

## The Martha Collier Civic Engagement Award

The League of Women Voters of Mobile established the “Martha Collier Civic Engagement Award” to honor one of our beloved, long-time members who passed away in 2015. Martha left a lasting impact on her community with her many contributions. Notably, Martha established the Observer Corps for the LWVM, which promotes open, transparent government, encourages active participation in government, increases our understanding of major public policy issues and educates our citizens on what their government is doing.

Our first recipient of the “Martha Collier Civic Engagement Award” is an outstanding civic-minded person who has devoted his life to public service. Kenyen Brown was nominated by President Barack Obama to serve as U. S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama. He was the first African-American to serve as U. S. attorney in the history of the State of Alabama. Prior to his appointment as U. S. Attorney, he spent ten years working for the U. S. Congress.

During his tenure in Mobile, Mr. Brown was committed to making every community in the Southern District of Alabama a better place to live. He has promoted a vision that law enforcement’s role should not be limited to prosecutions; rather, he spearheaded an effort to help ex-offenders successfully re-enter society without committing new crimes or returning to jail. This initiative is called Project H.O.P.E. – Helping Offenders Pursue Excellence, which tries to address every need of the ex-offender, including transportation, voting rights restoration, housing and employment, to name a few. As part of Project H.O.P.E., Mr. Brown has hosted ex-offender employment workshops and ex-offender-only job fairs.

Through Mr. Brown’s leadership, the U.S. Attorney’s Office has successfully litigated significant civil rights claims on behalf of minority community members and the disabled. In one fair housing case, the U. S. Attorney’s Office recovered more than \$1.5 million on behalf of a disabled person who was denied a reasonable accommodation from an apartment complex. The settlement in this case represented the largest recovery ever obtained by the Department of Justice on behalf of a plaintiff in a fair housing case. Mr. Brown, committed to educating the community on the rights of all citizens, held a series of civil rights summits focused on fair housing, Americans with disabilities and hate crimes.

The League of Women Voters of Mobile is honored to award Kenyen Brown the first Martha Collier Civic Engagement Award for his efforts to make the community that Martha so faithfully served a better place for all.