

DWGC Board Members, 2023-25

Laura Haight
President



Over a 35-year career in the newspaper industry — 25 years as a journalist, columnist, editor, and news executive, and 10 years as a technology executive — Laura was a political wonk whose career barred her from active participation in politics. After leaving her last Gannett posting as vice president of IT at the Greenville News, she went out on her own as a communications/technology consultant and freelance writer and columnist, and was too busy to think about politics. And besides, things seemed on a good track - Obama became president, health care became the law of the land, etc.

In 2014, she did two things: dipped her toe in the political waters as a volunteer for Hillary Clinton's campaign and became a member of Democratic Women. When the 2016 election didn't work out as expected, she became a volunteer with the Greenville

County Democratic Party.

She served as communications director with the GCDP from 2016 to 2021, returning to the party in 2022 as a consultant on comms and technology offering support to comms director Bridgette Watson. In 2021, she became communications director for the League of Women Voters. This year, she serves as chair of the Greenville League's Gender Equity program.

Laura describes herself as “results oriented” and has a reputation in both the corporate and nonprofit arenas where she's worked as someone who “gets things done.”

She is a native of New Jersey, lived and worked for many years in New York City, made her way to the “sort of South” for a three-year stint as a senior manager in technology at the Gannett Corporation's corporate headquarters in McLean, VA.

She moved to Greenville in 2003. Semi-retired from her business (but still keeping her hand in with select clients as opportunities arise), she lives in Greer with her husband, Steve, and border collie, Kora. She and Steve spend their quality time on the golf course. A golfer for 55 years, Laura is still trying to figure the game out!

Golf, she says, is the game that is most like life - and perhaps politics. Because your score is primarily dependent not on how well you do from the middle of the fairway, but on how well you handle the obstacles the course puts in front of you.

Monica Hughey
1st Vice President



Monica is a proud mom of two daughters. She is a native of Sumter, SC and daughter of an Army veteran and former district Superintendent. Monica obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Biology and continued her education at the University of South Carolina (Columbia), where she graduated with her MBA and PhD in Biological Science.

Monica's willingness to become an active member and serve as 1st VP of the Democratic Women of Greenville caucus comes as no surprise as Monica was immersed in politics at a young age through her grandfather (a former mayor), her sister's godfather (a former state Representative), and several other family friends that served at the state and national political levels. While living in Columbia, SC, Monica was active in politics as an intern for

Congressman Jim Clyburn, program representative of the 5th Circuit Solicitor's office, and intern for the City of Columbia's Marketing, PR, and Communications department. She was also a grassroots volunteer for former President Obama's campaign.

Upon graduation, Monica moved to Greenville where she worked as an Assistant Professor of Biology at North Greenville University and Adjunct Instructor of Biology at Greenville Tech and USC Upstate. Since that time, Monica has also taught science, scientific research, and Related Arts at Berea Middle and Greer Middle schools. After 16 years in education, Monica decided to leave teaching full time to spend more time with her daughters.

She is currently a Communications Director for a local nonprofit organization, Owner of MonicaMichelle Boutique, and Founder and CEO of ReVision Dance and Yoga Studio – a nonprofit studio dedicated to providing affordable and accessible lessons to underprivileged and underrepresented communities.

In her spare time, Monica loves to dance, travel, and watch football.

Peggy Schotsch
2nd Vice President



On my 19th birthday, as I watched the 1968 presidential election returns with my fellow Penn State students, I realized that I was a Democrat. (Remember, 19 year-olds couldn't vote in 1968.) In the '70s and '80s I was very active in NOW (the National Organization for Women). I've lost count of the marches and rallies in DC I participated in for the ERA, abortion, and gay rights. But it took the 2016 election to get me active in the Democratic Party. By that time, I was retired from GE, and I could return to my activist nature. And so, here I am, 2nd

Vice President of DWGC in charge of membership, after four years as treasurer.

Valerie Brooks-Madden

Treasurer



Dr. Valerie Brooks is a native of Greenville, residing in Fountain Inn, with her husband Kevin.

Valerie has overcome many obstacles in her life by persevering and determination. Tell me I can't or there is no way and I say give me 15 minutes of your time and I will change your mind while motivating you to reach higher and never give up. Her life includes being a board chair, Rotarian, distinguished toastmaster, and lay leader in the United Methodist Church while mentoring young women.

Valerie received her doctorate from Walden University, MBA Strayer and Bachelor of Science in from Southern Wesleyan University. Her favorite quote from Youth Poet Laureate of the United States Amanda Gorman is: For while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us."

Evelyn Nocella,

Secretary



As the Chairperson for North Greenville County Dems from Jan. 2020-Jan. 2023, I organized and conducted monthly planning and membership meetings, did outreach to increase membership, researched and organized community and candidate events, and managed the organization's social media accounts. I'm committed to promoting democratic values, at the everyday level, to bring people together. Honesty, inclusivity, and integrity are words I would use to describe myself. My political career has been short; my only post has been as chair of NGCD. As an active member of the GCDP, I've co-chaired a major fundraising event twice and am a precinct president. I am a member of NGCD, GCDP, LWV, and DWGC. I'm a retired (but still working) educator whose personal interests include travel, hiking, cooking, and reading.

Jen Boffey

Outreach Chair

Jen Boffey is excitedly new to Greenville having moved to Verdae in June 2022 from Orlando when her husband accepted a position with a local business.



She's a mom of three girls – one a freshman at JL Mann and two in college, one in Ohio and one in Florida. Jen is currently a practicing life coach and also owns and remotely operates a franchised hair salon in Orlando, but she is not a hairstylist!

Before kids she taught elementary school and, while raising her daughters, served in various volunteer capacities and later worked part time for a CPA.

Jen was drawn to the Democratic Women of Greenville County to meet like-minded women in her new community. She believes in actively working collaboratively to make the world a better place. She highly values relationships, authenticity and participating in community improvement. She's eager to give

voice with a newcomer's perspective and work to strengthen the powerful common thread that unites many of the individually unique women of Greenville County.

Abbie Collins

Fundraising Chair



I attended Greenville County Public Schools, continuing on to Claflin University, Greenville Tech, and other schools ultimately moving into Marketing and Financial Management.

Professionally, I have worked in Finance at the Greenville Housing Authority, HUD and computer marketing. I am a retired South Carolina realtor.

I am married to Foldger Collins and the mother of three children. I attend Bethlehem Baptist Church, Simpsonville, SC.

I am now enjoying the life of an entrepreneur as owner of Odell's Real Estate & Financial Consultant as well Abbie's Silk Sentiments N More. I volunteer in my community with several

social, civic and political groups.

Linda Derector

Meeting and Events Chair

I'm a native New Yorker, turned Greenville five years ago. I'm a passionate advocate for human rights, animal rights, good fashion and lifestyle, and hosting events large and small in my

home, sharing good food and creating an atmosphere of camaraderie among new and old friends and having memorable experiences .



My goal as event planner for the GWDP is to create meetings and events that members look forward to and feel proud enough of to invite friends to join us. My plan is to bring new energy and excitement to our meetings, in my style, with a view toward growing our membership base, making a little money AND having fun!

I am currently an active member of the League of Women Voters and the GCDP. I also volunteer for Safe Harbor, Jasmine Road, and Lucky Pup Rescue. I'm an outspoken and fun-loving person, and I'm honored to be a part of the

team.

I am always available to hear ideas, recommendations and advice. Feel free to reach out, I look forward to getting to know you!

Linda Hardman
Legislative Chair



I came of political age during a tumultuous and chaotic time in our country's history-when the Civil Rights Movement was in full force, when feminism was recognized as a just cause, and when a brutal war was raging in a faraway Asian land. One could not help but be shaped by these events, and they shattered my complacency. My sense of fairness, equality, and justice became more finely crystallized, and I became more actively engaged in the political process as a way to make a difference. The Democratic Party embodied the vision of working towards making our country live up to the principles upon which it was founded. I still passionately cling to that ideal today.

I worked in public schools for over 30 years as an art educator. My Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree is from the

University of Georgia and I have a master's from the University of South Carolina in Art Education and a master's from Clemson University in Human Resource Development. When I retired from teaching full-time, I was able to channel my passion for politics into the Democratic Women of Greenville County -- a major force in the political arena of the Upstate since its founding 56 years ago (and the longest continuously meeting Democratic Women's organization in South Carolina). In DWGC, I have served two terms as secretary, two terms as president, and chair of the legislative committee. I am proud to be a part of such a dynamic, vital political team!

I am also actively involved every month in registering newly naturalized citizens to vote at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service with the Greenville League of Women Voters.

Jeanette Jacobs

Constitution and Bylaws Chair



I moved to Southern California in the early 1970s and lived there for 38 years between San Diego and Los Angeles. My profession was in high tech, and I retired as the U.S. and Canada Distribution Sales Manager from an electronics manager.

I obtained my real estate sale license and became a Realtor. I used this knowledge to purchase and resell my own properties. I also earned a Certificate for Aging in-Place from the National Association of Home Builders.

In 2007, my house was lost in a wildfire. After going through the recovery process myself, I decided to help other fire survivors and join a natural disaster recovery organization as a coordinator, providing information and contacts for rebuilding, insurance policy education, and claim and home inventory guidance to disaster survivors.

My volunteer background in Greenville consists of being a past Treasurer of DWGC and volunteering at the Greenville County Animal Care animal shelter where, in addition to caring for animals, I assisted in the creation of volunteer guidelines, policies, procedures, and the volunteer handbook.