



League of Women Voters  
of the  
Greater Dayton Area

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ELLIS JACOBS IS RECIPIENT OF LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
CATHY BANTZ AWARD**

*First to receive honor since 2005 for League's community voter service recognition*



**DAYTON, Ohio (May 19, 2008)** – The League of Women Voters of Greater Dayton (the League) announced today that Ellis Jacobs, member of the Montgomery County Voter Protection Coalition (MCVPC), was bestowed the Cathy Bantz Community Voter Service Award in honor of his contribution to fair and accurate voting in the Miami Valley.

Mr. Jacobs is being recognized for his leadership role and volunteerism in determining the success of electronic voting machines used November 6, 2007 during Montgomery County elections.

“The League is honored to bestow the Cathy Bantz Award on Ellis Jacobs who put voters’ rights front and center while investigating fairness and accuracy in Montgomery County elections and bringing such issues to the forefront in the State of Ohio,” said Sharon Harmer, president of the League. “It is a privilege to know that Ellis continues to work on our collective behalf to ensure the honesty of a system in continual flux.”

Mr. Ellis devoted more than 100 volunteer hours to obtain information, garnered by the Public Records Act, on the performance of voting machines and hardware used in last year’s county elections. His project was conducted while working with the MCVPC since 2004 in collaboration with local labor unions, various community organizations, private citizens, attorneys and the League.

The outcome produced a first-ever detailed analysis, report and published document submitted to the Ohio Secretary of State highlighting problems encountered by Montgomery County voters using Diebold electronic voting machines.

Mr. Jacobs identified malfunctions throughout 40 percent of Montgomery County precincts (221 out of 548). These included jammed printers; crumpled or torn paper; non-working encoders; inoperable machines; calibration issues; stuck voter access cards in machines; frozen screens, start-up/shut-down problems; and, questions about registered votes.

Without this investigation, the State of Ohio would not have realized the extent of the issue with the new machines or the potential for citizens’ votes becoming void.

### **About Ellis Jacobs**

Ellis Jacobs is a public interest attorney with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality in Dayton. For more than 26 years, he has been a tireless advocate for Dayton citizens. He has adopted such causes as environmental justice, protection of the right to vote and access to telecommunications services in low-income communities.

In March 2008, Jacobs was honored by the Harvard Civil Rights - Civil Liberties Law Review in Cambridge, Mass. for his "outstanding work in the public interest" and for "exemplifying outstanding commitment to social justice."

He is a graduate of the University of Dayton College of Law and is a member of the Dayton Bar Association, the Ohio Bar Association, the City of Dayton Environment

Advisory Board, and the board of directors for Ohio Citizen Action. Jacobs is a native of Dayton and resides in Yellow Springs.

### **About Greater Dayton League of Women Voters**

The LWVGDA is a nonpartisan political organization and encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, while working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and the influence of public policy through education and advocacy.

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**FACT SHEET**

***Cathy Bantz Community Voter Service Award***

Cathy Bantz, a long-time League member, was League president from 1988 to 1991. She was committed to citizen education to be informed voters. She urged active participation at all levels of civic involvement and especially Montgomery County. She was the first executive director of Kids Voting-Ohio. After a courageous battle with cancer, she died in 1992 at the age of 42. As a project of the Dayton Area League of Women Voters Education Fund, the award recognizes those who advocate for citizen education and honors Cathy's dedication to voter service.

The League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area Cathy Bantz Community Voter Service Award, established in 1992, recognizes an individual or organization, residing in Greene County or Montgomery County, who has achieved excellence as an advocate for voter service.

**Past Recipients:**

- 2005: Charles Berry, committed The Berry Company (now Bell South) employees, who became a deputy registrar to ensure employees were eligible to vote and informed with unbiased information to make educated decisions at election time
- 2004: Marni Flagel, long-time President of County Corp, for her untiring voter education efforts directed especially toward the employees of County Corp
- 2003: Greene County and Montgomery County for support for League's publications *Know Montgomery County* and *Know Greene County*
- 1999: The *Dayton Daily News* and its co-sponsorship of the "Your Voice, Your Vote" Project which encouraged citizen participation in government
- 1997: Project READ for its collaboration in League's "Easy to Read" *Voters Guide*
- 1995: The *Dayton Daily News* for publication of the *Voters Guide*
- 1994: Miami Valley Cable Council, Dayton Access Television and Continental Cablevision (now Time Warner Cable) for taping candidate interviews
- 1993: Kids Voting Ohio/Founders Region for its youth voter service efforts

Applications for future awards are currently being accepted. Please contact The League for information on how to apply. Contact 228-4104 or by email at [league@lwvdayton.org](mailto:league@lwvdayton.org).

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