

Leads League of Women Voters



ALTHOUGH MRS. JULIA Davis Stuart is a soft-spoken, sophisticated grandmother who guides her subjects with a smile instead of a banner, her aims and role are much the same as those of her first predecessors—the suffragists who first set out to conquer the vote for women by parading through the streets of St. Louis 50 years ago.

As president of the League of Women Voters of the United States, Mrs. Stuart is a strong believer in leading her 146,000 members not just as women, but as citizens who are organized to fight for the causes they believe in.

The cause is no longer woman suffrage, of course, but ferreting out “the alienated voters of the inner city,” involving women in issues like water pollution and equal opportunity in education nationally, and on local issues like the Gateway Arch bond campaign and Home Rule for St. Louis County.

Her national objective is to encourage all women to become interested in the political issues of the day locally, state-wide and nationally, then to make a stand and persuade legislators to listen.

She personally is one to whom many listen.

When the League of Women Voters of Hawaii held its first state convention, Mrs. Stuart spoke not only to those hundreds of women but to a special joint session of the Hawaii House of Representatives and the Senate.

A resident of Spokane, Wash., she spends about two weeks of every month in Washington, D. C., directing national activities of the league. She has also served for the last 18 months in what she terms “the only non-

expert role” on the President’s Crime Commission and on the National Citizens Commission on International Cooperation.

When she was handed the gavel for the first time at the national convention in San Francisco in 1964, President Johnson “dropped by” to congratulate her. Since taking office, she has been a frequent speaker at hearings before the U.S. Senate and House in Washington, D. C.

She has been the only woman on the Dupont Co. foundation awards committee for radio-tv awards, and is a frequent guest on the national 90-minute Meet the Press television show.

A native of Macon, Mo., Mrs. Stuart attended the University of Missouri majoring in political science. With her husband, Robert J. Stuart, an accountant, she moved to Washington in 1941 and joined the League of Women Voters there in 1951. She served as local president, state president, a national board member, second vice president nationally, and president in 1964.

When her two daughters married and her son entered college, she added other extra-curricular interests such as serving on the jury which selected winners for the All-America Cities Competition.

Mrs. Stuart admits that her husband may have been a bit “astonished” at the enthusiasm she showed for the League in the beginning. But over the years he has become “intrigued” and is now an ardent League supporter.

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