

DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB

Of Upper Pinellas

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Black History Month Honoree

Representative Val Demings



February 22, 12:00-1:30

Congresswoman Valdez B. Demings, the youngest of seven children, was born in Jacksonville, Florida to James and Elouise Butler. The first in her family to graduate college, she worked as a social worker, then joined the Orlando Police Department. Over a 27-year career, Demings had many notable assignments, including Commander of the Airport Division during 9/11, Commander of Special Operations, member of the Crisis Negotiation Team, Commander of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team, and Executive Vice President of the International Association of Airport and Seaport Police.

In 2007, Demings was selected to serve as Chief for the Orlando Police Department—the first woman to hold that position. Upon taking office, she launched an all-out war against crime. Her tenure was marked by a dramatic 40% reduction in violent crime, including robberies, shootings and murders. Chief Demings also served as Co-Chair of the Florida Gang Intervention Regional Task Force and Member of Florida Police Chiefs Legislative Team. In addition, Congresswoman Demings founded “Operation Positive Direction,” a youth mentoring program designed to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and youth in the community.

In 2016, Demings was elected to Congress in Florida's 10th District. Her committee assignments include the following: Committee on Homeland Security (subcommittee- Transportation and Maritime Security), House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (subcommittees- Defense Intelligence and Warfighter Support and Intelligence Modernization and Readiness), and the House Judiciary Committee (subcommittees- Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law and Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security). Demings is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Women's Caucus, and New Democrat Coalition. In addition, Rep. Demings is a Vice Chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, Recruitment Chair for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Member of the Election Security Task Force, and Member of the Congressional Badge of Bravery Review Board.

In 2019, Demings, again, made history when she was appointed by the Speaker of the House to serve as an Impeachment Manager, one of only 3 women to ever serve in that position.

Congresswoman Demings stays involved in her community through numerous organizations, including: Saint Mark A.M.E. Church; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; the Orlando Chapter of The Links; NAACP; National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE); as well as numerous other affiliations. Congresswoman Demings also enjoys riding her Harley Davidson Motorcycle. Congresswoman Demings is married to Jerry Demings, who serves as the Orange County Mayor. The couple has 3 sons and 5 grandchildren



President's Message: Mary Freeman

As we enter February, we remember many black women who have made an impact on our lives. From Noted Historian Carter Woodson and the decades that followed, mayors of cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing Negro History Week.

By the late 1960s, thanks in part to the civil rights movement and a growing awareness of Black identity, Negro History Week had evolved into Black History Month on many college campuses.

Black History Month gives us many reasons to honor our women of color and there are many. Harriet Tubman was known as the Conductor of underground railroads. She was an active proponent of women's suffrage making several trips to Maryland to rescue both family and non-family members from the bondages of slavery. In 2016, the U.S. Treasury Department announced that the countenance of Harriet Tubman will appear on a new \$20 bill.

We all love and will never forget Maya Angelou, hailed as a Global Renaissance Woman, this best-selling author, educator and civil rights activist used her poetry to inspire and empower. Who can forget the excerpt from "Still I rise"?

*Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.*

I rise

I rise

I rise.

We have had a few members of our own club who were memorable on their own. Bea Ritchie was a beloved member of our Club. The following is an autobiography written by Bea:

Bea Ritchie

In her own words

Curtis B. Woodson organized a Negro History (Black) celebration. He opened a museum and a store on 9th Street in Washington D.C.

This year we made history. The Democrats elected our first black President, President Barack Obama.

President Lincoln, a Republican, freed the slaves. Not of his choice but to save the Union. So much happened in between, lynching, burning, shootings, drownings, mobs and KKK.

"We have reached the mountain top" (Martin L. King quote). I hope we will not slide off. I became a Democrat for personal reasons and it paid off.

I was born on July 4, 1914 in Culpepper County, Virginia. My parents were Archie and Ardeemer Hansborough West. My father was a farmer. He and a brother worked with their father on a very large farm.

We lived with my grandfather until my father died. I was very young. My mother and I moved to Lignum, Virginia to live with her parents, also farmers. We lived there until my grandfather died. I stayed with my grandmother, aunt and uncle until I moved to Washington D.C.

I am very proud of my grandfather Hansborough, a slave who could not read or write. He died at 59 leaving a 139-acre farm free of any debt to his wife and children.

The school I attended in Virginia was in the family church. There were no public schools for Blacks where we lived. A teacher maybe had a high school education.

My mother moved to Washington DC to find work. My grandfather's sister had moved to D.C. and bought a home. Whenever relatives moved to DC, they lived with her; 4 bedrooms, basement, attic, front and back parlors, dining room and large kitchen.

My mother's sister moved to DC after she married. I moved with my aunt and uncle and stayed with them until my mother remarried.

My uncle worked at the White House as a butler, two of his sons were also employed there.

DC was an eye opener. I had never seen a brick building or row houses. The school I attended was red, 3 stories and about 6 or more rooms on each floor. Schools in DC were also separate, not equal.

After an operation at Sibley Hospital, I had an appointment the next Sunday at the doctor's private office in Georgetown. When we arrived the elevator operator refused to let us go to the doctor's office. A man came down and said the doctor was waiting for us and we went up. The doctor came down and told the operator never to refuse any of his patients.

I moved to Arlington with my mother and her new husband. Arlington was different. You had to ride in the back of the buses, the schools were segregated and small with used books that were missing pages and there was dirty writing on many pages. I was in the sixth grade when I went back to school in DC. I graduated from high school during the Great Depression, no money for college. Most people were unemployed.

World War One Veterans had marched on Washington and if they found a vacant building, they moved in to take it over. One family moved in our cellar. The door must have been open. They stayed there until my aunt and uncle move to Virginia. Apples were sold at five cents apiece.

I finally found work at a white café making deserts and salads. I stayed there until I married.

I took an exam for the Federal Government and made a very high score. On my third call I was told if I didn't report to this job I would be placed at the bottom of the list. I reported and everything was all in place for me to start working. I asked for two weeks to get things in order for my daughter who was 4 years old to make sure everything was ok. When I reported for work I was told the job had been filled. I was sent to work at Gravelly Point for night work.

I worked for the Federal Government for a little over 20 years. I worked for the Army, Air Force and Navy.

Whites and Blacks were treated different. I refused to walk picking up papers while the whites sat. I was given a machine to work on. I refused a supervisor's job.

Twice I was called in the office for refusing to pay income tax. I told the supervisors, one white, one Jew and one Greek, that I didn't feel I was treated as an American Citizen. My husband was told he was responsible for my debts. I paid and I wrote why. The other time I refuse to give to the Red Cross. I explained the blood was separated. They offered to pay but I refused, I paid. To my surprise I was called to receive the plaque for making the group 100%.

I retired on disability. I continued my volunteerism activities. I took part in members of a team to organize a brunch for NAACP for Arlington, was a member of a women's club who gave 6 acres for the YMCA. I served both as President and First Black Woman to become member of Arlington Women's Democratic Party. Church Women United, Precinct worker for Democratic Party, member of National Council of Christian and Jews, organized a group to close porno stores, closed limo business in neighborhoods, member of task force group to build a hospital for Hospice, a member of task force to build a new jail for Arlington County, responsible for annual celebration for Martin Luther King, Jr., a volunteer for 25 years working as coordinator for Senior Citizens for 10 years and took first Black Senior group to Wildwood New Jersey.

Picketed hospital in Arlington because of hospital rooms for Black patients. They could only use back entrance.

Picketed theaters, dime stores, restaurants and drug stores in DC. My cousin was first Black to be hired as a pharmacist in Peoples Drug in DC.

Worked until I was 83 and then moved to Florida where I joined the Democratic Women's Club of Upper Pinellas.

The Democratic Women's Club of Florida DOES NOT SUPPORT HB1/SB484. HELP US STOP THIS!

The Senate version (SB 484) of the "anti-riot" bill that is moving quickly through the House (HB 1) has landed on the desk of **Jason Pizzo - Democrat**, who is the Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee. Senator Pizzo is showing support for this bill. Many in the Party believe he needs to be convinced otherwise.

"Other Democrats in the Legislature have decried the bills as deliberately targeting minority communities' right to protest. Progressive groups also denounced the measure before the bills were filed, and the campaign to stop the bills in the Legislature has grown since."

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Send emails to pizzo.jason.web@flsenate.gov and include "HB1/SB484" in the subject line because they already have a folder set up to collect all of these messages. This is probably the most efficient way to have your message actually read by Sen. Pizzo.

Call him, tweet him, message him. Demand he not schedule the bill!

Twitter -

<https://twitter.com/senpizzo?s=21>

Here is his FB -

<https://www.facebook.com/jason.pizzo.5>

Here is his Instagram -

<https://instagram.com/senpizzo?igshid=v3chvw5ohilf>

How much are we all enjoying hearing from our new President? The Inauguration was both beautiful and safe. He spoke to all of us directly and compassionately. He answers questions instead of attacking the questioner. He attends daily security briefings. His appointees look like America—and they're all competent professionals! He believes in science and lets Dr Fauci tell us the truth about what's happening with COVID. Not bad for the first two weeks in office!

GOD BLESS AMERICA!



FL DEMS

I am so pleased to meet you (albeit virtually), everyone.

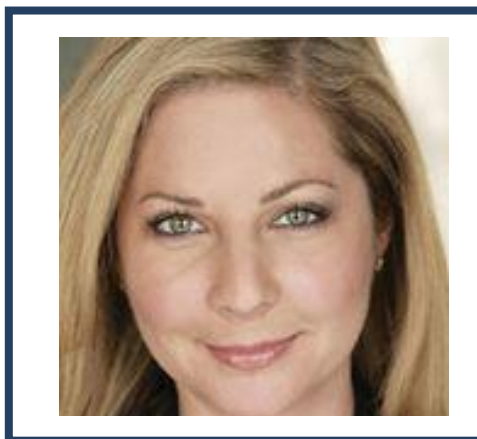
It is my honor to serve all of you as the newest Chair of the Florida Democratic Party. I want to thank you for all the work you do to make our shared vision of a stronger, more unified, and more diverse party a reality.

Together, we can blaze a path forward by mobilizing a massive network of grassroots activists and building upon our existing infrastructure so that Democrats across Florida not only win in local elections but flip the Governor's mansion and take back our Senate seat in 2022 as well.

It is my honor to lead the Florida Democratic Party at this moment in history as we work together to rebuild it from the ground up. Activists and volunteers – like you – are the party's most important resource as your personal connections with others in your community are what will make the difference.

One party, one future,

Manny Diaz
Chair, Florida Democratic Party



Thank you for your support!

We, at the Law Office of Jessica D. Ehrlich, would like to thank you for your support during almost a decade of work in St. Petersburg and across Florida. Our office will be closing permanently as of January 1, 2021 as Jessica Ehrlich has accepted a new position in Washington, DC beginning in 2021.

We thank you again and it has been a pleasure working with you.



**Here's the latest
DWCUP mask!
Get yours for only \$5 each!
Mail cash or check made out to
DWCUP and send to
Donna Dennis
223 Island Way #4B
Clearwater, FL 33767**



DAY OF SERVICE PRESENTATION

On behalf of the entire DWCUP, President **Mary Freeman** presented a check for \$250 to Huddle in the Harbor Board Member **Denise Smolenski** at the Safety Harbor Library.

Huddle in the Harbor meets basic critical needs of women in need in North Pinellas County. Services include

- Providing period products
- Partnering with food pantries to help families eat healthy
- Provide housing grants and assist homeless women
- Pay for mammograms for women with no insurance
- Provide education grants to pay for training to enable women to earn a living wage.

The DWCUP Board voted unanimously to make this organization our charitable recipient this year.
Huddleintheharbor.org

OUR VALUES

“ Democrats believe that cooperation is better than conflict,
unity is better than division, empowerment is better than
resentment, and bridges are better than walls. ”



Time to pay your annual dues!

Annual Membership Dues \$20.00

TIERED MEMBERSHIP

PLATINUM - 3 years for \$50.00

SILVER - 6 years for \$100.00

GOLD MEMBER - Member for Life \$200.00

Make checks out to **DWCUP** or
Democratic Women's Club of Upper Pinellas.

Mail checks to Donna Dennis,
223 Island Way #4B
Clearwater, FL 33767



Next Meeting
March 22, 2021
On Zoom
12:00 – 1:30

