



Meet Our 2024 Award Recipients

Defender of Democracy Award

Joy Cardin

Joy joined the League of Women Voters of Dane County in 2018, shortly after retiring from Wisconsin Public Radio. Over a span of 31 years at WPR, she served as the News Director, Talk Director, Ideas Network Director, and the Executive Producer and Host of The Joy Cardin Show—a live call-in talk show where she interviewed a wide variety of guests about current issues. She also moderated candidate debates, hosted election coverage, and conducted numerous interviews on many of the issues LWV has also worked on—sometimes with League leaders.

In the years prior to her retirement, Joy became increasingly concerned about what she perceived as a rise of incivility in political discourse, an apathy about voting in state and local elections, as well as increased attempts to spread disinformation and distrust in the news media. She viewed these as threats to our democracy and wanted to continue to counter these efforts once she left WPR. She found the perfect place to do this with the League of Women Voters. She shared the League's mission to empower voters and defend democracy and believed she could use her broadcast journalism skills



to help do this.

Joy grew up in a politically diverse family in Appleton, Wisconsin during the tumultuous 1960s and '70s. Watching the evening news and candidate debates were “must see” TV. Dinner table discussions about the Vietnam War, the ERA, and other issues of the day were routine. Her father wrote letters to the editor, her mother called into local talk radio programs, they voted in every election, sometimes for different candidates, and they instilled a sense of civic duty in Joy and her 7



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Joy Cardin, continued

older siblings.

Since joining the League of Women Voters, Joy has worked on organizing and moderating several forums on various election issues, restoring reproductive rights, gerrymandering, the importance of DEI programs, and many others. She has participated in voter registration drives, conducted candidate interviews, and moderated candidate forums. She has helped organize Lively Issues Luncheons, including this one!

While being an active member of the Dane County League, Joy has also been serving on the board of directors for the LWV of Wisconsin since 2019, she is the president of her Madison neighborhood association, and was the co-president of the former Madison Civics Club. She serves on the board of the Dane County Humane Society and just became a

member of the board of the Attic Angel Community. She is a member of the Rotary Club of Madison and TEMPO Madison, among others. She is also a city of Madison Election Official.

Joy has a degree in Communications from UW-Stevens Point and worked as a news reporter/anchor at WSAW TV in Wausau and WLUK TV in Green Bay prior to joining WPR. She was recently inducted into the Milwaukee Press Club's Hall of Fame for her service to the community and to the journalism profession.

Joy lives with her husband Rob Starbuck and her two orange kittens Jay and Juna in Madison's Midvale Heights neighborhood. She loves to travel—and just returned from experiencing this week's total eclipse of the sun in Cleveland.