

Each year, the Emily Farley Advisory Board goes about the difficult task of highlighting the service of only 1 Portland Area League member. There are 3 main criteria Emily Farley Award winners need to meet:

- Commitment to the League of Women Voters
- Active participation in the League, and
- Leadership in furthering the League's mission.

Each year, the name of the recipient of this award is kept secret. However, I am quite sure that this year's award winner, who happens to be very very smart, will know we're talking about her after about 2 sentences!! So here goes:

As with so many fantastic League colleagues, many of us would not have known this year's Emily Farley Award Winner if the Portland Area Chapter had not been reconstituted close to a decade ago. She has lived most of her adult life outside of Maine – indeed much of it outside of the US! And, since her 1995 move to Maine, our Awardee seems to prefer island life and remote wilderness retreats. So, it's fortunate for all of us here tonight that she is also an engaged citizen and became a founding member of the leadership team that steered our local League's re-creation.

Valerie Kelly easily meets all 3 of the award criteria. Until 2018 she was an active Board member. But, even before the Board existed, Valerie's 30

year background as an agricultural economist, specializing in agricultural policy and African development, earned her a coveted position on the national League's agricultural update study committee. After she left the Board, and before Covid, she still attended all major events and volunteered to help as needed.

Because Valerie and I have participated in the last 2 state League consensus study committees, I can unabashedly vouch for her work upholding League values for leadership, nonpartisanship, and efforts to include as many diverse people and points of view as possible. Valerie's commitment to research and data, her technical writing and organization skills are not surprising given her professional background. But her dogged persistence, humor and encouragement helped both the Maine Primary Study Committee and the Citizens' Initiative Committee (which she chaired) through our long slogs leading to Study Reports, Consensus Question Packets, response analyses, and Draft Policy Statements.

After all of this, I hope Valerie's Moosehead Lake island retreat has strong enough wifi to see her 2020 Emily Farley Award!