

<http://www2.scnow.com/news/2011/aug/08/florence-league-women-voters-honor-brown-founders--ar-2245370/>



Published: August 08, 2011

[Home](#) / [news](#) / [local](#) /

League of Women Voters to honor Brown, founders

By SCNow Staff

The League of Women Voters of the Florence Area will host a reception Aug. 25 at the Florence Museum of Art to honor community activist Peggy Brown of Florence, who's recently been elected to the LWV South Carolina co-presidency; and LWV Florence founders Dolores J. Miller, Patsy Schnibben Stone and Barbara Thornton Sylvester.

The event, "Honoring Our Past - Celebrating Our Future," will be from 6 to 7 p.m. It coincides with the annual observance of Women's Equality Day (Aug. 26).

Co-presidents Frances L. Elmore and M. Hannah Reig of the Florence Area League, note that "there is much for members to celebrate as they usher in Women's Equality Day commemorating 91 years of women's right to vote."

Brown is in the unique position of being a "first of the first" since becoming the first local LWV member to be elected to the first LWV-South Carolina co-presidency, a position she shares with Barbara Zia of Charleston.

Brown is well known in Florence for activism in battling big-box stores and proposed coal plants near her Florence neighborhood. An Illinois native, she moved to Florence 35 years ago.

Miller served the local LWV in various administrative positions, including its presidency, as well as a director of the LWV-SC board. She came to Florence from Salisbury State University in Maryland in 1969 as assistant to the founding president of Francis Marion University and served on its administrative staff until her retirement in 1994.

Miller's community ties include service on boards of the Pee Dee Council of Boy Scouts, Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, Florence County United Way, Florence Museum and House of Hope Building Committee. An active member of St. John's Episcopal Church, she became its first female senior warden, has served on many diocesan boards and commissions, is former president of the Province IV Altar Guild Association, and currently serves on the National Altar Guild Association Board of Directors.

A native of Florence, Stone was elected Florence County probate judge in 1970, becoming the first woman to be elected to a Florence County office. She served until 1998. During her tenure, Stone was made president of the S.C. Association of Probate Judges, instituted the first continuing judicial education program for S.C. probate judges and conducted weekly civil commitment hearings at state and private hospitals for many counties in South Carolina.

Stone has served on the boards of Florence Area Literacy Council, SC School of Dance, Florence Little Theatre (president for three years and chairman of the building committee, which successfully negotiated construction of the new theater on South Dargan Street), appointee to the President's Committee for the John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts, advisory board for the Department of Mental Health, charter member of Arts Alive! and charter board member of The Florence Men's Choral Society.

She's also been a member of the National Commission on Probate Court Standards, National College of Probate Judges (twice elected to the nine-member Executive Board) and was a member of the US Merit Selection Panel for US Magistrate Judge in 1998 (Florence District) and 2000 (Greenville District).

In presenting Sylvester with the key to the city of Florence in 2002, former Mayor Frank Willis said, "...If the city of Florence were an All-America City, she'd be our All America lady." Active in helping minorities to register to vote, organizing women to run for public office, serving as Democratic National Committee Woman for two terms, also, as a McLeod Hospice volunteer, being instrumental in starting a clinic for HIV patients, working on twelve Habitat for Humanity houses and to helping to bring Special Olympics to South Carolina, Sylvester has been long recognized as an activist in community, state and national affairs.

Sylvester is also credited with helping to establish a separate state department for disabilities and special needs (Department of Mental Retardation, now Developmentally Disabled). Of the 13 years spent on the Youth Services Board (now Juvenile Justice), she served 12 years as its chairwoman. Because of her work in this area, she was appointed to the National Commission on Juvenile Justice by former President Jimmy Carter. The state's highest honor Order of the Palmetto was presented to Sylvester by the late Gov. Robert E. McNair in 2002.