

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – NAN PEELE

My involvement with the League of Women Voters has only been in the last few years. I grew up with parents who considered voting a privilege and responsibility. That ethic still prevails, and I believe rings stronger in my ears this last year. Though I'd attended LWV meetings, my active participation began when approached to coordinate the relatively new program of Ballot Observation that Sharon Wilhelm was overseeing. I was told that I'd said something in a meeting that drew attention to me as a possible candidate for the position. (Indeed it is not the first time opening my mouth has gotten me in trouble). This time, however, it's brought "good trouble"!



I moved to Tacoma in 1997 to work with the Frank Russell Company. My two children were grown and out of the home pursuing their lives in New York City and Mesa, Arizona. We'd been the "three musketeers" since my divorce in their early grade school years, so I began considering changes in my career and a move from the home they'd always known, not only to aid my adaptation to this new stage of life, but also to reassure them that "mom" would be fine.

Though my BA was in History and Economics, my first job after graduating was as a social worker in Topeka, KS working with families receiving ADC (Aid to Dependent Children). I worked in that role for the county for two years, then moved to the state level to be a Quality Control Investigator where I worked until my daughter, whom we'd adopted at the age of 6 days, reached 2, and was so cute I could not stand to have the babysitter telling me of her "firsts"so I quit.

While fully indulging myself in parenthood, I was offered a newly created position by the Kansas Department of Social Services to manage the operations in the area, but discovered I was pregnant with my second child a few days after accepting, so declined.

While parenting two kids full-time, I also indulged in volunteer opportunities (another ethic role-modeled by my parents). Eventually, I also enrolled in UMKC's MBA program. It was the Head of the MBA program who referred me to the Sr. VP of the largest bank in Kansas City, who was building a new Investment Department. I was hired to sell investments to local businesses and corporations...thus launching my career in Finance. This bank was across the street from DST where I moved a few years later.

When Russell called, I was working at DST, one of the world's largest mutual fund operations companies, partially owned by State Street Bank. I later learned that Russell planned to convert to the Sate Street system within the year. My experience managing customer conversions to that system and leading a staff of over 50 through those perilous actions, had drawn Russell's attention. I was not familiar with Russell or the Northwest area but a little investigation and a trip here convinced me to accept.

Russell, like my KC employers, encouraged community volunteering, so I became a supporter of the wonderful Tacoma Art opportunities as an attendee, member, and sometimes board member. A very sad memory is the demise of TAG (Tacoma Actors Guild) when it was forced to close in 2008. I was President of the board at the time. Currently I serve on the TACID (Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities) Board and the Tacoma Historical Society Board.

Ballot Observing falls squarely within the mission of the League of Women Voters, so building the team from a devoted, committed group of people was easily achieved. Like everything in our lives, it became a greater challenge when the pandemic hit, but the leadership of our Pierce County Election Office, headed by Julie Anderson, made it safe. We will see what 2021 brings and keep you informed. Come join us.