

## WFWP No. California: Commemorates 100 years of women's right to vote

Patricia Fleischman  
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August 26, 2020 was a historically memorable day: it marked 100 years since the passing of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote for the first time in the United States. This was a wonderful occasion for the Northern California chapter of WFWP to celebrate with the community the brave and sacrificial women who gave years of their lives and suffered great pains to see that dream come true.

Bruna Allen, the WFWP communications coordinator for the Northern California chapter, thought that our event could be even more exciting if the historical walk through the suffrage times could be combined with the celebration of a present-day woman worthy of receiving WFWP's [HerStory Award](#). When we started planning, about three months earlier, we were hoping to host an in-person event by August, so we needed to find someone local. God heard us and Brunna came across a non-profit organization with an intriguing name, Girls Love Mail, and discovered that the young lady who found it, Gina Mulligan, was also a best-selling author and researcher of the suffrage period.

Girls Love Mail is a national charity that collects and distributes hand-written letters of encouragement for women newly diagnosed with breast cancer. Gina is a cancer survivor herself and received great comfort from one note of encouragement she received during her dreadful experience, so she decided she would do likewise for women going through the same suffering. Since the start in 2011, Gina and her 15 volunteers have delivered over 170,000 letters; that's 170,000 women helped!

We prepared to hold our event, "REMEMBER THE LADIES: A 'Girls Love Mail' Letter Writing," on August 29th and ultimately had to host it virtually using Zoom, but Gina put all our worries to rest as her years of presentations to various audiences, even corporate ones, and television interviews, such as on the Oprah Winfrey show, have given her great solid experience and confidence. In fact, she gave a brilliant overview of the history of women's suffrage in America with details of the trials and violence those ladies were victims of, and included amazing stories of the little-known women in history like Mary Dixon Kies who, in 1809, became the first female to file a US patent. Our audience was very captivated as they kept on asking her questions, and the conversation expanded to other countries as a couple of participants offered their own insights about women's rights in their native countries of Nigeria and Finland.

After that lively presentation, Gina guided us step by step on a hands-on activity of writing our own letter or card of encouragement and support for a "friend" or "sister" or "powerful lady" -- as Gina suggested we'd call a breast cancer recipient -- who will most certainly cherish such a note like Gina did. She is still keeping that card on the shelf next to her bed 11 years later! Our event concluded with the virtual presentation of the HerStory award to Gina, who became visibly moved as everyone expressed their appreciation and did not seem to want to leave as they kept on repeating their goodbyes.