Restaurant
1395 NW 57th Avenue (Dolphin Xpwy & Red Road)
Miami - Cost \$25
RSVP - 305.446.0880

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
PRESENTS:

HOT TOPIC LUNCHEON

THE FUTURE OF
RACE RELATIONS IN
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY*

A Panel Presentation

Wednesday, January 28th

12:00-1:30

94th Aero Squadron Restaurant
1395 NW 57th Avenue
(State Road 836 at Red Road)
Buffet Lunch - \$25

*Speakers: Thelma Gibson, Robert Steinback, Pedro Freyre

Reserve your place now! R.S.V.P. 305.446.0880

President's Corner

The question has been answered and the results are in: YES Miami-Dade was election ready to face the large voter turnout and a lengthy ballot. According to the Department of Elections, 867,932 voters went to the polls out of a total of 1,245,138 registered voters, that's 70%. This was a welcome change from the less than 20% of registered voters that determined the outcome of our January elections. Thanks to a well organized effort on the part of Supervisor of Elections Lester Sola and staff, the early voting as well as those voting on Election Day seemed like a smooth process, lengthy for some but worth the wait.

The enthusiasm that this presidential election generated was unparalleled, a result of many factors, including a highly appealing candidate who will lead our country during turbulent times. People who had never voted registered for the first time because they believed their vote could make a difference. Many were youth who had reached voting age; others were recently naturalized citizens who were excited to fully participate in the democratic process; still others, voters who had been apathetic in previous presidential elections and chose to take action because they were inspired and believed that democracy still works.

The world was watching as we elected our next president, and Florida became a focal point – instead of being the laughing stock of the 2000 presidential election, Florida was the location of a hard fought conflict with an unambiguous outcome. As a battleground state, Florida hosted a number of international visitors, and as League president I was invited to join in the discussion and share time with two separate groups: Visiting dignitaries from England (Members of Parliament from the London Borough of Merton) and women from the Middle East (Council Members from Morocco, Minister of Economy in Tripoli, Lebanon, and a senior attaché for the House of Representatives in Algeria). This was truly a fascinating exchange sponsored by the US State Department and the Middle East Partnership Initiative and made possible by the Council for International Visitors who were instrumental in making all the arrangements. Needless to say, our visitors were well informed regarding our presidential election cycle. It was truly a pleasure for me to once again represent our League and validate what I always suspected – democracy works when citizens participate.

Annie Betancourt

Our League

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**JOIN US! SEE PAGE 4 FOR A
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION!**

The **Miami-Dade Voter** is published every two months by the League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade County.

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VOTER SERVICES ROUNDUP - by Terry Coble

The Miami-Dade League was active in promoting voter education before the November election. In an effort to ensure that voters had sufficient information to make intelligent decisions on the issues, the LWV of Miami-Dade County conducted a series of forums and speaking engagements designed to explain the lengthy ballot questions to the electorate. On October 15th, we held a well-attended Hot Topics luncheon at the 94th Aero Squadron on the six proposed state constitutional amendments remaining after three of the questions were struck from the ballot by the Florida Supreme Court. On several occasions, President Annie Betancourt spoke on radio talk shows regarding pro and con arguments for each amendment; she also presented this information to over 30 residents of the East Ridge Retirement Village, where longtime LWV member Betty Metcalf (see article page 1) now makes her home, and to the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Coral Gables. Vice-President Terry Coble explained the ballot questions to 50 residents of Classic Residence by Hyatt in Aventura, and arranged for the Miami-Dade County Elections Department to provide an on-site demonstration of the new voting equipment.

Board member Caesar Phillips worked with the Miami-Dade County Public Library to have the LWV of Florida's Special Election Edition of The Florida Voter distributed to all branch libraries. This election year publication is produced by the State League in English and Spanish, and contains written summaries and arguments for and against each proposed constitutional amendment, as well as information regarding candidates for statewide office.

LWVUS PRESIDENT VISITS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY - by Lourdes Diaz

As part of a statewide visit to Florida, President Mary G. Wilson of the LWV of the United States, visited Miami on September 22nd to promote the League's VOTE 411 campaign to increase voter awareness and education, and to meet with local election officials to obtain first-hand information about the extent of their readiness for the upcoming election. Miami-Dade League president Annie Betancourt, Vice-President Terry Coble and I participated in the day-long visit.

At our first meeting of the day with Supervisor of Elections Lester Sola, Wilson requested updates on many topics, including the handling at the polls of voters on the state's no-match/no-vote list. S.O.E. Sola assured us that poll workers had been trained to allow voters to show the required identification documents at the polls – rather than having to bring it to the Elections Department within two days - and to allow voters producing this ID to use a regular ballot – rather than having to use a provisional ballot that would not be counted if they failed to bring in the ID within the requisite time. We left feeling assured that the Miami-Dade County Elections Department was doing its best to ensure that the election process was accessible and helpful to all voters.

In South Miami, we met with County Commissioner Carlos Gimenez to ensure that he was aware of the bus signs advertising VOTE 411, and the League's public education efforts. Following this meeting, we took Wilson to the famous Versailles restaurant to introduce her to Cuban food in this most famous of Miami Cuban rendezvous. There, both Wilson and Betancourt were interviewed by a local Spanish language television station, which gave them the opportunity to speak about VOTE 411 and its link to voter education information.

As a final activity before leaving for Palm Beach to continue her Florida tour, Wilson addressed students and staff at Miami-Dade College's Inter-American Campus regarding existing barriers to voting, the ways in which the LWV has advocated to overcome these barriers, and the importance of participation in elections.

Membership: Our Lifblood



**Making
Democracy
Work**

**League of Women Voters
Of Miami-Dade County**

The League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade Wants You!

The League of Women Voters has stood for good government for over eighty-five years – no individual can take your place in helping us make democracy work. Since 1920, the League has worked at local, state and national levels to generate democratic conversation among members, educate the general public and policy makers on pressing issues, and take concerted action to bring about social change.

The League of Women Voters is the most trusted not for profit organization in America. As such, League chapters are often called upon to convene community issue forums as well as host candidate debates.

- The League is nonpartisan; we do not support or oppose candidates.
- The League registers and mobilizes people to vote.
- The League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade County is one of 25 local Leagues and two Member-at-Large Units functioning in 31 of Florida's 67 most populous counties, and one of 850 local Leagues nationwide. There are Leagues in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong. In addition to the numerous grass roots efforts that local Leagues are known for, the League of Women Voters of Florida represents League positions in Tallahassee, while the League's National Lobby Corps represents League positions on Capitol Hill.

"No chance, no destiny, no fate can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul."
Carrie Chapman Catt, founder, the League of Women Voters.

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JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2008 / 2009 TODAY!

All League members receive The National Voter magazine, local and state publications, access to member information on the League website, alerts on breaking action on Capitol Hill and the State Legislature and significant discounts on publications, products, videos and other valuable resources. The Miami-Dade Chapter offers opportunities for everyone - ten hours a week to one hour a year! **Your voice matters!**

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