



July 24, 2019

News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Jennie Tunkieicz
262-653-2831

Was your great-grandmother a suffragist? Kenosha County Suffrage 100 releases, researches list of 1915 league members

KENOSHA – Want to know if someone related to you was involved when women received the right to vote a century ago?

Kenosha County Suffrage 100, a group dedicated to celebrating the history of women's suffrage and the future of voting, this week released a curated list of members of the Kenosha County Equal Suffrage League from nearly 104 years ago.

The list, first published in the Nov. 11, 1915, edition of the Kenosha Evening News, was extensive. However, consistent with the style of the day, it lacked the first names of most married women, as in "Mrs. John Smith."

Local historian and Suffrage 100 committee member Diane Giles headed up the successful effort of researching the full names of these 170 women.

"The Kenosha County Suffrage 100 committee really wanted to give these feisty women back their own first names," Giles said. "It took many hours of research and it couldn't have been done without the help of the staff at the Kenosha History Center and committee members Pam Drummond and Cameron Swallow."

Giles said the list was discovered in a scrapbook that belonged to Mary D. Bradford, now housed in the archives at the Kenosha History Center. The newspaper clipping told of the upcoming

annual meeting of the Kenosha County Equal Suffrage League, and named the slate of officers, delegates and alternates to an upcoming state meeting.

Bradford is among the still-familiar surnames on the list. The first female superintendent of a major school system in Wisconsin and the namesake of Kenosha's Bradford High School, she was listed as the first vice president of the local suffrage league in 1915.

Ultimately, Giles and her fellow researchers were able to come up with the first names of all but 12 of the 121 married women's names on the 1915 list. It is Giles' hope that the list will allow present-day readers to claim an ancestor as a suffragist.

Giles, a fifth-generation Kenoshan, said she is not sure, but she believes she may have made one such determination herself.

“One of the names listed – Mrs. William Schultz – may be my Great-Aunt Susan Thome Schultz, but since there were three Mrs. William Schultzes living in Kenosha County at that time, we don't know for sure,” Giles said. “In my heart, I sure hope it's my Aunt Susie.”

The full list from 1915 can be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/1915Suffragists>.

About Kenosha County Suffrage 100:

To celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote, Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser has appointed a special steering committee to coordinate celebrations across the county in 2020.

The Kenosha Suffrage 100 steering committee encourages schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses and citizens to plan events throughout 2020 in celebration of the Women's Right to Vote.

Learn more online at www.kenoshacounty.org/suffrage and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KenoshaCountySuffrage100.

###