



# THE VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

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tag.lwvia@gmail.com

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[www.lwvia.org](http://www.lwvia.org)



## President's Message

By Terese Grant, LWVIA President

In the last issue of The Voter, there was a lot of praise given to our local Leagues for the fantastic work they did during the 2020 election season. It was so inspiring to hear about the creative ways they registered voters and educated them on how to request and fill out absentee ballots. As a result Iowa had one of the best voter turnouts in history. And so we ask, why did the Legislators find it necessary to pass an Election Bill that greatly restricts early and absentee voting, among other things?

(Continued on page 2)

## Membership Tally 2021

Local League membership as of January 31st of this year is up about 6%, from 800 members last year to 851 this year.

Of the nine Leagues that gained members, Johnson County led the way with 16 new members, followed by Dubuque at +9 and Linn County and Metro Des Moines at +8 each.

PMP invoices will go out to local Leagues in August. If an error in the membership categories for your local League is discovered at that time, please advise the LWVIA Treasurer.

## Impact on Issues 2020 - 2022

Impact on Issues is designed to help League members use LWVUS public policy positions effectively at the national, state, local, and regional levels. The intention is to inspire Leagues to use national positions to act in their own communities.

Visit this link to view the full publication:

<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>

(Continued from page 1)

This was the question we heard over and over in committee meetings and in the House and Senate as they debated SF 413. It is beyond disappointing for us as League members, who value and promote easy access to voting as a fundamental right for every citizen, to deal with these kinds of restrictions. Iowa, of course, is not alone. There are these kinds of voter restrictions being enacted in a variety of states.

But there is hope. In Washington, the House of Representatives passed HR 1, the For the People Act. This bill will help to expand voter access, protect voters, and help to build a more inclusive democracy. The next step will be for the Senate to also pass this important legislation. We need to ask both Senator Grassley and Senator Ernst to support passage of HR 1 in the Senate. Please reach out to our Senators to ask them to support the For The People Act, S1, and to pass this important piece of legislation.

Senator Charles Grassley: <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/contact/questions-and-comments>

Senator Joni Ernst: <https://www.ernst.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact>

The Iowa Legislature has now nearly passed the second funnel deadline. There are still many bills and issues that the League feels are very important and need our attention. We will be monitoring bills that deal with guns, broadband, law enforcement, child care, criminal justice system, women's reproductive rights, the bottle bill, and so much more. We will continue to advocate for the people of Iowa - all of them.

I want to encourage every single member to stay involved in this Legislative Session. Contact your Legislators and let them know your opinion about bills that are being considered. Send them an email, make a phone call, and attend your local forum to ask questions about their positions. We need ALL members of the League to Defend Democracy.



## Policy Updates

### Political Policy

The LWVIA shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy

The League is fully committed to ensure compliance - in principle and in practice - with LWVIA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.

## ByLaws Updates

Article VII, Financial Administration  
Section 6 ---"The LWVIA Board also acts as the LWVIA Education Fund Board."

Article VIII, Convention  
Section 1 --- "Meetings may be held electronically." (second sentence of section)

Article IX, Council  
Section 1 ---"Meetings may be held electronically." (second sentence of section)



## LWVIA Convention 2021

The League of Women Voters of Iowa will be hosting our annual Convention this year on Saturday, June 12. It will be a virtual event and our theme for this year will be, "Let's Grow Our Future...NOW". Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Deborah Turner, the President of the League of Women Voters. She has been asked to speak about her role as President, her vision for the future of the League, and the role that local leagues should play. Every local league will have an opportunity to register voting delegates, but all members will be welcome to attend this event. More details will be announced at a later date. This is the first call to Convention.

## Slate of Officers Presented for Nomination 2021 - 2023

### **President**

Terese Grant, Grinnell (2021 - 2023)

### **Secretary**

Polly Horton, Johnson County (2021 - 2023)

### **Directors**

Teresa Bomhoff, Metro DM (2021 - 2023)

Mary Stewart, Ottumwa (2021 - 2023)

\_\_\_\_\_, Sioux City (2021 - 2023)

### **Directors appointed by the LWVIA Board**

(The elected members of the Board of Directors shall appoint such additional directors as they deem necessary, not exceeding six to serve concurrently with the terms of office of the most recently elected directors.)

Doris Kelley, Black Hawk-Bremer

Raven Hollenhorst, Johnson County

Sue Wilson, Dubuque

Mary Rae Bragg, Dubuque

Bonnie Pitz, Jasper County

\_\_\_\_\_, Muscatine

### **Continuing Terms**

#### Vice President

Nancy Halvorson, Ames-Story County (2020 - 2022)

#### Treasurer

Linda Meloy, Johnson County (2020 - 2022)

#### Directors

Nancy Porter, Johnson County (2020 - 2022)

Jean McMenimen, Linn County (2020 - 2022)



## LWV ILO

You love it!  
 You care for it!?  
 You know it's important.

Our environment is more important than ever, and so many issues depend on it being cared for properly. That's why the UMRRILO was established and we work for the environment.

Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization is in need of hands to help our new recommended director, Mary Ellen Miller, to lead the fight. The position of Vice President is open and basically a four year commitment. Think about joining us. You're already a member if your local league paid the \$25 dues. Mary Ellen has a resume that won't stop and promotes positive environmental directions.

Join our annual meeting on April 5.

Contact Nancy Porter for more information:  
[nancy55555@icloud.com](mailto:nancy55555@icloud.com)

Opportunities are endless.

## Iowa's 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Commemoration is up and running again

Doris Kelley, Chair, Iowa's 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Commemoration Committee

Just a few weeks ago – specifically March 11, 2021 – was the one-year anniversary of COVID-19 being declared by the World Health Organization as a worldwide pandemic. We know - oh too well - that was also when Iowa's 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Commemoration officially "closed-down-shop" with their over 100 planned projects, endeavors and projects to occur in 2020.

Due to the medical miracle of creating ~95% efficient COVID-19 vaccinations in one year - the average vaccine takes 10-12 years to develop - we're getting closer and closer to a "normal lifestyle." Vaccinations, herd immunity and adhering to CDC recommendations are important so we can get back to social interactions like we once knew.

This is to announce Iowa's 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Commemoration is now up and running again! Let's resume our commemoration endeavors with vim and vigor. And, on Dec. 31, 2021, we'll formally conclude our commemoration activities. All cities, counties, libraries, museums, colleges, organizations and individuals who planned 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment commemoration endeavors to occur in 2020 should resume projects -- as they feel comfortable -- and are in accordance with local, state and CDC COVID-19 recommended protocol. New activities not thought of one year ago are welcomed to occur in 2021.

The webpage - <https://19th-Amendment-Centennial.org> - will continue to receive and publish project details (who, what, when and where). Hence, if you are hosting a 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment related project between now and Dec. 31, 2021, go to the webpage's Menu, 'hit' the "Submit an Event/Program" tab, complete the requested information (event name, short description, date, time, place, name, phone, e-mail and organization) and 'hit' the Submit button. Your approved event will be noted on the Iowa map and month-by-month schedule with details of your project published.

Don't forget we have two 1913-1920 replica suffrage wagons ready for usage. One is for display purposes only and the other wagon is parade usable. Information related to the replica suffrage wagons (dimensions and pictures) and requesting wagon usage is easily accessible in the "Suffrage Wagon Replica" tab of the webpage. Questions regarding the wagons should be directed to Melissa Gesing, Replica Suffrage Wagon Coordinator; [Melissa@RedGooseSolutions.com](mailto:Melissa@RedGooseSolutions.com); 563-506-3826. I'm excited our 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Commemoration activities will be commencing again. I look forward to attending your event. Thank you for your one year tolerance, patience and understanding.

Ever since the Olympic Games first started in Greece (1896) we hear the phrase "let the games begin" during the opening ceremony. Likewise, "let Iowa's 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Commemoration reconvene."

## The Mighty Mississippi

Nancy Porter, LWVIA Board of Directors

MRN (Mississippi River Network: 1Mississippi)

UMRRILO (Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization)

### Mississippi River Network

1Mississippi.org webpage of the Mississippi Regional Network will present a plan for a celebration week in June dedicated to the river and all its wonderful attributes. What do you think of when you think of the Great Mississippi? Do you think of the great commerce use, the barges or the fisher people who fish, smoke the fish and sell it along Highway 52 at the scenic overlooks? Do you remember Huck Finn and his antics with Joe? Did you ever sit and watch a lock and dam in action or walk along the main street of Bellevue, IA? Did you visit a bed n breakfast or rent a cabin on the river, camp along the river or rent a House Boat or cruise on the Mississippi Belle? Maybe you hear the sounds of the river calling including the music and memories of Ol' Man River or Show Boat as you eat your picnic lunch on the Mississippi River Bank. Pandemic time is a good time to use as memory time, but looking forward to the future including the Mississippi River is not a daydream.

Right now I offer thanks and gratitude to the Biden appointed Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, who knows Iowa and is communicating with the farmers of Iowa to help create more sustainable land use. He believes in building diverse rural communities, powering a clean energy system that revives our economy while saving the planet from extinction. (resource: Art Cullen, editor Storm Lake Times).

The Mississippi River receives more than 55% nitrites from the Iowa farm land which washes to the Delta. Not good. Better land use would help protect farming and the Delta.

In the meantime there are all sorts of websites and information. Did you know Tom Vilsack has talked with Iowa farmers about carbon offsets? Anna Kusmer from "The World" February 7 writes it's possible for large companies to reach net-zero carbon emissions, in theory, carbon-neutral, by banking on carbon offsets. This is what Disney had in mind when spending millions to help protect a forested area in the Amazonian region of Peru. It is one of the more affordable ways to help solve climate change. Capturing carbon dioxide with algae is a carbon sequestration study. Developing molecular films that capture carbon dioxide with algae is a study with Iowa based Slater, IA Gross-Wen Technologies and the U of CA - San Diego. The National Renewable Energy Lab and U.S. Department of Energy announced this \$2 million grant.

For those who like economic proof, a study from Iowa State recently found that topsoil loss amounts to \$7 million the first year with a ten year loss of \$315 million for Iowa farmers' crops and \$735 million over 15 years. I used to take my students out to farms and measure top soil. It was 14 to 16 inches in the 1990s. Try to find that now. Of course a study has to make some assumptions as to cost of corn and soybeans per bushel and 14 million Iowa farm acres.

There is also current reading on research on ethanol and the use of in electrical vehicle times..

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### **Interleague Organization of the Upper Mississippi Region (UMRRILO)**

Mary Ellen Miller will become our new Chair of the UMRRILO in March. She is a passionate, sustainable farmer who has contacts and knowledge to lead our mission forward involving more people in the need to protect our Mississippi River. Who better than an Iowan who knows the farmers' needs and desires and also lack of knowledge!? Her background is impressive and her knowledge extensive.

Would you like to work with Mary Ellen and the dedicated Executive Board of UMRRILO? Monthly meetings currently held the first Monday of the month including a post lunch break program is the time commitment. Four states work with Iowa to educate and help protect the Mississippi River: Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin. A vice chair is needed.

Contact Nancy Porter at [nancy55555@icloud.com](mailto:nancy55555@icloud.com) with UMRRILO in the subject line if you are interested or need more information.

### **Bottle Bill legislation should put Iowa consumers first**

Linda Schreiber

LWVJC Voter Editor and Advocacy Committee Member

The growing fund of unredeemed deposits now held by the beverage industry is the point of contention in the Iowa Legislature today. The grocery industry wants the unclaimed deposit money that the beverage industry holds.

Legislators are stumped as to how to rectify the situation. Unfortunately, none of the proposed bills that made it through the funnel offer a comprehensive revision to benefit Iowa consumers.

The League supports a clean bottle bill that puts Iowa consumers first. Americans - not just Iowans - need a modern architecture that allows consumers to conveniently return beverage containers. Asking consumers to drive miles to redeem a deposit that they have paid isn't reasonable.

One of the current Bottle Bill's best features is that it's self-funded - it doesn't cost taxpayers anything. The cost is borne by the distributors/manufacturers. Here's how it works:

Distributors charge grocery stores/retailers, etc. a 5 cent deposit. In turn, grocers/retailers charge consumers a 5 cent deposit. Now, the grocer/retailer is whole.

When the consumer returns the containers they are paid 5 cents by the grocer/redemption center. Now, the consumer is whole.

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## Local Leagues Rock - Muscatine

By Linda Meloy, LWVIA Treasurer

On the banks of the Mighty Mississippi, President Sue Johannsen has a lot to say of her fellow League members! First, even during a pandemic, this League has gained members this past year, now totaling 42!

Rather than always deciding on a study that is needed for their city or county, the Muscatine League's approach to Program Planning is usually to have a meeting for members to share what they want to learn more about or what public information is needed in their community. Then those topics become the foci of meetings for the following year. Here are three examples:

1. Last spring members thought the community needed to understand more about the practical aspects of recycling, i.e. what can and cannot be recycled. Thus League member Sandy Stanley contacted Waste Management Director David Popp and he prepared a YouTube video to address that issue (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHJfaSzFIKw>). Then a City Recycling Guide was produced by the League and distributed within the community - acceptable and unacceptable products.

2. Due to the local history of Muscatine being a station on the underground railroad and a former resident, African American Alexander Clark, being a member of the community during that time, this League partnered with the Alexander Clark Foundation and the Muscatine Community College to sponsor an event about another underground railroad station, Grinnell. David Connon, Earlham, presented virtually Josiah Bushnell Grinnell and the Iowa Underground Railroad.

Muscatine was home to African American Alexander Clark (1826-1891) from the age of 16. His parents were freed slaves as was his wife Catherine. Alexander was a barber by training, but during his life a laborer, newspaper owner, entrepreneur, lawyer, diplomat, and activist for improving the status of blacks in Iowa. He is well known for suing the Muscatine School District for not allowing his daughter Susan to attend the white school, feeling that the school for blacks was inferior. When his request for denied, he appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court, and in 1868 a ruling in his favor has handed down, a ruling that initiated school integration in the State of Iowa, 86 years before the more well-known Brown v. Board of Education case. In 1869 he was a delegate to the Colored National Convention in D.C. where he met President Grant. Alexander was the second African American graduate of The University of Iowa School of Law in 1884; his son Alexander, Jr., was the first in 1879. President Harrison appointed Alexander to U.S. Ambassador to Liberia in 1890, where he died suddenly the next year. He is buried in Muscatine where his family home remains a historic landmark. Note: Due to the work of a group of history-minded residents of Muscatine, some of whom are League members, West Middle School was renamed last year the Susan Clark Junior High School, honoring her as the first African American student to integrate a school in Muscatine.

3. In order to offer the community the latest and most accurate information on the Covid-19 virus and vaccination, this League welcomed the local Public Health Director to a virtual public forum on What we all need to know about Covid.

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When the grocer/retailer/redemption center returns the containers to the distributor/manufacturer, the grocer/retailer/redemption center is paid 5 cents PLUS 1 cent handling fee by the distributor.

Again, the grocer/retailer/redemption center is whole, PLUS they receive a 1 cent handling fee. When the containers aren't redeemed it's the distributor/manufacturer that is ahead because they have kept the 5 cent deposit fee charged to the retailer/grocer at the initial sale.



The bottle bill should be updated to reflect and address the issues and uses of today.

- Redemption is critical to maintaining an adequate supply chain for manufacturers.
- Asking consumers to drive to redeem is an unreasonable burden - especially when the current law requires sellers to redeem.
- Increasing the handling fee will allow retail stores additional funds to incorporate reverse vending technology (automated redemption machines) and encourage entrepreneurs to open new redemption centers.
- Increasing the deposit fee will encourage consumers to redeem bottles and cans.
- Expanding the beverage market to include more bottles and cans that use the very same containers (i.e., bottled water, tea and energy drinks) as current beverages covered by the existing law helps protect the environment and natural resources.
- Determine greater and more stringently-enforced penalties to be assessed to violators and determine what agency will assess the penalties and ensure adherence to the law.
- Move the administration of the container deposit law to the Department of Revenue - it is ideally suited to create procedures to track unclaimed deposits and follow the money, which is at the heart of the bottle bill (for distributors and retailers/grocers).
- Recycling, while good, is not the complete solution. Adding more recycling programs will cost municipalities that are ultimately passed on to taxpayers.

The bottle bill can be updated to be a win-win for everyone by expanding the containers regulated by the bill and increasing the deposit and the handling fee. This action encourages redemption over litter control, provides grocers and redemption centers opportunities to operate fiscally-sound operations, keeps containers in the supply chain and allows containers to be used at the highest levels. These steps will maintain the costs within the industries affected, and doesn't raise or pass costs to consumers or taxpayers.

The current bottle bill is net-neutral for taxpayers. A modernized bill should also be net-neutral for redemption.

## Election Regulations and Government Accountability Committee

The Election Regulations and Government Accountability Committee (ERGA) met via Zoom January (1.28.21) and March (3.09.21).

### Election Regulations

We decided to check with the County Auditors' Association to support legislation they were proposing with regard to Absentee Voting and Election Recount Revisions. The ISACA recommendations regarding recounts and absentee ballot administrative improvements were presented to the appropriate legislators by the ISACA lobbyists, but the legislators did not consider them. The Auditors' Association was represented at the public hearing announcing their opposition to bill SF 413, without success. ERGA Committee sent out an Action Alert to LWVIA members to express opposition to the election bill SF 413. Governor Reynolds has since signed the bill.

### Government Accountability

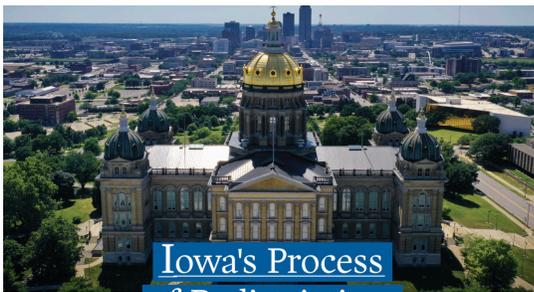
How to monitor Government Accountability? We set out to decide who to partner with and what to measure.

An interview (Zoom) was held with Randy Evans, the executive director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council, to garner his insights. How can we effect the gridlock in the Iowa Legislature and the secrecy in sub-committee meetings? Is there an Accountability Office? His comments and suggestions pointed to strengths of the League:

- Foster well-informed citizens (educate)
- Cover a broader geographic footprint (use all local Leagues)
- Partner with others
- Research and share ideas with newspapers

ERGA Committee

Polly Horton, Doris Kelley, Bonnie Pitz, Shannon Patrick, Terese Grant



### The Nation's Gold Standard

Thursday, March 18, 2021  
3-4 p.m.

Join the League of Women Voters of Iowa and Drake Law School for a discussion on the reapportionment of Iowa's voting district boundaries presented by Ed Cook, senior legal counsel with the Legal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency.



Ed Cook graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1982 and served as an attorney in the U.S. Army and as a staff attorney with the Iowa Supreme Court prior to joining the Legislative Services Agency in 1992. Currently, he staffs the State Government and Veterans Affairs Committees and drafts legislation in the areas of public retirement, state government, gambling and alcohol regulation, veteran's affairs, and redistricting. He was the lead attorney for the redistricting efforts of the Legislative Services Agency in 2001 and 2011.

## Iowa's Process of Redistricting

The League of Women Voters of Iowa recently co-sponsored a discussion about redistricting with Ed Cook, senior legal counsel with the Legal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency.

You may watch the full discussion here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZIIYfWCT\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZIIYfWCT_U)

Stay tuned for a series of videos about redistricting that we will be sharing on our social media channels and website!

## Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee

Myrna Loehrlein, Chair

Our emphasis this year is research. We continue to have great interest in the high cost of interaction with the justice system. Particular concerns are court debt (fees and fines), cash bail, and forfeiture law. We have created four subcommittees to learn and share information about these topics plus the role misdemeanor law plays in the prison pipeline.

CJJC has instituted the "Justice for All of Us" a one-page, weekly, news note. We will continue the series through the legislative session with more information about our four areas of interest.

We welcome anyone who has an interest in the criminal justice system. A new and immediate topic is the treatment of prisoners during the pandemic.

## All League Members

Please contact Sue Wilson at [wilsonsue1832@gmail.com](mailto:wilsonsue1832@gmail.com) if you wish to periodically receive information about the environment.

Information may include a link to a recorded program, an article, or current research.

Topics of interest include:

- Soil Health
- Water Quality
- Renewable Energy
- Carbon Offsets
- Carbon Sequestration
- PFAS / Oil Pollution
- Climate Change

## Newest Member-at-Large Erica Larson of Storm Lake

By Linda Meloy, LWVIA Treasurer

Erica is a St. Mary's Catholic High School science teacher who used to live in Iowa City where she served as an Area Education Agency (AEA) Science Consultant while raising her now adult children, one a chef and one an archaeologist. While in Iowa City Erica was introduced to the League as well as to AAUW; and she has old friends there, such as Rep. Mary Mascher.

In 1991 Erica was awarded an Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Fellowship, sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Here is a descriptor of this enriching program for teachers and for the youth teachers impact as a result of the projects created and delivered:

*Applicant must be a woman, elementary or secondary public school teacher, U.S. citizen, dedicated to improving educational opportunities for women of all ages, presently employed with at least three years full-time teaching experience, and planning to continue teaching for the next three years. Award supports professional development for teachers, educational opportunities for girls, and advancement of gender equity in the classroom, school, or district.*

Besides her interest in the work of the League in the area of the environment, Erica lives in a multi-cultural community where she works for equity. As a League member she would like to work with others in her community to register voters and provide accurate information on issues to the public.

She has a compatriot in that goal in Art Cullen, editor of The Storm Lake Times and winner of a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting.

In her spare time and consistent with her interest in the environment, she kayaks, fishes, and bicycles. When weather doesn't permit those adventures, she reads and knits.

Welcome to the League, Erica!





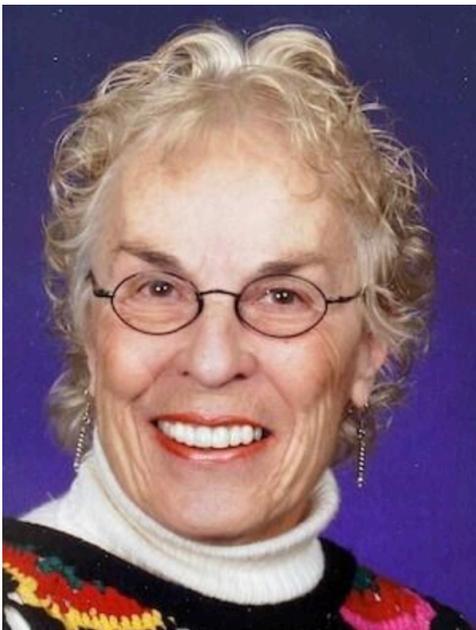
## L. Joan Hartsuck

By Linda Meloy, LWVIA Treasurer

L. Joan Hartsuck, 1934-2021, passed away February 28, 2021, in Urbandale, IA, where she had lived since 2013. She was LWVIA President 1989-91 after serving as president of her local Metro League from 1976-78. Joan, along with being involved in her communities of residence, was passionate about music, hiking and camping in the CO Rockies, and her cats. She is survived by daughter Diane (Terry) Hausserman of Boonville, NY, and son Duncan (Jean-Marie) Hartsuck of West Des Moines; two grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by husband Richard and infant son Douglas. During Joan's years as state League president, she, her board, and local Leagues were working on impacting the passage of the following pieces of legislation: inspection of childcare facilities; school finance that provided avenues for achieving greater equity for IA students; safer groundwater; energy efficiency; and making marital rape illegal.

## Louise Pauline Mayer Moon

Source: The Des Moines Register



Louise Pauline Mayer Moon, 95, of Des Moines died on January 2, 2021, at Scottish Rite Park Healthcare Center from the effects of Alzheimer's Disease. Louise was born on February 8, 1925, in Chicago to Lazare and Esther (Bernstein) Mayer. After graduating from Grinnell College, she was married to John Henry Moon from 1947 until his death in 1998. They settled in Des Moines where they were active at Plymouth Congregational Church. Louise worked for the benefit of many civic organizations, including Planned Parenthood where she chaired The Des Moines Book Sale, priced cookbooks for decades, and served on the Board of Directors. Louise chaired the Festival of Trees and served on the Blank Guild Board of Directors. She served as the League of Women Voters president at the state and local levels, and was one of the first women lobbyists at the Iowa Statehouse.

Louise was appointed to the State Soil Conservation Commission and the Board of Trustees at the Des Moines Water Works. She served on the Water Board during the flood of 1993 when Des Moines lost water. In recognition of her years of service, a water storage facility was named for her.

