

Joining an Extraordinary League

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The Boys and Girls Club of Coastal Carolina (BGCCC) is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year but without the dedication of the community's movers and shakers, there would not be a club to celebrate.

Two women, past president of Beaufort Woman's Club Alice Copes and the late Doris Stanley, a former Beaufort Commissioner, were fundamental in getting the BGCCC started and helped the youth organization become what it is today.

The two women will be honored along with the BGCCC at the annual League of Women Voters Equality Day, which celebrates the day the women's suffrage amendment became part of the U.S. Constitution on Aug. 26, 1920.

The celebration will begin at 3 p.m. Sunday in the Bryant Student Center of Carteret Community College, **during which time Paula Wolf, of the Raleigh-based company Paulitics, will speak.**

While sitting in the living room of her Beaufort home, Ms. Copes said it was somewhat of a surprise to be chosen for this honor but understood that the BGCCC anniversary made it a natural fit.

"The county took to it (BGCCC), and it's still growing," she said. "The Boys and Girls Club gives our young people something to engage in — those young minds are constantly working, it's a good place to be busy."

As a teacher, education and children have always been a priority for Ms. Copes.

"I moved here right out of college," said Ms. Copes. "I taught at Queen Street High for 14 years, then after integration, taught at East Carteret High for 18 years."

Born in Richmond, Va., Ms. Copes graduated with a bachelor's degree from Virginia State University in Petersburg, Va., and did her graduate studies at Atlanta University and East Carolina University.

Now a retired educator after 32 years in the Carteret County public school system, she said she keeps herself busy teaching Sunday school to 9-13 year-old girls at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Beaufort and going to meetings and events of any number of organizations.

She's a member of the N.C. Retired School Personnel, Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, Carteret Community College Foundation Board, trustee for the Carteret County Public Library, Beaufort Historical Association Education Committee, Les Vingt Femmes Club, N.C. Federation of Negro Women's Club, Carteret County NAACP and Carteret County Democratic Women.

The late Ms. Stanley was a retired schoolteacher who served on the Beaufort Board of Commissioners in the mid-1990s. She helped the BGCCC establish itself in the county.

During her lifetime, she was honored by the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, was awarded the "Climber's Award for a lifetime of Achievement" and she served as vice president of the N.C. Federation of Negro Women's Clubs.

Previous Equality Day honorees include Tibbie Roberts, Kathryn Cloud, Ruth Barbour, Dr. Mary Katherine Lawrence, Mary Sue Noe, Marlene Anderson and the Habitat Honeys.

"Carteret County is a fantastic place with strong, capable and hardworking women. Each year the League of Women Voters recognizes one of these women and then the rest of us can look toward the future standing on the shoulders of the former awardees,"

said Marlene Anderson, league member.

"All but one of the former winners is still here and working on different projects to make this county the very best we can be," she said.

"The LWV really wants the younger women to realize what are foremothers went through to win the vote and equal rights that we often take for granted."

The women's suffrage movement in the U.S. began in July 1848, when the first national convention for women took place in Seneca Falls, N.Y. More than 300 people, including 40 men, met and the decision was made for women to fight for the right to vote. After more than 70 years of struggle, the right was granted in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan and sponsors forums for candidates for public office and issues of local interest as well as encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, can become a member.

The next board meeting of the League of Women Voters is slated for Sept. 19 at the Foundation building on the campus of Carteret Community College.

Tickets for Equality Day are \$5 and available at the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, Cousins Bed and Breakfast on Turner Street in Beaufort, from league members or purchased at the door. Refreshments will be provided.

For more information, call Louise Rulon, event chairman, at 726-9699 or Gayle Mitchener, president, at 726-4759