



Joint News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kenosha Pops Concert Band to feature salute to women's suffrage

KENOSHA — The Kenosha County Suffrage 100 Committee and the Kenosha Pops Concert Band are collaborating on a celebration of the centennial of the women's right to vote, to be featured at the band's Wednesday, July 21 concert.

The event will begin at 7 p.m. at the Sesquicentennial Bandshell in Pennoyer Park, 3601 Seventh Ave., Kenosha. Admission is free.

In addition to a musical program including some selections celebrating suffrage, Kenosha County Circuit Judge Mary K. Wagner will offer remarks on the significance of the suffrage movement and the efforts of some notable Kenosha County women who were involved.

Jada Robinson, crowned recently as Kenosha's Miss Juneteenth, will perform the "Ain't I a Woman?" speech delivered by Sojourner Truth in 1851, at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.

"We're excited to join with the Pops band and some other special guests to mark what's now 101 years of suffrage for women in our country," said Kenosha County Circuit Court Judge Mary K. Wagner, who is cochairing the Suffrage 100 Committee with retired Judge Barbara Kluka. "We invite everyone in the community to come out and join us to celebrate and reflect on this momentous occasion."

The Kenosha County Suffrage 100 Committee was formed by County Executive Jim Kreuser in 2019 to organize and promote events honoring the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment in August 1920, recognizing women's suffrage rights.

Many of those local celebrations in 2020 were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Others, including this celebration with the Pops, were moved back a year, and are now celebrating 101 years of suffrage.

“We’re pleased and thankful that we’re able to participate in this celebration,” said Pops Band Manager John Moyer. “We’re happy that Kenosha County Suffrage 100 is recognizing the significance of the women’s suffrage movement and the resultant right to vote, and we as a band are eager to present music from the era along with information about the movement. This is a unique opportunity for the band, and we are humbled to be asked to commemorate it with Kenosha.”

Pops Musical Director Craig Gall said Melissa Cardamone will perform as the band’s guest vocalist, singing authentic suffrage songs of the era with lyrics advocating for the women’s right to vote, set to familiar melodies including “Auld Lang Syne,” “Marching Through Georgia” and “Glory Glory Hallelujah.” The band will also perform a program of other songs including “The March of the Women Marines.”

“The music and programming will recognize the essential and indispensable right to vote, which was finally extended to women with the 19th Amendment,” Gall said.

While the passage of the 19th Amendment essentially gave white women to vote in the United States, it would take another 45 years for women of color to be given the right to vote in every state. In performing “Sojourner Truth’s famed “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech, Robinson will spotlight the struggle for gender and racial equality that was forged by suffragists.

A prolific participant in the Kenosha Unified School District theater program and a past contestant in the National American Miss Pageant, Robinson was crowned as Kenosha’s 2021 Miss Juneteenth in recognition of her volunteer work for the Teen Taskforce and the Mary Lou & Arthur F. Mahone Fund. She is a student at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City, one of the top performing arts colleges in the nation.

Upcoming Kenosha County Suffrage 100 event:

Another musical celebration of suffrage, also postponed from last year, is scheduled next month.

Blues and Twilight Jazz: The Kenosha County Women’s Suffrage Celebration will be held from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 24, outside of the Anderson Arts Center, 6603 Third Ave., Kenosha.

Festivities will include performances by up-and-coming local blues artist Ivy Ford and acclaimed Chicago-based jazz singer Elaine Dame, as well as a suffrage parade, a brief presentation, informational booths showcasing organizations that serve women and children, and a fireworks show at the end of the evening. More details are at <https://kempercenter.com/event/twilight-jazz-kenosha-county-suffrage-celebration>.

Those interested in participating in the suffrage parade may contact Jennie Tunkieicz at 262-653-2831 or Jennie.Tunkieicz@kenoshacounty.org. Organizations interested in hosting a booth may contact Nancy Retana at 262-857-1949 or Nancy.Retana@kenoshacounty.org.

T-shirts, other merchandise available:

T-shirts and other merchandise displaying the Kenosha County Suffrage 100 logo are available for purchase, with proceeds benefitting the Susan B. Anthony-Women of Influence Awards scholarship fund and grants programs. Orders may be placed at <https://kenoshaspiritwear.com/collections/kenosha-county-suffrage>.

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