

Think more about what politics should be



Diane Mack

VIEWPOINT

President Calvin Coolidge once said, "Politics is not an end, but a means. It is not a product, but a process. It is the art of government. Like other values it has its counterfeits. So much emphasis has been placed upon the false that the significance of the true has been obscured and politics has come to convey the meaning of crafty and cunning selfishness, instead of candid and sincere service."

The Institute for Women in Politics was founded three years ago from a desire to change the counterfeit that politics has become and restore it to what it is meant to be: the application of great and unchangeable principles to the enduring good of a community. It is our contention, based on personal experience as well as national academic research, that our best hope for this change is having more women in elected office, women who are principled and competent and dedicated to selfless service, women who will take a seat at the table with principled men to work together and get things done for the common good.

July 1 marked the start of our fourth fiscal year and the launch of a new leadership team for the coming year.

City of Pensacola port director **Amy Miller** has taken the helm as president. Miller was one of the founding directors

of the Institute and has served as its vice president the past three years.

Her vice president/president-elect is **Meghan McCarthy**, director of the Healthy Lives program for Baptist Health Care. **Sharie Bourbeau**, formerly an executive with the departments of the Navy and Homeland Security, will serve as secretary, and Institute founding president **Diane Mack** will serve as treasurer.

Completing the new team as directors are campaign management consultant **Deb Corbin**; UWF sociology instructor **Roz Fisher**; **Rachael Gillette**, director of professional development for Studer Community Institute; and **Lola Presley** with Hancock Bank, who is a founding director returning to the board.

Our first three years were dedicated to building a strong foundation for future growth. This included growing our membership from seven to 39, vitally necessary as we operate entirely with volunteers and have derived our operating income solely from members' dues.

Who are these 39 members? They include current and past officeholders as well as candidates in this year's elections. They include women who work or have worked in government at the local and national levels. They include university academics and campaign management experts. They include entrepreneurs, educators, philanthropists, and women who have private-sector careers, all of whom strongly support the mission of getting more women elected, though they themselves may have no interest in running for office.

It has also been essential from the

start to provide a strong program of campaign and leadership training. To that end we have hosted six workshops to date that dealt with election laws, voter lists, petition strategies, campaign organization and management, how to prepare and position yourself to run for office, public speaking, fundraising, and campaign message development. While most of the presenters were local experts, thanks to our benefactors, we were able to bring in national trainers on two occasions, the Leadership Institute from Washington, D.C., and prominent political fundraiser Nancy Bocskor.

We also asked the city of Pensacola to host a how-to workshop offered by the Florida League of Cities for citizens who serve on advisory boards.

In upcoming pieces, President Amy Miller will announce the Institute's goals for the next three years and Vice President Meghan McCarthy will give an account of her recent experience at the Women's Campaign School at Yale University.

In the meantime we ask that you give deep thought to what politics should be — the application of great and unchangeable principles to the enduring good of the community — and join us in making it so.

Diane Mack was the founding president of the Institute for Women in Politics of Northwest Florida and offers this viewpoint on behalf of the IWP board of directors. She served on the Pensacola City Council 2009-2010. To inquire about membership, send an email to contact@iwp-florida.org.