

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR THE 2023-2025 BIENNIUM

DIANE HODGES (LWV of PARK FOREST) DIRECTOR

My life story can be described in brief as: “your beginning does not determine your end.” Born the fifth of eight children to a factory worker and domestic worker, who would have predicted that I would earn a Northwestern University PhD? Despite being raised in public housing, we were encouraged to seek education and to never allow anyone to deter us from reaching a goal we set. This strong belief in the power of education made a career in higher education an obvious choice. During my undergraduate years at Illinois State University, I was exposed to careers in student affairs. After graduation, I entered that career path as a residence hall director and retired 40 years later as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Indiana University Northwest. With my retirement approaching in 2011, I began pondering how I might utilize the time that was now available to me. I knew very little about the LWV of the Park Forest Area, but decided to begin attending meetings in order to learn more about the organization. In less than a year, I moved from being a member to Program Chairperson followed by Co-President and then President. My involvement in League leadership has been a source of challenges and personal growth. Despite the ups and downs, my experience as a Leaguer continues to hold a very special place in my heart.

WHY I WANT TO SERVE ON THE LWVIL BOARD

My desire to serve at the state level is simply to continue pursuing my commitment to the mission of the League at a level which can influence the quality of local Leagues across the state of Illinois. While I do not see myself as a token African American in any environment where I may be, I believe that the presence and input of a person of color can make a significant difference in the discussion and decision making of any organization, including the League. Repeatedly I have been challenged to answer questions about the relevance of the League in today’s world. I believe that the core values of the League are as relevant as they always were, but somehow its public persona too often does not assertively come across as such. My personal and professional experiences and skill set along with my history as a local league leader can be valuable assets to the LWVIL in expanding this influence and power of this organization.

WHAT I HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH AS AN LWVIL BOARD MEMBER

The issues that are high priority for the LWVIL reflect the same pressing issues of citizens across the state and nation. My question, then: why are women of color and younger women not joining the League? Addressing this question and finding resolution are important goals for me as a LWVIL Board member. My hope is to include a consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion in any facet of the work I do for the LWVIL.