

The League of Women Voters Decade of the 70's

At the 50th Anniversary Convention in May 1970, Lucy Wilson Benson, President of the League of Women Voters, declared 1970 the *Year of the Voter*. "Make the vote, not violence, the basic instrument of change in this country."

The League also incorporated "the equality of the environment " moving forward with a goal to restore a balance between human society and its environment. They completed studies on air pollution, land use and energy conservation. They stressed citizen participation on decision making, public education and the relationship of the environment and human needs.

In 1971 the bipartisan National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) was founded to help elect women to public office. The League trained women leaders while the NWPC worked to get them elected.

Support for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was adopted at the 1972 Convention.

The League also adopted a position of direct popular election of the President.

In 1972 the League created Interleague Organizations (ILO's) to deal with regional issues of the various Leagues.

In 1974 men were accepted as full voting members of the League. A Colorado League t-shirt read, " The League of Women Voters - not for women only."

Another position adopted by the League was the enfranchisement of the "voteless" citizens of the District of Columbia (Washington DC). They petitioned Congress against the denial of the "citizens' inalienable rights - a voice and a vote" in the nation's capital.

Most important to the League was educating the public on the issue positions of the candidates. In 1976 the League sponsored the first televised Presidential debate since 1960. The League won an Emmy Award for its efforts.

Many of these issues had their beginnings in the early years of the League and were revisited many times over the decades. The members of the League had such an influence

on issues and policies that impacted all levels of government in both the United States and at the international level.

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Thank you to...

Nancy M. Neuman, *The League of Women Voters In Perspective 1920-1995*

Kay J. Maxwell, League of Women Voters U.S., *The League of Women Voters Through the Decades*

Barbara Stuhler, *For the Public Record, A Documentary History of the League of Women Voters*

Louise M. Young, *In the Public Interest: The League of Women Voters 1920-1970*