

Member Spotlight: Joanne M. Lisosky

By *Joanne M. Lisosky*

Truth, justice and the American Way... While I may not be Superman (or Superwoman), I am an ardent advocate of this trite aphorism.

I call Tacoma, Washington home and have for more than 20 years. I set down roots in Tacoma after being hired as a professor at Pacific Lutheran University in 1995. I taught communication and journalism at PLU for more than a couple of decades. Advising student media operations and counseling young people while they struggled with some of the toughest decisions they were to face in life remain my fondest teaching memories. PLU was the type of university that allowed me to matter in my students' lives. I shared more than textbook learning with them... I was the wind in their wings as they flew high in the sky or landed face down. I still hear from former students on a regular basis—which brings me great joy.



During my time at PLU, I had the momentous opportunity to serve three Fulbright teaching assignments, teaching journalism in Uganda, Azerbaijan and Trinidad. These teaching engagements abroad allowed me to boldly explore new cultures and practices. But most importantly, my time abroad revealed how the U.S. system of government, while flawed, offers its citizens the most abundant freedoms in the world—perhaps most of all free expression.

My travels abroad also led me back to academic endeavors as I co-wrote a book, “War on Words: Who Should Protect Journalists?” with a former student. Jennifer just learned she will be completing her doctorate as she begins a tenure-track teaching position at Washington State University in the fall. Excuse the proud teacher boasting.

My American way soon led me to retirement. When a request from a friend of a friend, Sharon Wilhelm, asked for counsel on a League of Women Voters project. It was the Responsible Journalism Affinity Group. Faster than a speeding bullet, I was in. I joined the League and started to work with Dee Anne Finken to address the decline of local news on our democracy.

My husband of 36 years is a published author and poet who taught English at Pierce College for 25 years. As a retired professor, I often miss the teaching so I have ventured into the primary school classroom as a substitute teacher for Tacoma Public Schools. On my first day, I needed to be rescued by the principal. Teaching kindergarten requires a completely different skill set. But I have grown to love the challenge. I have studied Español online for 732 consecutive days (Duolingo) and for the past two years at University of Washington, Tacoma. I think I may someday be able to order effectively at a Mexican restaurant. □ I have lived in every time zone in the United States, including Hawaiian time and I've spent time on every continent... with the exception of Antarctica. While I don't have a red cape, I do have a strong desire to make the best country in the world even better. That is why I'm here.