

## Member Spotlight

### LEE ROWE



#### **Where she's from**

Lee Rowe, who is 85 years young, grew up in Arlington, Virginia. Lee and her husband, Ed, met in high school. Lee earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry at the College of William & Mary and worked in several biochemistry labs while in graduate school. In 1962, after graduate school, she and Ed moved to Emporia, Kansas where Ed joined the biology faculty at Emporia State University. They raised three sons—one is now a nurse in Overland Park, one is a writer in Seattle and one is a naval officer in Washington, D.C.

#### **Why she joined the LWV**

Lee joined the Emporia League in 1962 mostly because she was new in town and wanted to get to know people. After living in the D.C. area, she also was interested in the workings of government in a small town. In 1975, she ran for state representative. Two years later, she became the first woman elected to serve on the Emporia City Council. She went on to serve two terms as mayor of Emporia in 1980 and 1985, and again she was the first woman to be elected to that position.

#### **Why she remains committed**

Lee says League activities allow her to follow her interest in Johnson County government. Her hometown of Arlington grew relatively quickly from a small county to being part of a much larger metropolitan area. Lee thinks Johnson County, which is growing in a similar way, can benefit from Arlington's experience.

#### **What the League does well**

Lee recognizes that the League has smart members who produce and consume good, careful analyses of government. Through the Observer Corps and other efforts, the League plays an important role in government. She cites two examples in which the League's involvement made a difference: the establishment of the Women and Infant Children program in Lyon County and the housing affordability study for Johnson County, which the League will release this spring.

#### **Where she would like to see LWVJoCo focus**

Lee's husband was a League member, and she thinks the organization benefits by encouraging men to get involved. Also, League's continued involvement in local efforts, like the affordable housing study, is important.

*By Kathleen Morrow*