

League of Women Voters of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area, 1926-

Organization Description. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan grassroots membership organization, works to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. The League empowers voters and defends democracy through advocacy, education, and litigation at the local, state, and national levels.

Organization History. After women won the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, the League of Women Voters of Lake Forest was founded in 1926 and the League of Women Voters of Lake Bluff in 1930. Early emphasis in both leagues was placed on women's participation in government, including get-out-the-vote campaigns and support for state legislation allowing women to serve on juries. The two local leagues often cooperated to offer programs. The leagues merged in 1989 to form the League of Women Voters of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff.

The League of Women Voters of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area is a member of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the League of Women Voters of Illinois, and the League of Women Voters of Lake County and participates in national, state, and county studies and activities. Records and publications of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) are collected at the US Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. Records and publications of the League of Women Voters of Illinois (LWVIL) are collected at the University of Illinois Chicago, Special Collections (Richard J. Daley) Library. Records and publications of the League of Women Voters of Lake County are maintained by that League and will be donated to the Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County.

The Collection: General

Records and Publications of the Organization. The History Center of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff maintains the records and publications of the League of Women Voters of Lake Forest (1926 to 1989), the League of Women Voters of Lake Bluff (1930-1989), and the League of Women Voters of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Area (from 1989 forward). Records of the League of Women Voters of Lake Bluff are also collected at The Lake Bluff History Museum.

Local League records and publications date from 1926. The bulk of the collection includes digitized and searchable board meeting minutes, newsletters, and membership lists/directories. Documents available that are not digitized include: files of news clippings (1926 to 2023); notebooks covering the 50th, (1970), 75th (1995), and centennial (2020) celebrations, birthday greetings for Alice Hixon, a Lake Forester who was a leader of the early league as an officer at the national, state and local level.

The collection is not complete. Like most local Leagues of Women Votes, the local league does not have an office and the organization's files were passed from president to president and were subject to various retention policies. Many League documents were destroyed in a basement flood in the mid-90s and others were not regularly retained. Some gaps have been filled from the files of individual league members.

Videos of League programs and candidate forums can be accessed on the video tab on the League's home page:

[https://lwvflbclubexpress.com/content.aspx?pageid=22&cub](https://lwvflbclubexpress.com/content.aspx?pageid=22&cubid=123647&moduleid=492298)

[id=123647&moduleid=492298](https://lwvflbclubexpress.com/content.aspx?pageid=22&cubid=123647&moduleid=492298) or via their YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@leagueofwomenvotersoflakef483>

The Collection: Digitized Documents

Board Meeting Minutes. Board meeting minutes usually include agendas, committee reports, and a treasurer's report; handouts and correspondence or news clippings referred to in the minutes may also be included. At the spring annual meeting, members elect new officers and directors, approve changes to the bylaws, and determine the program of study and action for the following year. Annual meeting packets and annual meeting minutes are interfiled by date with board meeting minutes.

The minutes of the League of Women Voters of Lake Forest begin on July 29, 1930, and continue through February 22, 1989. The merger of the two local Leagues took place in early 1989 and the first joint meeting was held in April. The minutes of the merged leagues date from April 1989 forward. The minutes of the League of Women Voters of Lake Bluff, which was active from 1930 to 1989, begin on May 17, 1978, and continue through March 2, 1989. No Lake Bluff League minutes from before 1978 were located.

Newsletters. Newsletters are arranged by date. "League Lines," the newsletter of the Lake Forest League, was published from 1954 to Spring 2018. The first issue in the collection is Vol. 2, No. 1, June 1955. The name was changed in January 2020 to "The Weekly Newsletter" and then to "The Voter" in August 2020. "LWV Alerts", email communications between newsletters, were not digitized. They begin in 2010 and are filed in the administration/general notebooks.

Annual Membership Directories. Membership directories include lists of current local positions, rosters of local league presidents, and contact information for local members and for legislators at the local, state, and national levels. Directories from 1967 through 2000 have been digitized

and are searchable. Directories from 2001 to 2018 are collected, but not digitized.

The Collection: Undigitized Documents

Administration/general. Five notebooks, arranged chronologically, include official correspondence, programs and publicity for League programs and candidate forums, League histories, honors and awards, and early bylaws.

Publications. Publications in the League collection include community guidebooks such as Know Your Town, Lake Forest Portraits, Living in Lake Bluff, and a few studies which were printed and made available.

News clippings. Three notebooks including clippings from 1926 to 2022, with many gaps.

Anniversary celebration materials. This file contains notebooks covering the 50th (1970), 75th (1995), and centennial (2020) celebrations. It also contains an unpublished directory of local organizations in which women took a leading role, with an introduction by Susan Dart and a draft directory of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff women elected and appointed to public office.

Alice Hixon papers. One box containing birthday greetings to this League leader on her 80th birthday in 1963 and selected programs of the US and Illinois leagues, for which she was an officer.

League Studies. This file is incomplete. It includes scattered background materials from the files of individual study committee members. There are no official files of League studies. Official positions can be found in the minutes of the annual meetings and on the League's website. Local

league studies over the years have covered hundreds of topics at the local, county, regional, state, and national levels. Printed studies are not the norm, but there are a few filed with League publications.