

Interview with our Foremothers

Welcome, everyone, to this very special celebration of the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters. I'm Vicki Roberts-Gassler, the president this year of the League of Women Voters of Snohomish County. We have quite the program for you today – we have some marvelous guests. League Founder Carrie Chapman Catt, Alice Paul, Lucy Stone, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Mary Church Terrell and Missouri Hanna have all come back from the Beyond, for one week only. The week is almost up and they have agreed to be interviewed in this panel on the 100th anniversary of our founding. We are all excited to have them here with us, and to hear their life experiences and their impressions of the United States today.

First each of them will introduce herself briefly, then we'll spend a few minutes talking about the momentous events that led up to forming the League. Finally, I'll have the great privilege of asking each of them what they think of our country today.

Interviewer: Let's start with Mrs. Catt and go through the line. [Please save your applause until all our panelists have introduced themselves.]

Mrs. Catt: I'm Carrie Chapman Catt: Thank you. I was a teacher, journalist and suffrage organizer, and finally an advocate for world peace.

Miss Paul: I'm Alice Paul. I devoted my life to women's issues, first woman suffrage, then the Equal Rights Amendment.

Mrs. Stone: I seem to be the oldest here; I'm Lucy Stone. I worked for abolition, and for votes for women until my death.

Mrs. Gage: I'm Matilda Joslyn Gage: I worked for abolition and for women's rights, including the right to vote.

Mrs. Terrell: I'm Mary Church Terrell: I actively supported woman suffrage when I studied at Oberlin College. I worked for the advancement of my race, especially through education.

Mrs. Hanna: I'm Missouri Hanna: I'm excited to be here among some of the major leaders of the women's movement, and my, it's nice to be back near my home in Edmonds.

Interviewer: Please welcome this illustrious panel.

We'll start with Mrs. Lucy Stone, who was part of the first generation of women who were all-in for the struggle for votes for women. Mrs. Stone, could you tell us a little about yourself?

Mrs. Stone: Yes, thank you so much. I was considered quite the rebel in my time. I was a contemporary of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and knew both of them well. You know women were expected to marry, have a number of children, run a household and raise those children and defer to their husband. Education was restricted to the ability to care for the household accounts and read the Bible. If one did not marry, one was relegated to a housekeeping position for a brother or for some other family. A woman who got some education might be allowed to work as a teacher, for perhaps one-quarter the salary paid to a man in the same position.

Interviewer: But you were different?

Mrs. Stone: Yes, I was one of the early graduates of Oberlin College, the first institution of higher learning to allow women an advanced education. I decided to learn to speak effectively in public and fought the establishment to achieve a place for women in debates at Oberlin, even with male audiences. I lost any fear I might have had regarding speaking up in public.

Interviewer: You did marry in the end, though, didn't you? And you had a child as well?

Mrs. Stone: Yes, that is true. Henry Blackwell was very persistent in courting me, and finally convinced me that even though legally a marriage made a woman virtually her husband's slave, we could be different. We raised a magnificent daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, who also dedicated her life to our causes; I was extremely proud of her. I kept my own name, you know, which was considered downright scandalous! Henry devoted his life, just as I did mine, to working for equal rights, for the slaves and then the former slaves and for women.

Interviewer: I think your work in the woman suffrage movement was not without conflict. What really happened around the Civil War?

Mrs. Stone: As leaders of the woman suffrage movement, most of us began our activist careers in the fight for the abolition of slavery. When the Civil War began we worked hard to convince President Lincoln to advocate for freedom for the slaves, and not just to maintain the Union. Many of us worked in the war effort in all the traditional ways, supporting our men, and of course nursing became much more professionalized, and there were even a few women physicians, like my sister-in-law Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. Then the war was over and we knew, we just knew, that Black Americans had to have the vote to protect their freedom and their rights.

Interviewer: But what about women? You had already worked for years to get rights for women, but the word "male" appeared in the 14th Amendment, and women were omitted from the 15th Amendment.

Matilda Joslyn Gage: They just gave up! Lucy and her husband and Julia Ward Howe and Frederick Douglass and so many others just gave the vote to Black men, and left the women out. They said it was the "Negro's hour" and women would just have to wait – we were so disappointed!

Mrs. Stone: Oh hush, Matilda! If we had pushed for votes for women too, the whole thing would have fallen apart! It was just too radical for the time! Look how long it took to convince enough men to give women the vote! Another 50 years!

Mary Church Terrell: And then by the 1890s the Southern states deprived Black men of the vote through various laws anyway...

Alice Paul: So they might as well have continued to fight for women --

Interviewer: I can see this was a contentious issue. There was a major split in the woman suffrage movement. Can you tell us about that, Mrs. Stone, and then we'll find out more about Mrs. Gage.

Mrs. Stone: After the war, Henry and I and all the other realists formed the American Woman Suffrage Association and kept on with the struggle. We published the *Woman's Journal* weekly for years, gave speeches, and generally carried on the slow work of changing hearts and minds. It was 20 years before we reconciled with the more radical National Woman Suffrage Association in 1890.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, Mrs. Stone. We'll come back to that, but first I think our audience wants to know more about Mrs. Gage. How did you become involved in woman suffrage?

Mrs. Gage: I think I was just naturally against oppression. My father was a doctor and an abolitionist, and our home was a station on the Underground Railroad; my husband and I also participated, even though we could have ended up in jail. I worked for rights for women and also for Native Americans – it's really shameful how we have treated the original inhabitants of this land! By the way, the history of the women's movement doesn't begin with white women. Iroquois women already had the right to vote 1000 years ago. I first lectured about women's rights at the 1852 National Women's Rights Convention in Syracuse, NY. For many years I worked with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. They of course are the most famous, close friends who collaborated in the movement for 50 years, different as they were from each other. When Mrs. Stanton and Susan Anthony started writing the *History of Woman Suffrage*, it was really all three of us writing together, but of course in the end Mrs. Stanton took over and she gets the major credit.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate a little about the *History of Woman Suffrage*?

Mrs. Gage: Yes – it started as a manageable little project; we just wanted a record of what we'd been doing since the beginning before the documents and our memories were lost. Elizabeth thought it might take about four months. By the time I died, it was several volumes long and work was still proceeding. I was surprised to learn this last week that it's about 5700 pages long, in six volumes! My contribution was to the first three, in which I wrote a number of chapters. Susan had all her papers – she saved Everything! – sent to Mrs. Stanton's house, and stayed there for weeks at a time writing and arguing. I wrote mostly on my own...

Interviewer: What would you say your main contribution was?

Mrs. Gage: That's easy. I specialized in women's history. When I gave speeches in favor of women's rights, I always hoped to inspire my audience with the achievements of women in

past times and different cultures. I argued that these achievements proved that women were as intelligent and capable as men, and therefore deserved the same rights.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mrs. Gage, for your contributions! Mrs. Stone, we have learned that the rift between your organization, the American, and the National, was serious and long-lasting, even though both associations had the same goals.

Mrs. Stone: I'm not sure Elizabeth ever got over it, and she and Susan both said some very unfortunate things about our Black brothers getting the vote before women. Certainly, though, we continued to work on woman suffrage. While we in the American were focused on the vote, under the strong leadership of Stanton and Anthony the National advanced some rather radical ideas. Stanton argued that women should have the right to divorce, for instance. Very shocking. Worse, she wrote that outrageous *Woman's Bible*.

Mrs. Gage: I worked on that with her, and she was definitely right. She showed how Christianity, or at least Christianity as interpreted at the time, oppressed women. And look at how much better things are for women now, when people are so much less bound to those traditional religious ideas that kept most women virtually enslaved for centuries!

Mrs. Stone: In some cases, perhaps – but Matilda, she – and you – hurt the movement so much by stubbornly insisting on ideas that people simply weren't ready for!

Interviewer: Clearly the controversies didn't end soon.

Mrs. Gage: No, they did not. By 1890 Elizabeth and Susan were ready to combine the two associations to make it one strong unit, but oh, the way they did it! The National was stronger, but Susan in particular just caved and compromised until the new association was basically the more conservative American with a new name, although we called it the National American Woman Suffrage Association, or the N-A-W-S-A. I dropped out, and I never forgave them. Elizabeth was actually on my side, but she and Susan were such friends, and she just went along with everything. I continued to work for women's rights in my own way, though, and I notice that my book *Woman, Church and State* is currently in print.

Interviewer: Our historians think the focus and the relatively more conservative stance of the NAWSA resulted in part, too, from the next generations of activists. It's time now to turn to one of the most prominent of that second generation, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt.

Interviewer: Welcome, Carrie, oh, um, I mean, Mrs. Catt. You were born in 1859, so perhaps things were a little easier for you?

Mrs. Catt: No – I had some models, true, but education for girls was still not a given for my generation. I graduated from the Iowa State Agricultural College with very little help from my family. I worked my way through doing everything from teaching to dishwashing. Then I was a law clerk and a teacher, and in 1885 I was the first woman superintendent of schools in Mason

City, Iowa. My first husband Leo Chapman was a newspaper editor who moved to San Francisco for his work, but he got typhoid fever the next year and died before I could join him. After his death I worked as a reporter for a time. I married George Catt in 1890. He was an engineer, and doing quite well financially; we had an agreement that I would spend part of every year working for woman suffrage, even though this meant being away from home for months at a time.

Interviewer: He sounds like a special man, unusual for the time.

Mrs. Catt: Yes, he was, as were many husbands of activists. I was able to use my organizational talents in Iowa in the suffrage movement there, and then nationally, in the NAWSA.

Interviewer: It sounds as if you really became involved only when the two rival organizations had merged.

Mrs. Catt: I was involved right from the beginning of NAWSA; I was a speaker at its first national convention, in Washington, D.C.

Interviewer: You must have known the great leaders Stanton and Anthony well, then.

Mrs. Catt: I worked with Susan B. Anthony from the beginning of my involvement with woman suffrage. She was a great inspiration. She understood that in order to get the vote, we needed to appeal to the broad public, which sometimes meant avoiding controversy and making compromises. For example, we joined forces with the Women's Christian Temperance Union - But of course Susan was always loyal to Mrs. Stanton, with whom I did not always agree.

Interviewer: Really?

Mrs. Catt: Well, it was that *Woman's Bible*. The NAWSA needed to distance itself from her wild ideas! She published the book in 1895, and at the convention the next year some of us introduced a resolution pointing out that the *Woman's Bible* had nothing to do with NAWSA. Of course Susan didn't want NAWSA to comment, but the vote was 54-41, so we got the resolution, and we thought Mrs. Stanton would drop out, but she didn't. Maybe because Susan was still the NAWSA President.

Interviewer: What was the thinking about how to carry on the struggle at that point?

Mrs. Catt: We were campaigning state by state, and we thought we had some momentum, after a quick succession of Western states gave women the vote – Wyoming first, then Colorado, Utah, and Idaho. After that, though, it became more discouraging. We kept at it, organizing women in clubs, printing flyers and newspaper articles, sending petitions to legislatures, lobbying in the states, giving speeches – and we either didn't get anything moving at all, or we lost when votes were tallied. Mrs. Stanton and Susan realized they would not live to see nationwide woman suffrage. Susan finally passed the NAWSA presidency on to me in

1900; in 1904 I had to step back because my beloved husband was ill and needed me. Sadly, in 1905 he died.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mrs. Catt, we'll return to this. Mrs. Terrell, before we continue here, I assume your life was a little different from some of these other women. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

Mrs. Terrell: Different, yes and no. While many of my race struggled at that time with poverty, my parents were both free by the time I was born in 1863, and both were business successes. My mother had a thriving hair salon, and my father was actually a millionaire due to hard work and astute real estate deals. I was educated at Oberlin, where I majored in classics, preparing me for a career in education. That was a generation after Mrs. Stone, but Oberlin still guided women, shall we say, into lady subjects – but I insisted on doing the full academic curriculum like the men, which meant classics. I taught Latin at the first public high school for Negro students, or African Americans as you say now, in Washington, D.C. I married and raised one daughter and adopted another.

Interviewer: Latin, hm – and I understand you learned a couple of other languages as well?

Mrs. Terrell: Yes, I spent two years studying in Europe and became fluent in French, German and Italian. All this came in handy later when I spoke at the International Congress of Women in 1904 in Berlin; where, by the way, I was the only Black woman in attendance. I was able to give my talk in German, French and then English.

Interviewer: Impressive! So when did you join the suffrage movement?

Mrs. Terrell: I think I always knew that women needed the vote; very few Black women enjoyed the cushy life of middle class white women, privileged to devote full time to their homes and children, so it was always obvious to us that we needed the vote to improve conditions for our families and our race. I was involved in suffrage already while studying at Oberlin, and I met Susan B. Anthony early on and loved her dearly. (By the way, I was also close friends with Aunt Susan's friend Frederick Douglass.) I attended NAWSA meetings and often spoke. In fact I addressed the NAWSA (spell out) in 1898 – I called my speech "The Progress of Colored Women" - and urged, as I always did, that the needs of my race be taken into account in the women's movement.

Interviewer: You also were involved in strictly African American organizations too, though, weren't you?

Mrs. Terrell: Indeed. We had pressing issues that weren't shared and perhaps weren't well understood by white women. We were concerned about outrages against members of our race, and I worked with Ida B. Wells on the ongoing campaigns to stop lynching. We also worked on education in general, and particularly for nurseries and kindergartens for Black children. I was a founding member of the Colored Women's League, which later merged with the Federation of

Afro-American Women to become the National Association of Colored Women. Our motto was “Lifting as we Climb”. The women’s club movement was a major factor in all sorts of progress, including for Black women. Much of my work was in my chosen home of Washington, D.C., where I served on the Board of Education. Besides directly working in education I also wrote articles and did other activist work throughout my life, always in support of civil rights and integration.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Mrs. Terrell. Returning to Mrs. Catt – you dropped out of active participation in the NAWSA for several years. How did things go without you?

Mrs. Catt: My dear friend Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, bless her heart, was a wonderful speaker, very inspirational, but alas, her organizational skills were a little lacking. There was some disarray when I was able to return to the fray full-time in 1915.

Interviewer: What did you do between 1905 and 1915?

Mrs. Catt: They were busy years. I helped found the International Woman Suffrage Association and served as its president for nearly 20 years. I traveled all over the world during those years, meeting with women’s movement leaders in Europe and Asia, even in China.

Interviewer: But I believe there was some progress in suffrage before 1915?

Mrs. Catt: Yes, indeed! The movement was invigorated in the West with our success in Washington State in 1910 – thank you, Mrs. Hanna, for your part in that! and several western states finally made the right decision about women voting, but things were still dragging on the East Coast.

Interviewer: Before we ask you more about this, let’s hear from Mrs. Missouri Hanna. How did you contribute to the movement, Mrs. Hanna?

Mrs. Hanna: Oh my, I feel quite out of my depth with these absolute stars of the woman suffrage movement. I was a newspaper publisher in the small town of Edmonds, Washington. To be sure, I worked closely with Emma Smith DeVoe, the president of our Washington suffrage association, who in turn worked closely with Mrs. Catt. I was one of many women who devoted their time and their passion to convincing men that women deserved and needed the vote.

Mrs. Catt: Now, now, Mrs. Hanna – we know you were actually one of the first women publishers around. Before your influential newsletter *Votes for Women* you had been publishing a weekly newspaper with local, national and even international news for several years. My organizing skills, and those of Mrs. DeVoe, depended upon having good people like you to organize!

Mrs. Hanna: Thank you, I’m just so honored to share a stage with you, Mrs. Catt. Without you..... It is true, though, that I had to be quite independent, as a widow with children to

support, including an injured daughter. It did not seem logical that I could publish a newspaper, buy and sell property, and above all pay taxes, but I could not vote.

Interviewer: We're honored by your presence; you did so much for Snohomish County with your activism.

Mrs. Hanna: Those of us in Washington State did believe we played an essential role in revitalizing the woman suffrage movement when we persuaded our men to give women the vote in 1910. The rest of the western states quickly followed, then some of the Eastern and Midwestern states, and by the end of the decade women all over the US could vote.

Interviewer: White women, at least. It wasn't so clear for Black women, was it?

Mrs. Terrell: The amendment is properly written, but in the southern states the powers found many ways to deprive Black women of the vote, as well as Black men. And although this isn't specified in the Amendment, it was not applied to Native Americans or Asians until later. (Sigh) We tried our best.

Alice Paul: We didn't get as far as we did just by asking nicely, though, did we?

Interviewer: Miss Paul, yes, we need to hear from you now. Thank you so much, Mrs. Hanna, we are honored to have you here. – Miss Paul, you were mainly active in the last decade of this long campaign, weren't you?

Miss Paul: Indeed. I personally did not face some of the obstacles these other women did. Education for women was rather taken for granted in my Quaker family, and my studies at Swarthmore College were accomplished smoothly. With my bachelor's in Biology I did not want to teach, and a stint in a settlement house convinced me social work wasn't going to be my path either. All the individual help in the world wasn't going to change society or the political situation. After earning a Master's at the University of Pennsylvania, I studied in England for several years. When I first heard Christabel Pankhurst speak – she was one of Emmeline's daughters and equally influential as a suffragette – I knew getting equality for women was my mission in life, and getting the vote was a first step.

Interviewer: Woman suffrage was a little different in England, we've heard?

Miss Paul: The Pankhursts and their followers were tired of being polite; they shouted, broke windows and generally made a fuss. I was arrested seven times protesting with them, was imprisoned three times and force fed when I went on hunger strike.

Interviewer: But then you came back to the US. Did you join in protests here?

Miss Paul: First I earned my doctorate in Sociology. Then I worked with NAWSA in the political wing. Which did not last long – Mrs. Catt did not approve of my methods.

Mrs. Catt: (Sigh) It seemed at the time that you would simply irritate men, Alice. Many people believe that your actions did advance the cause.

Interviewer: Miss Paul, are probably best known for that parade in Washington, D.C. in 1913.

Miss Paul: Yes, we worked through NAWSA to organize the procession for the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, quite deliberately as we were very annoyed with his failure to come out in favor of woman suffrage, and felt he was key to getting the federal amendment. The parade was quite magnificent, with hundreds of women marching in nice straight rows in their white dresses with their signs. There were around 8000 marchers from every part of the US. Bands and floats portrayed the various activities women were involved in – naturally women were not all housewives! The tableau on the steps of the Treasury Department alone involved a cast of 100. There were over half a million spectators. But although Congress had approved the route, there wasn't nearly enough police protection, and it was almost a riot, with men hemming in the women marching so they could barely move. Some of the police just watched without taking action. Our main goal was publicity, and we certainly achieved that goal, with the magnificence of the parade and with reports of bad behavior on the part of some men, which increased sympathy for our cause.

Interviewer: I wish I had been there to see that amazing event! So, what would you say was the root of your disagreement with Mrs. Catt?

Miss Paul: Mrs. Catt was strictly nonpartisan. She also objected to the militancy we believed would advance the cause. My friend Lucy Burns and I and others gave up our membership in NAWSA and formed the National Women's Party in 1916.

Interviewer: What militant tactics did Mrs. Catt disapprove of?

Miss Paul: Early in 1917 we started picketing the White House. Groups of women, the Silent Sentinels, stood outside the gates of the White House with suffrage signs. We never got involved in the kind of violence that suffragettes in the UK used, but we still ended up with prison sentences, and when we protested with hunger strikes many of us were force fed, even here in the US, just like in England.

Interviewer: Thank you, Alice Paul. I think all of us today agree that both of you, Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt, were essential to getting the vote for women, even though your methods were different. We know that President Wilson eventually supported women getting the vote, and that the 19th Amendment passed the House and that it finally squeaked through the Senate in 1919.

Mrs. Catt: We were ready with organizations in every state, but it was still a hard fight. The ratification process went very quickly, though, and the Amendment was ratified and certified by August 26, 1920.

Interviewer: Mrs. Catt, please tell us briefly about the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Mrs. Catt: Once it was clear that the Nineteenth Amendment would pass – or at least we were pretty confident! – our mission changed. We felt with several million new voters we needed to do something about educating them, so in February we turned the National American Woman Suffrage Association into the League of Women Voters. I am so proud it's still going strong today! After 100 years!

Interviewer: So you kept working with the same organization?

Mrs. Catt: I used my influence to see that Maud Wood Park was elected President of the League, and I put more emphasis on my international work for woman suffrage and on working for peace. Maud had led the suffrage organization in Boston. She was a brilliant choice – among her early achievements in the League, she lobbied for the Shepard-Towner Act, which gave federal funding to efforts to help mothers and children, and for the Cable Act, according to which American women who married non-citizens kept their own citizenship.

Alice Paul: But you and the League failed to support my efforts to actually get equal rights for women. I can't believe we still don't have an amendment giving women equal rights!

Interviewer: I can imagine you are disappointed with that, Miss Paul.

Mrs. Catt: Initially the League did not support the ERA. We were concerned that the laws we had worked hard to get passed which protected women would be cancelled by an ERA.

Interviewer: Those same arguments led to the ERA's failure to get ratified much later, even though by the 1970s the League was in favor of it.

Mrs. Gage: You still have this religion thing getting in the way— woman's place is in the home and all that nonsense!

Mrs. Terrell: And of course there's still the race issue –

Mrs. Stone: I'm pleased to see that the League has remained nonpartisan and secular. It's good that you take no position regarding religion. Also that you do not support any political party or endorse candidates.

Interviewer: Yes, much has changed in the League, but the basics remain the same. The League takes a position on an issue only after thorough study, and only then we can lobby for legal changes.

Mrs. Catt: I suppose you can say that the League has always been a careful organization. As Maud Wood Park put it, "It has chosen to be a middle-of-the-road organization in which persons of widely differing political views might work out together a program of definite advance on which they could agree. It has been willing to go ahead slowly in order to go ahead steadily. It has not sought to lead a few women a long way quickly, but rather to lead many women a little way at a time."

Alice Paul: So you're not radical, but I notice the League is also willing to take legal action when it fits with the positions taken.

Mrs. Catt: These women, and now men as well, are not shy about keeping up the tradition of vigorous lobbying either, once they've decided what the position is.

Interviewer: Our time is almost up, but before we go I wanted to give each of you a chance to tell us what you think of the world as it is now, after nearly a week of observing as you are back from the beyond. Let's start with Mrs. Stone.

Lucy Stone: My, you know I was considered a rebel with my bloomers, but the way people dress really stood out for me. So convenient! You weren't going to win any tennis tournaments or gymnastics championships in a hoop skirt and multiple petticoats. But it's disappointing that even though everyone has the vote, so few people, women included, actually use it.

Interviewer: You must be happy seeing the descendants of the enslaved people prospering.

Lucy Stone: Yes, and no, because one really had hoped by now the color of one's skin simply wouldn't matter, and that's not the case, in spite of wonderful progress.

Interviewer: Mrs. Gage, you must have noticed women's history courses, books and so on.

Mrs. Gage: Indeed. And yet, when we tell people who we are, most of them never heard of any of us. It is as if they think women always had the vote, or that it just happened one day without the years of work and sacrifices. Standard history still seems to be about male leaders and their wars, not about peace and civilized progress. Also – the whole religion thing - but we won't get into that.

Interviewer: Mrs. Terrell, what are your impressions?

Mrs. Terrell: Of course the things I notice are the progress of my race. It's magnificent to see that you actually had an African American president, and that he remains so popular, and people like Oprah are very inspiring, showing how far a Black woman can go. Racial

discrimination is hardly a thing of the past, though, and I agree that it is disappointing. We must continue to work for the betterment of all people.

Interviewer: Mrs. Hanna, did you have the chance to look into today's newspapers?

Mrs. Hanna: They are mostly on this thing you call the internet, aren't they? Just finding out the news seems much easier now than it ever was in my day, when I was always waiting for the telegraph, and you rarely knew what was going on right now. Evaluating what it all means is harder than ever, though, isn't it? And the civility I valued seems quite absent. Oh, I suppose politics was a dirty business in our day, as well, with fights and some name-calling, but we really thought getting women involved would change everything.

Interviewer: Miss Paul, what are your impressions?

Alice Paul: I simply cannot believe that the ERA STILL has not passed. Women, why have you not been out on the streets daily? Why haven't there been pickets at all those state legislatures where lawmakers still give privilege to men? How can this still be controversial, when there are women in all the professions, women multimillionaires like Oprah, 126 women in the US Congress, women walking in space and serving in combat? Sorry, I do not understand.

Interviewer: This is the League's birthday celebration, so we're going to give Carrie Chapman Catt the last word.

Mrs. Catt: There has been so much progress, it's quite heartening. There are very few places where women still do not have a political voice, and most of the things we fought for are taken for granted, like women being educated and supporting themselves financially and mostly ruling their own lives. Men need to behave better, of course; we like this #meToo movement, although we deplore the necessity for it.

Not everything has improved, though; we especially noticed the pollution of the air and the water. We all noticed that non-scientists think they know better than the experts – please, people, yes, the climate is changing, and not in a good way.

I am very proud of the work the League is doing in so many crucial areas. There are women, and men, working on all sorts of problems. We know it can take a discouragingly long time to make changes, but those who have studied our movement learn that change can happen. We persisted, and so will you.

Interviewer: Thank you, all of you, for the contributions you made that benefit all of us, and for your visit today! Happy 100th Birthday, League of Women Voters!

(Thank you for input from the LWVSC Centennial Committee, which improved the script.)

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