

Paula D. Willoughby

VFRW President | 2006–2008



Overview

During Paula D. Willoughby's presidency, the Virginia Federation of Republican Women was the **sixth largest state federation in the National Federation of Republican Women**, with **66 clubs and nearly 3,000 members**. Her tenure focused on leadership development, membership growth, and strengthening the Federation's role in Republican political engagement across Virginia.

Leadership & Service

While serving as VFRW President, Paula also represented the Federation in several leadership roles, including:

- Member, **Republican Party of Virginia Board**
- Appointed to the **NFRW Board of Trustees**
- Advisory Boards:
 - Women's Federal Forum
 - Jennifer Byler Institute
 - Office of Lt. Governor Bill Bolling
 - Congressman Eric Cantor
 - Congresswoman JoAnn Davis

Key Initiatives

During her presidency, several organizational improvements and resources were introduced:

- Updated the **VFRW Leadership Manual**, distributed via CD
- Reinstated **traveling workshops** for clubs across Virginia
- Developed new training materials including:
 - *How to Lobby*
 - *101 Ways to Win Members*
 - *Republican Woman A-Z*

Political Landscape

The period brought both challenges and victories for Republicans in Virginia. Senator George Allen was no longer in office and Congresswoman JoAnn Davis passed away during this time. Despite these losses, Republicans maintained a **majority of 45 legislators in the Virginia General Assembly**.

Several VFRW members were elected to office, including:

- Senator Jeannemarie Devolites
- Senator Jill Vogel
- Delegate Annie B. Crockett-Stark

- Delegate Melanie Rapp

VFRW also sponsored an **intern to NFRW** and awarded **two political scholarships to young Republican women**.

Legislative Day Programs

Two Legislative Day events were held in Richmond at the Marriott.

First Legislative Day

- Breakfast hosted by Delegate Phil Hamilton
- Speakers included:
 - Senator John Watkins
 - Delegate Rust
 - Delegate Robert Hurt
 - RPV Chairman Ed Gillespie

Second Legislative Day

- Hosted in partnership with NFRW and the Maryland Federation
- Welcomed **12 young political women from the Democratic Women's Union of Mongolia**
- Participants toured the Capitol and met with Attorney General Bob McDonnell

Speakers included:

- Lt. Governor Bill Bolling
- Senator Jill Vogel
- Delegate Bill Janis
- Delegate Annie Crockett-Stark
- Delegate Terri Suit
- Cessie Howell
- Former Lt. Governor John Hager

Fundraising

A highly successful fundraiser, the “**Elephant Extravaganza**,” was hosted at the home of **Congressman Tom Davis and Senator Jeannemarie Devolites Davis**.

State Conventions

2007 Convention – Richmond, Virginia

City Renaissance Omni Hotel

Highlights included:

- Reception hosted by Congressman and Mrs. Eric Cantor at Tobacco Company in Shockoe Bottom
- Presidential Straw Poll
- Speakers included:
 - Congressman Eric Cantor
 - Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn

- Mrs. Jim Gilmore
- Former Attorney General Jerry Kilgore
- NFRW President Sue Lynch (mini campaign school)

2008 Convention – Newport News, Virginia

Newport News Marriott at City Center

The convention celebrated “**55 Years Strong**” for the Federation.

Highlights included:

- Yorktown Drum & Fife Corps welcome
- Proclamation from the Mayor of Newport News
- Speakers included:
 - Congressman Tom Davis
 - Former Governor Jim Gilmore
 - Delegate Bob Marshall
 - Author Peter W. Barnes
 - NFRW President Shirley Sadler

National Federation Convention

In 2008, Paula represented VFRW at the **NFRW Convention in Palm Springs, California.**

Speakers included:

- Congresswoman Mary Bono
- Mitt Romney
- Mike Pence

During the convention, Paula accepted several awards on behalf of VFRW:

- **Caring for America Award**
- **Membership Recruitment Award**
- **Betty Heitman Award for State Achievement**
- Honorable Mention for Publicity
- **33 individual club awards**

Historic Recognition

At the close of her presidency, the **55th Anniversary of the Virginia Federation of Republican Women** was formally recognized in the **U.S. Congressional Record** on April 10, 2008, by Congressman Tom Davis.

Reflection

“It was truly an honor to serve such a fine organization with strong, like-minded women.”

— Paula D. Willoughby