

What's Inside

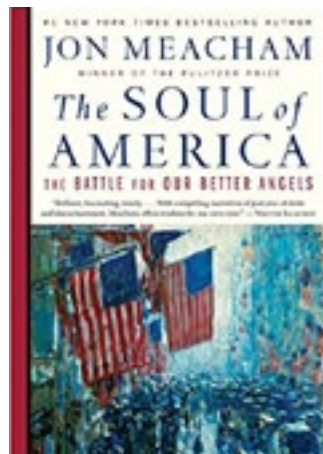
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	2
REDISTRICTING UPDATE	2
ANNE B. SMITH HONORED	2
GREAT DECISIONS	3
FALL SPEAKER	4
JCC REGISTRAR RECEIVES AWARD	5
MEMBERSHIP TEAM IS GRATEFUL	5
INCREASE DEI	5
2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES	6
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CHALLENGE	6
GA ASSEMBLY STRATEGY TIPS	6
WAYS FOR WILLIAMSBURG LEAGUERS TO BECOME INVOLVED	7
WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE PRE-SESSION	7
100 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE!	8
ANN KAHN, OBITUARY	8
CLARA BYRD BAKER STORY	9
CALENDAR	10

2021 Great Decisions

Don Schilling & Jim Clark, *Co-chairs*

Following the wrenching but necessary decision to cancel the last three sessions of Great Decisions in March 2020, the Great Decisions leadership team and the League Board faced the challenge of how to offer the program safely in 2021. Benefitting from a survey of League members and past participants, we made the decision to offer this highly valued program virtually on Zoom during our traditional time, Tuesday mornings in February and March from 10:30 to 11:45.

**Join the LWV Book Club via Zoom
Tuesday, January 26, 4:00 PM**



Please email VP Sue Bivins if you would like to read and discuss Jon Meacham's 2018 bestseller "The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels." (\$9.95)

Meacham relates the long-term perspective on American history and a reason to believe the soul of America is ultimately one of kindness and caring, not rancor and paranoia. In this book, he provides advice to find our better angels—enter the arena, resist tribalism, respect facts, deploy reason, find a critical balance and keep history in mind.

"We've faced such trials before. We have come through times of fear. We have triumphed over our dark impulses. With compelling narratives of past eras of strife and disenchantment, Meacham offers wisdom for our own time and helps us appreciate the American soul: the heart, the core, and the essence of what it means to have faith in our nation." (Walter Isaacson)

President's Message



We are excited to begin a new year and are all hoping to return to some normalcy in our lives. However, we hope this new normal will include more awareness for the people and the world around us, especially those who have faced additional

burdens during 2020—health care workers, the unemployed, people of color, and countless victims of COVID-19. Our financial, physical, and emotional health have all faced challenges this past year. Now, as a League, we will begin the challenge of creating that “more perfect union” we all strive towards.

First of all, I want to acknowledge and thank everyone who worked and volunteered on the election. Co-chairs Maryann Simpson and Rubyjean Gould led the way through our Voter Services committee. Communications Director Mary Ann Moxon spearheaded all types of communication and much more. Many of our members worked at the polls, distributed information, registered voters, and volunteered in countless ways. Thank you all for a job well done.

Although we are unable to meet in person, the League continues to be very active. There are numerous interest groups that I encourage you to learn about and join. We also hope to reestablish a type of “Observer Corps” to follow various governing bodies in the community. Please complete the interest survey in the “eVoter” or contact me LWVWAPresident@gmail.com about how you can become more involved. (I should warn you that involvement in the League can be habit-forming.)

Let us move forward together Empowering Voters & Defending Democracy.

Sudie Watkins

Sudie Watkins
President

Redistricting Update

After years of work by OneVirginia2021, supported by the League of Women Voters and other organizations, Commonwealth voters overwhelmingly approved Constitutional Amendment 1 that creates the Virginia Redistricting Commission (VRC) to end gerrymandering and establish fair electoral districts.

- The aim is to create a diverse VRC that works transparently to establish fair electoral districts throughout the Commonwealth.
- Democratic and Republican Party leaders have selected eight House and Senate members to serve.
- Five retired Virginia judges (Baskerville, Alper, Kirksey, Pugh, Andrews III) have been named to the Selection Committee.
- February 1, 2021 Date of first Virginia Redistricting Commission meeting
- April 1, 2021 Current deadline for states to receive census data.

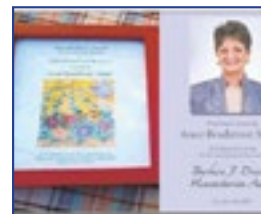
After receipt and review of the 2020 census data, the VRC will publish new, detailed boundary lines for the House of Delegates, Senate, and Congressional districts.

The primary criteria for their decisions will be:

- Proportional population
- Politically non-partisan
- Contiguous and compact lands
- Adhere to state and national rules
- Preserve communities of interest color or and language minorities
- Eliminate all voting suppression of racial and language-minority individuals.

Anne B. Smith Honored by Child Development Resources

League member and community activist Anne



Bradstreet Smith was honored by Child Development Resources (CDR) in November for her years of volunteer service. Charles Driscoll presented the Barbara J. Driscoll Humanitarian Award to

Anne, who served on the CDR board for many years. The award honors CDR volunteers possessing key attributes of the late Barbara Driscoll's “indomitable spirit and character.” Anne served as vice president with Mary Schilling on the Williamsburg board and also served on LWV-VA board as program chair; she was responsible for program at the June 2018 State League Convention.

Great Decisions

continued from page 1

Don Schilling & Jim Clark, *Co-chairs*

Jim Clark took primary responsibility for overseeing our registration process for individuals. He reached out to local communities for persons over fifty-five about interest in community viewing of our programs. This option has been well received. To date we have 210 individual registrations with total participants numbering approximately 325. Registrants will receive LECTURE LINK by email prior to the first event. Jim has been most ably assisted in the process by Mary Ann Moxon, our Constant Contact guru and communications director.

Don Schilling recruited and coordinated speakers. The following schedule of topics and speakers reflects his work.

FEB. 2—Brexit and the European Union. Speaker: Dr. Jeffery A. Stacey. Stacey is a national security consultant, a former State Department official in the Obama administration, the author of the book, "Integrating Europe", and a frequent commentator of international affairs.

FEB. 9—China's Role in Africa. Speaker: Ambassador David Shinn. Shinn, a Foreign Service Officer for 37 years with significant service in Africa, is currently an adjunct professor at George Washington University in the Elliott School of International Affairs. He is completing a co-authored book on China and Africa.

FEB. 16—The Role of International Organizations in a Global Pandemic. Speaker: Professor Iyabo Obasanjo. Educated in Nigeria and the US, Obasanjo served as the Commissioner for Health in Ogun State of Nigeria in 2003 and was elected to the Nigerian Senate in 2007, where she was the Chair of the Health Committee. Returning to the US in 2011, she explored the issues of governance, leadership, and public health as an Advanced Leadership Fellow at Harvard University and held several academic appointments before coming to the College of William and Mary.

FEB. 23—Persian Gulf Security Issues. Speaker: Dr. Trita Parsi. Executive Vice-President of the Quincy Institute, Parsi is an award-winning author and the 2010 recipient of the

Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. He is an expert on US-Iranian relations, Iranian foreign politics, and the geopolitics of the Middle East. He has authored three books on US foreign policy in the Middle East, with a particular focus on Iran and Israel.

MAR. 2—Struggles Over the Melting Arctic. Speaker: Col. Larry Wilkerson. The Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Government and Public Policy, the College of William & Mary, Wilkerson, a frequent speaker at Great Decisions, served as Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff. His six-year membership in the Climate and Security Working Group (CSWG) gives him special insight on this topic.

MAR. 9—Global Supply Chains and National Security. Speaker: Mr. Frank Samolis. Partner and co-chair of the International Trade Practice for Squires, Patton, Boggs, Samolis has represented foreign sovereigns or foreign multinationals from Asia, Europe, Central and Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, in addition to US companies seeking expanded market access in major export markets. He spoke in the 2019 Great Decisions program.

MAR. 16—The Korean Peninsula. Speaker: Ms. Jessica J. Lee. Senior Research Fellow in the East Asia Program at the Quincy Institute, Lee focuses her research on U.S. foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific region, with an emphasis on alliances and North Korea. She previously led the Council of Korean Americans, a national leadership organization for Americans of Korean descent.

MAR. 23—The End of Globalization. Speaker: Prof. Michael Barnett, University Professor of International Affairs & Political Science at GWU's Elliott School of International Affairs. His research interests span the Middle East, humanitarianism, global governance, global ethics, and the United Nations. Among his many books are *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*; *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*; *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*; and *Rules for the World: International Organizations in World Politics* (with Martha Finnemore).

Fall Speaker Challenges League to “Finish the Fight”

On October 15, the Williamsburg Area League hosted a virtual Fall Meeting. Guest author and first Black president of the LWVUS, Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, delivered an inspiring Powerpoint and presentation, urging League members to assume greater responsibility to make our national mandate of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion a reality. She urged us to broaden our membership to become more diverse and to partner with local organizations and groups to address racism and work toward shared equity and inclusion goals. Susan Bivins, Board member and leader for discussion shared her thoughts about the speaker and her book. “The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters,” Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins describes various time periods following the passage of the 19th Amendment when the League did not support the rights of all women.

The League historically did not strive for equity and inclusion from the 1920s, not in

the 1950s or even the 1960s. After the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, the League’s bylaws stated that it was integrated. However, LWVUS left the matter to state and local Leagues to take whatever action would be “appropriate” since integration was seen as “impossible” in the South.

The Atlanta League, the sixth largest in the nation with more than 1100 members, did not vote to end segregation until 1956. However, that decision led six board members to resign in protest, generating unfavorable publicity in the *New York Times*. The LWVUS’s passive acceptance of injustice diminished the relevance of the League across the country.

In the 1960s, Presidents Kennedy and Johnson actively courted the League’s participation in advancing new civil rights programs. Unfortunately, the League could not muster sufficient votes to support the “Equality of Opportunity” program. These were missed

opportunities for the League to lead the cause for justice. Writing optimistically about the future, Dr. Jefferson-Jenkins states that “the League’s reputation allows it to take the lead on issues to transform itself and society to reflect the nation we are and want to be, that if we stay true to the fundamental principles, the League will remain relevant...” In her speech to our League, she stressed the need to be transformational in moving forward, and challenged us to “finish the fight” that our founder Carrie Chapman Catt began in 1920 and to be unapologetic about raising uncomfortable issues.



First Black President of the LWVUS, Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins

Registrar Dianna Moorman Receives Award from County Board of Supervisors



Electoral Board members *Perry DuPue, Kay Cheves, and Tom Gee (in red sweater)* pose with JCC BOS Chair *Jim Icenour*, Director of Elections *Dianna Moorman*, and League Voter Services Co-chair *Maryann Simpson*.

On December 8, Icenour presented the Chairman's Award of Excellence to Ms. Moorman for her handling of November election.

Membership Team is Grateful

Nancy Moye, Membership Co-chair

As winter envelopes us in its frosty embrace, Jan Keady and I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts our members have dedicated to LWV-VA. We greatly appreciate all you have done over the past year and the endless hours you have worked ensuring our defense of democracy. Your enthusiasm and dedication have inspired and motivated our Board!

Please know how grateful we are for your attendance in our Zoom presentations, Advocacy initiatives, phone calls and emails to legislators, Book

Club participation, help with the past elections, suggestions for topics and links for the "eVoter, and most of all your continued financial support for our League. Thanks to you and your steady participation, we have grown to the second largest League in the state. Your participation and professionalism help us be a better League. It is with sincere gratitude that Jan and I thank you for your participation, and we hope 2021 continues to bring all of us success, good health, and the opportunity to once again meet in person!

Join Our League's Effort to Increase Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Pat Evers, Member at large

We've all heard the phrase "the day of reckoning." Well, 2020 has been a YEAR of reckoning during which we were forced to face some unpleasant truths about our political, criminal justice and health care systems, and racial disparities that beg the question of whether our country is willing to make the major changes necessary to make democracy work for all its citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, educational level, social class, etc.

The League of Women Voters is also challenged to take a more critical look at what it is doing "to create a more perfect" democracy as set forth in our mission statement - and as our fall speaker Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins urged us to action. While we embrace our diversity, equity and inclusion in policy and principle, what's more important is how we put those words into action. We would like to foster connections with other local groups and organizations to identify shared goals and foster an exchange of ideas to encourage people from all communities to become active and engaged League members. In the coming months, our local League will be conducting outreach in Williamsburg, James City and York Counties with the goal of broadening and diversifying our membership and reducing barriers to League participation. We envision hosting a virtual "Town Hall" in the spring to examine how voter access is affecting our communities and possible remedies. For more information or to get involved in this effort please email lwvpresident@gmail.com.

2021 LWV-VA Legislative Priorities

Improve access to voting by making permanent the temporary legislation that allowed:

- Convenient drop off of absentee ballots
- No witness requirement for absentee ballots
- Allowing absentee voters to correct procedural errors on ballots
- State-level pre-clearance of practices restricted under the federal Voting Rights Act
- 100% Right to Vote Constitutional Amendment protecting the right to vote so it is not taken away upon incarceration
- Campaign Finance Reform
- National Popular Vote
- Increased Broadband Coverage throughout the Commonwealth

LWV-VA Advocacy Challenge

Once again the state League has launched its Advocacy Challenge, LWV-VA is urging its members to document calls, emails, or meetings made to governor, lieutenant governor, or legislators (not US senators) about various issues, concerns, bills – i.e., voter access, behavioral health, broadband access etc.

This friendly competition measures advocacy based on size of League. We are the second largest League in the state with 320 members. Despite our past active presence during General Assembly and participation in the Advocacy Challenge, we've yet to place higher than third. This year we could win. When you receive an "Action Alert," make contact. Phone calls are more effective than emails.

Log your action! Each time you call, email or visit your elected state officers and legislators, go here to record the contact or bookmark the new

Advocacy Challenge link, bit.ly/LWVVAChallenge or use the link on the bottom of each e-Voter or LWV-WA web page, <https://www.lwvwilliamsburg.org/> You can contact them every day or every week.

SENATORS:

MONTY MASON (D-1)

(804) 698-7501 District (757) 229-9310

Email: district01@senate.virginia.gov

TOMMY K. NORMENT JR. (R-3)

(804) 698-7503 District (757) 259-7810

Email: district03@senate.virginia.gov

HOUSE OF DELEGATES: 2-YEAR TERMS

MIKE MULLIN (D-93)

(804) 698-1093 District (757) 525-9526

Email: DelMMullin@house.virginia.gov

AMANDA BATTEN (R-96)

(804) 698-1096 District (757) 741-7001

Email: DelABatten@house.virginia.gov

IMPORTANT REMINDER: LWV members speak as individuals. Only the president can advocate on behalf of the League. You speak as a constituent.

Republican Strategist Jeff Ryer Offers General Assembly Strategy Tips

Linda Rice
Action/Advocacy Director

The LWV-VA hosted a Zoom meeting on December 9 with Jeff Ryer, Republican strategist and aide to Senator Minority Leader Tommy Norment. The purpose of this and an earlier meeting with Delegate Alfonso Lopez-Arlington was to seek advice on advocating for various League priorities in the 2021 General Assembly (GA) session.

Below is a summary of Jeff's suggestions:

1. Consider yourself a salesperson.
2. Know your arguments in favor of a bill and recognize

your opponents' objections. Be prepared to develop a strategy to overcome objections. i.e., voter registrars are important allies for certain voter-access bills the League may support.

3. Keep in mind: support within a legislator's home district is most significant. Such support can help to overcome the efforts of large or better funded groups. It is best to contact a legislator by personal phone call or handwritten note. The administrative assistant will note whether the caller or

continued on page 7

writer is for or against a particular bill, making special note if this is a constituent contact.

4. Start early to prepare a strategy to support a particular bill. For example, start planning in September how to affect legislation on voter access issues and gun violence prevention bills. If the issue is new, review a new bill before planning a response. The Legislative Information System (LIS) is a good source for information about the status of legislation in both houses: <https://lis.virginia.gov/>
5. Be adaptable. If a legislator does not appear supportive, recommend that you write a thank-you note to him/her for listening to your ideas but also re-state your objections with supporting data. Look at LIS for evidence

of how similar bills fared in regard to pass/fail votes. Identify your allies such as other interest groups or legislators.

6. Keep in mind the importance of the Finance Committee. Bill is sent to Finance if it has a budget implication (various voter access and behavioral health bills are examples) or to die (members do not want the bill to remain on the floor).
7. The 2021 session focus will be on budget issues. Broadband expansion is recognized as important, but General Assembly will be looking to the Governor to see if this is one of his priorities.

Chairs Offer Opportunities to Get Involved

LWV-VA has formed several issue committees and seeks interested members. Several LWV-WA members have already joined one of these groups.

Below is the list of committees and contact information:

Issue committees and coordinators:

- Affordable Housing, Alice Tousignant
- Campaign Finance, Janet Boyd
- DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion), Doris Bey
- Election Security, Lisa Koteen Gerchick
- Environment, Sonia Ballinger
- GVP (Gun Violence Prevention), Christine Payne and Ruth Hoffman
- Justice, Kit Murphy McNally

- Redistricting, Chris De Rosa
- Voter Access, Pam Berg and Don Craig

Groups in formation (coordinators are invited to volunteer):

- Childcare
- Domestic Violence and Harassment
- Education
- Transportation

Related links are available on the issue committees menu pages, at this link.

(coordinators are invited to volunteer):

- Childcare
- Domestic Violence and Harassment
- Education
- Transportation

Related links are available on the issue committees menu pages, at the Williamsburg League of Women Voters website.

Women's Legislative Roundtable Pre-session Held December 3

Every December, the League of Women Voters of Virginia sponsors the Pre-Session Women's Legislative Roundtable prior to the January General Assembly session. We invite 15-20 directors and policy and advocacy experts from many nonprofit organizations to speak briefly about their priority issues and legislation, and to offer their predictions on what may or may not happen during the session.

This year's Pre-session keynote speaker was Brian Koziol, Director of the Virginia Housing Alliance. LWV-VA President Deb Wake and LWV-VA Advocacy Chair Julie Turner discussed the League's upcoming legislative priorities. Commissioner of Elections Chris Piper shared his observations on the 2020 election. While he felt the election went smoothly, one area where Virginia can improve is in providing ballots for the blind and visually disabled. Virginia Secretary of Finance Aubrey Lane presented his insights on the budget challenges Governor Northam's administration faces with revenues reduced because of the pandemic. A panoply of speakers presented their key legislative priorities, including many "old friends" with whom the League has partnered in the past including ACLU, OneVirginia2021, Gun Safety, Virginia Coalition for Open Government, AAUW.

In the past, Williamsburg League members have spent Wednesday mornings during General Assembly in Richmond. Hosted by the state League, legislators, nonprofits, and other advocacy groups speak briefly about upcoming legislation to the Women's Legislative Roundtable attendees.

Williamsburg Leaguers then met with individual legislators or their staffs to share our views. Given the ongoing pandemic, this year the Women’s Legislative Roundtable will meet virtually four Wednesdays—Jan 13, 20, 27 (League Day) and February 3. This is a great opportunity to learn more about how state government works. Find the zoom link for the WLRTs on the Williamsburg League of Women Voters website.

100 Years of Perseverance!

Phoebe Kent, *Voter Editor*



November 10 marked the 100th anniversary of the Virginia League of Women Voters. League members celebrated it on December 10 with a virtual birthday bash.

The evening’s first speaker, Mari Julienne of the Library of Virginia, provided an overview of suffrage efforts in the Commonwealth since the early days of the Equal Suffrage League in Virginia. Because they were not welcomed by their white counterparts, Black women formed their own organizations and fought for the right to vote as well as for fair wages and better working conditions. Local Leagues did not integrate until the 1960s (Williamsburg League was the first). The state library has 80 boxes of LWV memorabilia, and an exhibit, “We Demand: Women’s Suffrage in Virginia,” will remain on view until May 2021.

Nancy Tate, former LWWUS Executive Director and current board member of *Turning Point Suffragist Memorial*, discussed several centennial League events, some of which were modified due to pandemic restrictions. She is also the Virginia Coordinator for the *National Women’s Trail* project that seeks to highlight on an online interactive map important places where suffragists were active. To be included, each site must meet strict criteria. *The Pomeroy Road Marker Project* provides free markers for identified and documented suffragist sites that have a local partner.

Each local League president, beginning with our own Sudie Watkins, briefly shared past accomplishments and hopes for the League’s future. Sudie spotlighted Clara Byrd Baker, one of five Black women instrumental in the formation of our integrated Williamsburg

League in 1962 and an important community educator and activist throughout her life. Other presidents noted when their Leagues came into being (several are quite new but thriving) and their principal activities. Many highlighted their local League’s voter registration efforts.

Before concluding, party participants raised their glasses and/or cupcakes to toast the state League’s milestone achievement and its commitment to an ambitious future.

Ann Kahn— Role Model for Women

Long-time League member Ann Kahn passed away on December 29, 2020 at the age of 94.



Throughout her lifetime Ann was a civic activist, involved with the League, the Democratic Party and many other organizations. A powerful speaker and accomplished advocate, Ann was an early role model for working women—including League member and daughter Nancy Bolash.

After graduating from George Washington University, Ann went to work for the League of Women Voters in Washington, DC. Her passion for a good education for all children led to her election as President of the National PTA, following many years of involvement on the local and national levels. She served on the Fairfax County School Board, including three years as chair, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and worked at the National Academy of Science.

Local Leaguers remember Ann for her sharp intellect, interest in politics, commitment to public education and as Hostess Supreme of our League’s annual Holiday Receptions. For many years Ann insisted on preparing all the party food as well as hosting the well-attended events in her beautiful Kingsmill home.

CLARA BYRD BAKER (1866-1979) Founding League Member, Suffragist, Chalkboard Champion & African-American Trailblazer

Mary Ann Moxon, *Communications Director*

Ten years after Clara Byrd Baker died in 1979 at the age of 93, the Williamsburg/James City County School Board paid her a fitting tribute when it opened the Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School not far from where she began her teaching career. Yet few outside of our League or the First Baptist Church know much about this *chalkboard champion* who dedicated decades to teaching in Williamsburg schools.



League members know her as one of our founding members in the early 1960s. Then a retired teacher, 76-year-old Clara Byrd Baker was one of five black women among two dozen Williamsburg women in 1962 who applied to the state League to become a provisional League.

While many local Leagues existed in Virginia, none was integrated. The state League board initially denied the Williamsburg application. Later, they reluctantly agreed—but stipulated that only white women serve as officers on the board. The Williamsburg women resisted that limitation and persisted. Finally, the state board forwarded the application to the national League. The Williamsburg Area League of Women Voters became the first integrated local League in Virginia in 1963; board member Clara Byrd Baker was its Voter Services Chair.

Our League archives, housed in William & Mary's Swem Library, describe Baker's work leading our League's fight against poll taxes until the Supreme Court ruled them

unconstitutional in 1966. Clara was a natural in League work because she was one of the first women in Williamsburg to register to vote in 1920 after the 19th Amendment was ratified and just a few months later, she became the first woman to vote in Williamsburg.

Clara was one of 11 children born to a father who could neither read nor write and a literate mother who encouraged her children to pursue their education. According to the Library of Virginia website, Clara's father owned the family's Williamsburg house mortgage-free by 1900 and was one of only 36 African-Americans in Williamsburg still registered to vote one year after passage of the restrictive Virginia Constitution of 1902.

At age 16, Clara began her teaching career in 1882 in a one-room school in James City County. At the time there were as many black teachers as white in Williamsburg—a majority of them men. She continued her education through extension and correspondence courses and summer institutes. After attending Hampton Institute and Virginia State College for Negroes, now Virginia State College, she earned her Bachelor's degree in Education in 1945. After 16 years assigned to James City County Training School on Nicholson Street, Baker's last 12 years of teaching were at Bruton Heights School—all during the "separate but equal" policy of that era.

Baker was a renowned leader in the Black community, First Baptist Church and the League of Women Voters. She promoted interracial cooperation and advocated women's involvement in public affairs. She assisted in forming the Williamsburg Area Recreation Association that built Quarterpath Park. She was most proud of her success in encouraging her own children and many of her students to pursue professional careers. For seven years following her husband's death in 1960, Baker continued her volunteer work in Williamsburg and traveled extensively in the United States and abroad. In 1967 she moved in with her daughter's family in Virginia Beach.

continued on page 11

In a 1967 tribute, the W/JCC superintendent of schools said that he could not remember any worthwhile community-wide effort in which Clara Byrd Baker had not participated. She won numerous honors from local and regional organizations including the *Sojourner Truth Meritorious Service Award* from the Tidewater Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women in 1960 and the *Susan B. Anthony Award* from the Norfolk and Virginia Beach chapters of the League of Women Voters in 1975 for her work supporting education and civic opportunities.

Posthumously, in 2007, she was honored by the Virginia State Library as an *African American Trailblazer in Virginia*. In 2011, her life was honored in *To Be Seen as an American* by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation as an African-American woman who “didn’t accept society’s limits on what they could accomplish.”

Tidewater Suffragists Finally Get Some Credit

MaryAnn Moxon, *Communications Director*

Before Virginia women could vote in 1920, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia headquarters was in Richmond, giving suffragists easier access to state legislators. However, some very active suffragists were extremely busy establishing local Suffrage League chapters in Tidewater Virginia in the early 1900s.

The Equal Suffrage League of Norfolk, established by 40 women in 1910, and Williamsburg in 1911 were two of the first; Newport News in 1912. More followed with nearly 20,000 members in 140 Virginia chapters by 1919.

The names of Hampton suffragist Janie Porter Barrett, Newport News’ Faith Morgan and Norfolk’s Pauline Adams, Maude Jameson and Jesse Townsend have been ignored in the mainstream for too long, an injustice this book helps remedy.

Twenty-one women founded the Williamsburg Equal Suffrage chapter in March, 1911. Its first president was Anne Baker Tucker Tyler, wife of William & Mary president Lyon Gardiner Tyler, whom local suffragists boasted was the first man in Virginia to speak publicly on behalf of votes for women. During his presidency, women were first admitted in 1918.

Brent Tarter and Marianne Julienne are editors of the Library of Virginia’s Dictionary of Virginia Biography project. Barbara Batson is Library of Virginia exhibitions coordinator. The authors’ access to the records of the Equal Suffrage League enabled them to flesh out the stories of the decades-long fight of many largely unsung

women who marched, picketed and lobbied legislators during these tumultuous times in The Campaign for Woman Suffrage in Virginia.

At least 100 Virginia women marched in the famous 1913 “parade,” the first march on Washington. Maude Jameson was arrested at least seven times as she protested quietly with her fellow “Silent Sentinels” in front of the White House. Some were also jailed, force-fed and beaten by guards not far from here in Occuquan, Virginia, on November 14, 1917—the “Night of Terror”—for demonstrating in Washington.

The authors describe how two competing statewide organizations formed—one committed to an amendment to the Virginia constitution and one devoted to amending the U.S. Constitution. Carrie Chapman Catt, who went on to found the League of Women Voters in 1920, and New Jersey’s Alice Paul spent time here inspiring their Virginia counterparts.

Southern legislators and anti-suffragists opposed a federal woman suffrage amendment since they believed it threatened states’ rights and white supremacy. Virginia’s 1901-1902 state constitution and Jim Crow laws deprived almost all Black men the right to vote.

White women exclusively comprised the Equal Suffrage Leagues in Virginia. So Black women organized their own clubs to, among other things, fight for suffrage. Janie Porter Barrett helped found the Virginia State Federation of

Colored Women’s Club in 1908 in Hampton, serving as president until 1932.

Suffrage League members brought the issue to the floor of the Virginia General Assembly three times unsuccessfully between 1912 and 1916. Even after the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920 by Tennessee, the last of 36 states—Virginia not among them—many Black women faced obstacles as they tried to register to vote. In Hampton and Phoebus, voter registrars turned away many Black women or asked them to qualify by answering questions such as: “How long can the House of Representatives take recess without the consent of the Senate?”

As the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia disbanded, the League of Women Voters of Virginia got its start in 1920—with Adele Clark as first president. It remained a white women’s organization for more than 40 years—until the Williamsburg Area LWV fought to become the first integrated local League in Virginia in 1962. Currently, there are 14 local Leagues in Virginia—two in Tidewater Virginia: Williamsburg Area and South Hampton Roads. The League began accepting men as members in 1974.



Mark Your Calendars

All events are virtual through Zoom

Jan 13	General Assembly begins	8:30am
Jan 13	Women’s Legislative Roundtable (WLRT)	8:30am
Jan 20	Women’s Legislative Roundtable (WLRT)	8:30am
Jan 26	Book Club: The Soul of America by Jon Meacham	4:00pm
Jan 27	WLRT - League Day	8:30-11:30am
Feb 2	Great Decisions - Brexit & the E.U.	10:30am
Feb 3	LWV-WA Board Meeting	4:00pm
Feb 8	New Members Meeting	7:00pm
Feb 9	Great Decisions - China’s Role in Africa	10:30am
Feb 16	Great Decisions - Role of International Organizations in a Global Pandemic	10:30am
Feb 23	Great Decisions - Persian Gulf Security	10:30am
Mar 2	Great Decisions - Struggles over the Melting Arctic	10:30am
Mar 3	LWV-WA Board Meeting	4:00pm
Mar 9	Great Decisions - Global Supply Chains & National Security	10:30am
Mar 16	Great Decisions - Korean Peninsula	10:30am
Mar 23	Great Decisions - The End of Globalization	10:30am