

Interview with Judy Stuthman, July 31, 2013 – LWV Memoir Project

Judy Stuthman, who served as Co-President of League of Women Voters Minnesota, is convinced that the League offers members the opportunity to pursue their passions. “League appeals to people who have strong interests,” she says. “It’s a good mentoring organization and can teach a person how to influence public policy.”

Immigration is Judy’s passion. It is an outgrowth of the Vietnam War and the influx of those refugees, many of whom she befriended. Immigrants know that voting is the best way to become engaged as a citizen, she says.

At citizenship ceremonies, Judy coordinates the registration of these new citizen voters. Her great reward in doing this is the appreciation expressed by the participants to the League members for helping them register to vote and then watching these new citizens become active in their communities.

Judy tells of a young Somali women who actually attended a citizenship ceremony five hours after giving birth with her IV needles still in her arm; the woman’s husband brought her back to the hospital after the swearing in. It’s the witnessing of the happiness of these new citizens upon obtaining citizenship that motivates Judy to continue to do the work of the League at the citizenship ceremonies. She says that these newcomers know that voting is the best way to become engaged as a citizen.

Judy believes that the League of Women Voters instills in its members a passion for wanting our community –city, state, country- to be the best it can be for all people and this can be accomplished through education and public policy. Basically, members are all part of working together in this endeavor. Membership in League is a life time opportunity. It opens doors to all citizens and future citizens, no matter their origin, age, or profession.