

Women Democrats of Sacramento County

Issue 1 January - March 2023

WDSC's Mission

The Mission of Women Democrats of Sacramento County (WDSC) is to impact social change by redefining the role of women in politics while advocating for equity, justice, and economic advancement.

Our Goals are to:

- Promote and expand the role of women in politics and their engagement in the political process.
- Facilitate understanding of, and engagement in, issues that concern and affect women through support, advocacy and ongoing educational programs.
- Maintain cooperative relations and coordinate activities with other community and Democratic Party organizations.
- Initiate and advocate for legislation that improves the civil, social, economic and political status of women and other underrepresented groups.
- Uphold the principles of the Democratic Party.
- Work to expand the Democratic Party electorate and elect qualified Democrats to local, state and national office.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Who are the Women Dems?
- 2 Meet the WDSC Executive Board and Membership
- 3 The Indominables – Nancy Fox & Jo Souvignier
- 4 WDSC Member Spotlights



Women Democrats of Sacramento County
P.O. Box 161944 ■ Sacramento, CA 95814

www.sacramentowomendems.org



Ms. Sandra Hazel

This year, the Women Democrats of Sacramento County celebrate its 70th year as the oldest Democratic club in the State of California!



Over the years, we've championed many women's issues and successfully supported a number of women candidates. However, while we've seen progress, we're beginning to see an unraveling of our hard-fought fights for equality, personal freedoms, and civil rights.

My fellow club members, we need to continue to stay vigilant and prepared to stand up for the rights of women. We can do this through membership recruitment, education and training, and legislation tracking. It also is key that Women Dems continue to endorse and campaign for candidates who share our mission.

We have an exciting year planned with our monthly speaker series, Ice Cream Social, and 70th Anniversary celebration dinner. We also will be collaborating with other organizations to provide campaign training.

We are a **130** member strong group and we want to hear your thoughts and ideas for Women Dems.

I'm proud to serve as your President and I look forward to leading Women Dems as we continue our fight for the rights of women.



"Women belong in all places where decisions are being made."

Ruth Bader Ginsburg,
Associate Justice of the
United States Supreme Court

Meet the WDSC Executive Committee

The Women Dems' elected officers, directors and members-at-large are committed to enhancing the cause of democracy within the County of Sacramento and beyond. They are hardworking volunteers and share a passion to enhance the WDSC organization and mission.

Officers

President – Sandra Hazel
Vice President – Dr. Elizabeth Sherrell -Davis
Treasurer – Tracie Stafford
Secretary – Debbie Richardson

Directors

Annette Emery, Membership Director
Anna Ioakimedes, Political Affairs Director
Pamela Dominisse, Fundraising Director

Members at Large

Linda Reed
Eric Wiesenthal

Past President

Kate Van Buren

Newsletter Committee

Debbie Richardson, Editor-in-Chief
Eric Wiesenthal, Content Editor

WDSC has an email box for the purpose of hearing from you. If you have any questions, suggestions, concerns or would like to be invited to any of our meetings, please feel free to notify us at: sacramentowomendems@gmail.com.

A special thank you to The Honorable Malia Cohen, California State Controller, for conducting the installation of the Executive Board!



WDSC Executive Board Members:

L-R: The Hon. Malia Cohen, Sandra Hazel, Dr. Elizabeth Sherrell-Davis, Debbie Richardson, Tracie Stafford, Annette Emery, Kate Van Buren, Anna Ioakimedes, Pam Dominisse, Linda Reed, Eric Wiesenthal

Membership Is Where It's At!

By Annette Emery

Keeping track of the Women Dems membership can be daunting but also enlightening. We currently have 130 remarkable members who run the gamut of experience, age, education, and wisdom. Our newest members are an example of this. Nancy Castignetti is a speech language pathologist at the UC Davis Medical Center and Alexis Greene joined at our Board installation in January. She is a small business owner and HR professional. Ellen Cochrane took a break from membership but we're glad she's back. Ellen is a retired teacher and a former board member of the Sacramento City Unified School District. She formed a Women Dems book club in the past and members read Michelle Obama's "*Becoming*" among other selections.

As the membership director, I welcome new members, remind about their renewal dates, greet them at in-person events, and activate our wonderful phoners/texters to remind members about upcoming meetings and other events. Volunteers are the hallmark of our organization and I want to give a BIG thank you to the volunteers who make those calls and texts: Amy Thiebault, Cynthia Shallit, Eric Wiesenthal, Linda Reed, Pam Dominisse, Penny Taylor, Shelley Burns, Rhonda Neuchiller, Sandra Hazel, and Sue Litsey for taking this on. I have been membership chair for over five years and hope to train someone to take over this important position. It may seem daunting to work on the database but it's actually quite simple and it can be applied to other volunteer groups.

Please join the
Women Democrats of Sacramento County
Not a Member? JOIN NOW!
General Membership - \$35 per year
Students and Seniors: \$30 per year
VIP Membership - \$50
Be a part of Sacramento's oldest political club!
**WOMEN DEMOCRATS
OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

Interested in learning more? Contact me at sacramentowomendems@gmail.com.

The Indominables – Nancy Fox & Jo Souvignier

by Eric Wiesenthal

Mention Jo Souvignier and Nancy Fox to veteran members of our club or Democratic politicos across the county and you're liable to get a smile and a story about two of our hardest-working, long-time members.

Combined, Jo and Nancy have over 50 years of experience working in the Capitol and state government. Their political activism ranges from marching as members of Code Pink in the streets of San Francisco protesting Desert Storm to volunteering for countless federal, state, and local campaigns. And together they have played active roles in every California Democratic State Convention since 2000.

Nancy Fox's Sacramento story has a humble beginning. In 1970, she was a single mom whose husband refused to pay child support for their two sons. "So, somebody said, 'Go to the Capitol and put in an application.' And that's how I ended up in the Assembly secretarial pool."

Nancy grew up one of 10 kids (seven boys and three girls) in an Irish Catholic family. Her parents moved the growing family from the coal fields in West Virginia to a working-class neighborhood in southwest Philadelphia. Her father, who was a solid FDR Democrat, first worked on the docks, but after he fell in the Delaware River, found a career working in one of the assembly lines at the local General Electric plant. As a union member, Nancy's father never crossed a picket line and her mom would cook on a Coleman stove to save money whenever her father had to go out on strike. Nonetheless, her parents still were able to send Nancy to parochial schools.



L-R: Jo Souvignier and Nancy Fox

Out of high school, Nancy married a sailor whose ship was undergoing weeks of repairs in the Philadelphia Naval Yard. Ultimately, they moved to Chico, his hometown, but after having a child, the marriage didn't last long.

After moving to Sacramento and over the course of the next 30 years, Nancy would forge a path through California state politics working for seven state legislators. "Back [in the '70s], I had so little money to raise the boys, my lunch during the week was a tin of cottage cheese with ketchup," Nancy said with a wry laugh.

But, determined to move up Nancy would regularly sneak down to Vic Fazio's office to volunteer for whatever secretarial and administrative work she could find. Ultimately, she became Fazio's scheduling secretary before he was elected to Congress. "He was one of the most honest men I've ever met," she recalled. "He also was one of the most dedicated politicians in looking out for his district. Nancy noted, "He would come back to the office after a full workday. We would sit on the floor in his office, and he'd discuss with us what we were supposed to be doing and how to do it. He was fantastic!"

One of Nancy's last stints in "the Building," was for Senator Bill Greene, whose district included Watts and much of South-Central L.A. Notorious for his flashes of anger, Nancy joined the staff regardless. "He was a big, hulking guy and was meaner to some of the staff than others." Greene, who chaired the Senate Industrial Relations Committee, often kept staff into the night working on legislation and policy related to the committee. Nancy's hard work paid off when Greene assigned her to become a consultant to the Committee, after she became a recognized expert on workers compensation.

When Pete Wilson was elected Governor, a former staffer from the Industrial Relations Committee, who had been appointed Director of the Industrial Relations Department, invited Nancy to join his staff. At the same time, she was attending Sacramento State where she would earn her bachelor's degree in business administration and labor economics.

(Continued on page 5)



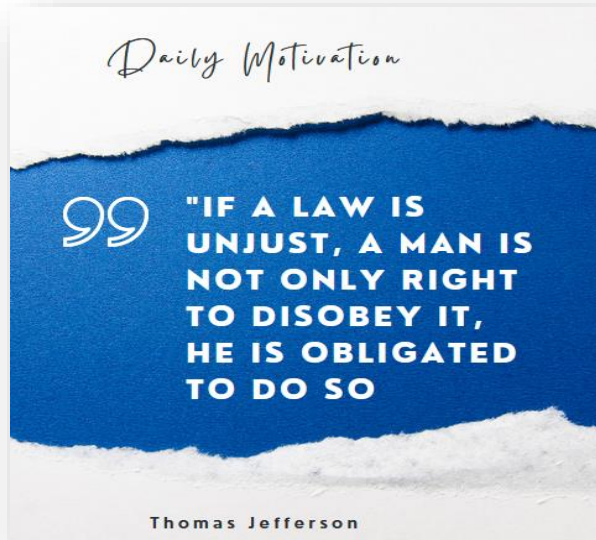
**WDSC Member -
Charmaine E. Betty-Singleton**

Charmaine E. Betty-Singleton was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and raised in Queens, New York. She is an attorney and a veteran who served in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Currently, Charmaine is the deputy general counsel and attorney advisor for the California National Guard. As a minority and an immigrant she loves what America stands for and is a servant-leader who strives/advocates for liberty and justice for all.



“One of the things that pains me is we have so tragically underestimated the trauma, the hardship we create in this country when we treat people unfairly, when we incarcerate them unfairly, when we condemn them unfairly.” - Brian Stevenson.

This quote motivates Charmaine to fight for and be the voice of those who are unable to speak for themselves and to support like-minded women to address voter suppression, gun violence, immigration concerns, police brutality, and mental health issues. She also believes we need more diverse elected officials.



**WDSC Member –
Nancy Castignetti**

Nancy is the newest member of the Women Dems! She’s a certified speech-language pathologist, specializing in clinical research as well as diagnoses and treatment of speech and language disorders in bilingual pediatric populations.



Nancy has been involved in grassroots activism, primarily in Elk Grove, but lapsed a bit during the COVID era. She is now living in the City of Sacramento again and is interested in returning to the political scene. Nancy joined Women Dems with the hope that the club will promote important legislation as well as candidates who support human rights, including (of course) women's rights.

Nancy’s hobbies include yoga, reading, and listening to podcasts and she has two amazing young daughters.



The Indominables – Cont.

Nancy began covering hearings at the Department's headquarters in San Francisco and ultimately rose to become a legislative coordinator. When an appointment opened to become the Director of the Department's legislative unit, Nancy applied. Despite demonstrating her knowledge on a wide range of legislation and regulations during the interview, the grandson of a well-connected political contributor was ultimately selected for the position.

Jo Souvignier's path to California politics was completely different. Her involvement in national, state, and local politics wouldn't begin until after 1980. That year, she was divorced from her husband, a career Air Force fighter pilot, when they moved to Sacramento for his last assignment. Unlike Nancy, she received financial support from her children's father, but needed to re-enter the workforce to share the responsibility of raising their three sons.

Jo had graduated from Oregon State University with a four-year degree in Secretarial Science in the late 1950s. And, while her commitment to political causes wouldn't surface until she joined Code Pink during the war in Iraq, Jo had been raised in a home by parents who were "solid Democrats" from Nebraska and Kansas.

After working in several state agencies from 1981 through 1997, Jo started working for the personnel director in the office of the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig.

The early '80s were still a time when people smoked at their desks, but Jo had given up smoking to become an avid runner who would go on to compete in dozens of marathons and ultra-mountain trail marathons. Outraged by the amount of second-hand smoke in their work environment, Jo and a group of consultants took a proposal to Superintendent Honig to ban smoking from the building.

"We pissed so many people off, but we became the first building in California state government to become a non-smoking building. He was all for it!" Jo proudly remembers.

In her last position, Jo served as a health and safety officer for the Department of Food and Agriculture. Her assignments ranged from holding seminars promoting healthy nutrition to wearing a hard hat as a building inspector checking the condition of asbestos during building renovations.

Although Jo and Nancy were members of the Women Dems, they didn't meet until 2004 when they staffed the County Democrats' booth at the State Fair. In 2005, Jo was elected Secretary for the Women Dems and in 2007 was elected President of the club. She likes to say that Nancy, who served as treasurer in that term, was part of her "dream team." Jo remained on the Board until 2010 as Immediate Past President.

While the Women Dems' roster is relatively stable now at about 130 members, veterans may recall that the club's vitality has ebbed and flowed. During the two years she was treasurer, Nancy remembers, "money was tight and at one point, we really thought the club was going to dissolve. Only about four of us were sitting in a little circle for one of the meetings."

Still, as California's oldest Democratic club (established 1953), it remains vibrant as do Jo and Nancy. "Talk to Nancy about it," is the advice I've heard for the last decade regarding local politics," according to Kate Van Buren, our club's Immediate Past President. "Nancy is one of those rare people who have experience, grit, and energy to sway public opinion on any issue."

In 2014, when Kate didn't receive the club's endorsement for school board, she said Jo contacted her and told her the nominating committee had been so impressed they wanted Kate to run for president of our club. (Cont. Pg. 6)



The Indominables – Cont.

Annette Emery, our Vice President for Membership, adds that Jo is “the one who knows that bringing people together is how you get things done. I’ve always been able to count on her for good advice, historical perspective, and an optimistic attitude.”

Together or separately, Nancy and Jo have attended nearly every California State Democratic Convention together since 2000. Jo volunteered at the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina and is currently Congressman Ami Bera’s alternate to the Sacramento County Democratic Party. Additionally, she has hosted a number of campaign fundraisers.

Meanwhile, Nancy volunteered for some of our endorsed candidates’ campaigns last year, including Alana Mathews’ campaign for Sacramento County District Attorney, Eric Guerra’s campaign for State Assembly, and Jaclyn Moreno’s campaign for County Supervisor representing District 5. Nancy also was a volunteer for Dave Jones’ campaign for State Senate.

In August, the two received the Tower Bridge Unsung Hero Award from Senator Alex Padilla for their years of service. At the same gathering, Women Dems were recognized as Club of the Year.



Photos w/elected officials - Top Middle: The Hon. Jim Cooper, Sheriff, with Nancy Fox; Bottom: The Hon. Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator (D-CA)

WDSC Affiliates

By Linda Reed

As part of their 2023 speaker’s series, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), a nonprofit group that collects and publishes information and data about the most pressing issues facing California, held a luncheon commemorating International Women’s Day (March 8, 2023).

Several members of the Women Dem’s Executive Committee attended the event highlighting this year’s California legislative class which has the largest number of women in state history. PPIC President Tani Cantil-Sakauye moderated a discussion of diverse women serving in the State Assembly and Senate. It was focused on the shared experiences of these legislators and key issues and policy proposals with which they are involved.

Participants included:

- The Hon. Tina McKinnor , Assemblymember (AD 61);
- The Hon. Liz Ortega, Assemblymember (AD 20);
- The Hon. Janet Nguyen, Senator (SD 36); and
- The Hon. Nancy Skinner, Senator (SD 9) and leader of the California Women’s Legislative Caucus.

The panel explained how they address pressing issues through their proposed legislation and their work on committees. They discussed their work on bills addressing homelessness, issues of diversity, the cost of living and affordable housing, the fentanyl epidemic, and human trafficking.

All of these issues were seen through the eyes of women who knew they had to get involved in the political process to promote change in issues important to women.



Photos L-R: The Hon. Tina McKinnor, The Hon. Liz Ortega, The Hon. Janet Nguyen, The Hon. Nancy Skinner

WDSC POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Upcoming Political Meet and Greets

CAMPAIGN
WATCH

U.S. SENATE CANDIDATES
Seek U.S. Senate seat now held by

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Representative



WDSC
Political Affairs
Committee



**The Honorable
Adam Schiff**
United States
Representative



**The Honorable
Barbara Lee**
United States
Representative



**The Honorable
Katie Porter**
United States
Representative

Congressional Representatives Barbara Lee, Adam Schiff and Katie Porter have all announced campaigns, with more candidates likely to emerge.

The Women Democrats of Sacramento County will try to organize a series of meet and greets with each Senate candidate to allow our members the opportunity to meet the candidates and ask questions. We will let you know as soon as the events are scheduled!

The last election just ended but campaigning has already begun for 2024! As you have likely seen, three Democrats have already declared their candidacy for the Senate seat currently held by Dianne Feinstein.

Ms. Feinstein, 89, who is in her sixth term, was first elected in 1992 and plans to retire at the end of her term. As California's senior senator and the longest-serving woman senator ever, Dianne Feinstein has built a reputation as an independent voice, working hard to find commonsense solutions to problems facing California and the nation.



At the State level, the Women Dems is reviewing the legislation that has been proposed in the new legislative session to determine which bills we should support. We will make recommendations to the membership in April.

If there is a bill you believe we should be supporting, please reach out to our Political Affairs Director, Anna Ioakimedes, at annaioak@gmail.com.

Sacramento Women Dems' Speaker's Series 2023



Sacramento Women Dems in Action!

What is the WDSC Speaker's Series?

Remarkable leaders and agents of change within the community participate in WDSC's Speakers Series to discuss thought-provoking topics, meet members and answer questions. Dr. Elizabeth Sherrell-Davis, WDSC Vice President, is the coordinator of our Speakers Series.

February's Speaker's Series, celebrating "Black History Month", was led by Moderator Eric Wiesenthal.

Guest speakers were:

- David DeLuz (CalTrans, Office of Civil Rights and former Sacramento NAACP President);
- Rory Kaufman (former consultant to the Honorable Shirley Weber, Secretary of State); and
- Denise DeLuz (longtime community health advocate).

Black History Month was described as an opportunity to focus on the unheralded fabric of the African American community and to give credit to a rich history, a rich cultural tradition, and to our contributions to the growth of American society. It serves as a time of inspiration, respect, pride and acknowledgement as we continue to remember the past with the greatness of the future.

The Speaker's Series for March was just as exceptional! The topic was: "Honoring Women's History Month with Women Entrepreneurs" and the featured guest panelists included:

- Alexis Greene - Owner, Sixela Innovations and Consulting
- Emily Autenrieth - Owner, A Seat at the Table Bookstore
- Pamela Dominisse, Moderator

Alexis shared her experiences starting a human resources consulting firm focusing on employee development. Her inspiration to begin her business came with her frustration when her recommendations were being ignored or minimized by management in organizations where she worked. She spoke to the importance of having a business plan and not giving away services for free.


Emily opened A Seat at the Table to provide a community gathering place friendly to families, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ community. Her challenges included opening a progressive business in a more conservative community (Elk Grove) and her efforts to address the impacts of patriarchy, sexism, racism, ableism, etc. both in her business and in the community.



Celebrate the life & legacy of **César Chávez**



"There is no limit to what we as WOMEN can accomplish"



Michelle Obama

Join Us
And Participate in our Monthly General Meetings

FOR MORE INFO:
WWW.SACRAMENTOWOMENDEMS.COM



EVENT HOSTED BY WOMEN DEMOCRATS
OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL!

Featuring 7 delicious ice cream flavors, wine, and a silent auction!

**SUPPORTING LOCAL DEMOCRATS HAS
NEVER BEEN SO SWEET!**

**June 1st
5-7 pm**

Park Terrace, 5500
Parkfield Court,
Sacramento

ICE CREAM:

\$25 for members

\$30 for non-members

ICE CREAM + WINE:

\$35 for members

\$40 for non-members

PURCHASE TICKETS VIA
QR CODE OR VISIT:

[actblue.com/donate/
icecreamwithaglass2023](https://actblue.com/donate/icecreamwithaglass2023)



<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/icecreamwithaglass2023>



Food for Seniors Hart Senior Center

915 27th Street,
Sacramento, CA 95816

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services operates **Food for Seniors** (Commodity Supplemental Food Program - CSFP), providing **FREE** food to low - income seniors. Eligible participants will receive a box of groceries each month.



Food for Seniors

Come get a box of food
and fresh produce next month!

Food for Seniors Distribution Dates at Hart Senior Center 915 27th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816	
March 15, 2023; 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	June 21, 2023; 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
April 19, 2023; 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	July 19, 2023; 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
May 17, 2023; 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	August 16, 2023; 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

To be eligible, must be at least 60 years of age and meet the income guidelines.

To sign up, bring:

- Proof of identity and age
- Address verification
Identification with current address OR
any bill with your name & current
address

For help finding other food in your area, please
visit sacramentofoodbank.org/find-food

2023 Income Guidelines			
Family Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$18,954	\$1,580	\$365
2	\$25,636	\$2,137	\$493
3	\$32,318	\$2,694	\$622
4	\$39,000	\$3,250	\$750
Additional members	\$6,682	\$557	\$129

This institution is an equal opportunity
provider

www.sacramentofoodbank.org / (916) 925-3240