

100 Years Later

Virtual Breakfast Meeting Focuses on Women's Suffrage

The Ulster Chamber will devote their next Virtual Breakfast Meeting to the 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote by assembling a panel of female leaders to discuss that event from a local perspective.

The sponsor for the event is Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson.

The push for equal voting rights began on July 19, 1848 in Seneca Falls, N.Y. There, close to 200 women, led by abolitionists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, gathered at the Wesleyan Chapel to "discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of women."

The battle to secure full voting rights endured for another 72 years. It wasn't until Aug. 18, 1920, that the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.

the American story—one that needs to be recounted from a modern standpoint.

"Women have acquired power by exercising the right to vote and by running for office themselves. The perspective of all citizens must be taken into consideration for our government to fairly serve the needs of all," she said.

"As the first woman Family Court Judge in Ulster County, the first woman Supreme Court judge in the 28 counties of the Third Department and the first woman Presiding Justice of the Third Department, I have made a difference for justice for all and made sure that the voices of women and people of color have been heard in the highest levels of government.

"As it has been said by many before me, if you do not have a seat at the table, you do not get to enjoy the meal."

Postupack agreed that engagement is crucial.

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She said she will put on her historian cap at the breakfast and look back at how New York was ahead of the pack when it came to voting rights for women.

In 1917, 54 percent of (all-male) voters approved the proposed women's suffrage amendment to the state constitution.

Postupack will speak about "Ulster County Women of Note," spotlighting some of those suffragettes and "paying tribute to these women, who through their vision, determination and strength, laid the foundation for women's voices to be heard for generations to come."

Dittus said she plans to examine how women have "engaged with the ballot box in the past 100 years," specifically in Ulster County.

She said she will present data from historic documents maintained by the Ulster County Board of Elections to show the number of women who registered to vote over the decades and how those trends have shaped the political landscape in the county.

Dittus also plans to look at the next 100 years as women "progress in their political franchise both as voters and as elected

VIRTUAL BREAKFAST Meeting

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Tuesday June 16, 9:00 - 10:00 am



Hon Karen Peters



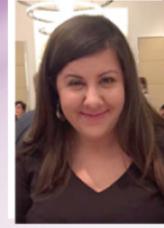
Cynthia Bell



Jennifer Clark



Nina Postupack



Ashley Dittus

officials."

She said she is working with KT Tobin, the director of the SUNY New Paltz Benjamin Center, to forecast those trends.

From a League of Women Voters perspective, Bell said she has researched the topic from early scrapbooks and will share interesting anecdotes at the breakfast.

She plans to take it a step further by looking at what women bring to the voting booth, including "diversity of thought."

"I think women's roles, while expanded greatly in the world, still tend toward a nurturing view and seek to bring others up with them rather than exercising power over them. They appreciate a candidate with a long, wide, creative view," Bell said.

"Women tend to vote their own values," she said, and for candidates who "consider the future."

Women voters "look to leave the world a better place for their children and grandchildren," she said.

Postupack said that is why the Chamber's efforts to spotlight the suffragists is so important.

"We owe so much to these women, who fought so that we could participate in the political process in the form of one of our most hallowed rights outlined in the Constitution—the right to vote."

The virtual breakfast can be viewed on Facebook Live from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

For more information go to UlsterChamber.org.

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Fast forward to now. The current pandemic has forced the cancellation of many events around the country commemorating the centennial, but the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce has come up with a creative way to highlight it.

On June 16, the Chamber is hosting a Virtual Breakfast Meeting with an all-female panel that will include Hon. Karen Peters, the first woman appointed Chief Justice of the Appellate Division of the Third Department of state Supreme Court.

Peters, who retired in December 2017 after more than three decades on the bench, will be joined by Ulster County Clerk Nina Postupack, Ulster County Elections Commissioner Ashley Dittus and Cynthia Bell and Jennifer Clark of the Ulster County League of Women Voters.

Crystal Jacob of Ulster Savings Bank, Vice Chair of the Chamber's Board of Directors, and Jess Davis, Director of Membership Engagement, will host the 9:00 a.m. online event at Seven21 Media Center.

Peters said she will focus largely on the suffrage movement in New York, with an emphasis on Hudson Valley trailblazers like Sojourner Truth, Hanna Johnson Bailey, Mary Hoes Burhans and Eleanor Roosevelt.

"These women changed the political landscape and improved the lives of women forever. They were masters at protesting but also understood politics and used the system to change the system," she said.

Peters said suffragists are a key part of

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