



Illinois Humanities | October 2020

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Three Questions: Q&A with Becky Simon, president, League of Women Voters Naperville



The Illinois Humanities Spotlight

Bi-monthly Illinois Humanities highlights the work of our Community Grants program partners through our “Grantee Spotlight.” It shines the light on our grantee partner’s work, offering details about the organization and the funded project, as well as a Q&A with a team member of the organization. More: ILHumanities.org/Spotlight

Project

“Creating a More Perfect Democracy — 100 Years Strong”

Location

Naperville, IL

Organization

League of Women Voters Naperville

Founded in 1956, the League of Women Voters Naperville (the League) encourages informed and active participation in local government

through education and advocacy. It is one of more than 800 state and local leagues under the umbrella of the National League, which dates back to 1920.

Project Funded by Illinois Humanities

“Creating A More Perfect Democracy” is a four-part film and discussion series meant to raise awareness about the fight for women’s vote, focusing on the history of women’s suffrage, including African American abolitionists/suffragist women, and ending with how racism and white supremacy continues to affect voting and democracy today.

Q1

How do you see the arts/culture/humanities as being essential?

Becky Simon: Arts are the messenger for our message. Music, performance, and visual arts tell our story to our audience in a persuasive way that leaves a lasting impression. The League’s most successful posts on social media always include a great piece of visual art; art speaks to people’s hearts and minds at the same time! Arts add color and fun to life. The League needs the arts because the arts add color and fun; no one wants to join a group that isn’t having fun!



Q2

What is the most important thing people should know about your work?

Becky Simon: We make democracy work. We get stuff done. Whether we are registering voters, pushing for functional election equipment, or lobbying for the Equal Rights Amendment, the League makes change happen. Being a nonpartisan organization lets League voters enter into conversations and efforts in a credible way that makes a lasting difference. We are not always the loudest or flashiest voice in the room, but we are civil, balanced and persistent as heck. We are your friendly local civics geeks, and we make stuff happen.

Q3

Who makes your work possible?

Becky Simon: An army of volunteers who have faith in democracy and believe in a fact-based approach to government. Our members are always ready for door-to-door campaigns, in-person visits with legislators, and connecting with the next generation of voters. The League also works with a network of nonpartisan organizations, such as NAACP, National Council of Jewish Women, Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwestern Indiana, Naper Settlement, North Central College, and American Association of University Women (AAUW). Working in partnerships with other organizations helps us to see things from multiple perspectives and to get fresh input.

Q

Anything else you'd like to add?

Can you hear me shouting? American Institute of Graphic Arts partners with League of Women Voters to produce Get Out The Vote campaigns during presidential election cycles.

The League's communications:

Our award-winning nonpartisan voter guide, VOTE411.org, is up and running!

LWVNaperville.org | [f @LeagueofWomenVotersNaperville](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersNaperville) | [@LWVofNaperville](https://www.instagram.com/LWVofNaperville) | [@LWVofNaperville](https://twitter.com/LWVofNaperville)

About Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities activates the humanities through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that foster reflection, spark conversation, build community, and strengthen civic engagement. Illinois Humanities is a nonprofit organization and the state's affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities.