



# Board of Commissioners

## *PRESS RELEASE*

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[lakecountyohio.gov](http://lakecountyohio.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 4, 2026

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### **Lake County Commissioners & Tour Lake County Launch Public Vote for 2026 America 250 Commemorative Bobblehead**

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, March 4, 2026 — The Lake County Board of Commissioners, in partnership with Tour Lake County, is pleased to announce that Tour Lake County's official America 250 webpage is now live and updated, and voting for the 2026 commemorative bobblehead is officially underway.

Community members are invited to visit <https://www.tourlakecounty.com/america250> to view the nominees' biographies, and cast their vote for the most deserving nominee.

Voting is open now through March 17, with one vote permitted per person.

The 2026 commemorative bobblehead will be unveiled and distributed to the first 1,000 visitors at the Lake County Fair on Saturday, August 1, 2026. This initiative continues to build excitement as Lake County joins communities across the nation in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The design receiving the most public support will move forward into production ahead of the July 4 celebration.

This effort follows the tremendous success of the 2025 General Paine bobblehead giveaway, which debuted at the Lake County Fair and generated significant community enthusiasm and engagement.

Funding for the 2026 bobblehead is provided by Tour Lake County and supporters of Lake County's America 250 celebration.

"Last year's General Paine bobblehead showed how much pride our community has in its history and its people. We're excited to once again give residents a direct voice in this fun and meaningful part of our America 250 celebration. I encourage everyone to visit the website, read the biographies, and participate. It's a great way to connect with Lake County's heritage as we prepare for this historic milestone," said Commissioner John T. Plecnik.

"Lake County has so many historical folks who've contributed to shaping our country into what it is today so narrowing down the list of nominations for this bobblehead wasn't easy. These six finalists, with varying ties to Lake County, all played very different roles in our nation's long history, and we're excited to see who the public thinks is the most deserving candidate for this year's bobblehead. We encourage folks to read about each nominee, vote for their favorite and encourage others to vote in this democratic process for selecting this year's bobblehead!" said Neil Stein, Executive Director of Tour Lake County.

For full details, to read the nominees' biographies, and to cast your vote, visit:

<https://www.tourlakecounty.com/america250>

## ADDENDUM

### 2026 America 250 Commemorative Bobblehead Voting

#### Nominee Biographies

**Voting is open now through March 17. One vote per person.**

Full biographies and voting are available at:

<https://www.tourlakecounty.com/america250>

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#### Dr. Westel Willoughby, Jr.

Dr. Westel Willoughby Jr. (1769–1844) was an American physician, medical educator, judge, and politician who served in the U.S. House of Representatives and led prominent medical societies in New York during the early 19th century. His name became historically significant to the City of Willoughby, Ohio when early founders of a local medical college—hoping to attract him—named both their institution and, ultimately, the village in his honor in 1834. Though he never visited Ohio, his reputation in medicine and public service left a lasting imprint on Lake County’s identity and its early efforts to expand medical education on the American frontier.

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#### Frances Jennings Casement

Frances Jennings Casement (1821–1890) was a prominent abolitionist and women’s rights advocate whose activism connected Lake County to some of the most transformative reform movements in American history. Living in Painesville, she and her husband, General John S. Casement, used their home as a stop on the Underground Railroad, helping freedom seekers on their journey north. After the Civil War, she became a leader in the women’s suffrage movement, serving as president of the Ohio Woman Suffrage Association. She worked closely with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in advancing equal rights. She is recognized on Lake Erie College’s Women’s History Walkway.

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#### Frances Payne Bolton

Frances Payne Bolton (1885–1977), a direct descendant of a Lake County Revolutionary War patriot, became the first woman elected to Congress from Ohio, serving in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1940 to 1969. Although she lived in neighboring Cuyahoga County, she represented a district that included Lake County at various times, giving the region a direct voice in national policymaking during World War II and the early Cold War. She authored the landmark Bolton Act, expanding nursing education nationwide and strengthening America’s military medical readiness. Case Western Reserve University’s Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing bears her name.

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#### John Adams

John Adams (1735–1826), first Vice President and second President of the United States, was a principal advocate for American independence. As a member of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence, he played a foundational role in shaping the nation. Adams supported the settlement of the Connecticut Western Reserve, which included present-day Lake County, and later signed the Quietening Act to resolve title disputes, enabling Connecticut to cede its interest and sell land to the Connecticut Land Company. A champion of colonial rights, a key diplomat, and often called the Father of the U.S. Navy, Adams helped lay the political and constitutional groundwork of the United States.

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### **Postmaster General Charles Anderson Wickliffe**

Charles Anderson Wickliffe (1788–1869) was a Kentucky statesman who served as U.S. Postmaster General under Presidents Andrew Jackson and John Tyler and later as Governor of Kentucky. His leadership helped expand and administer America’s postal system during a period of rapid national growth. His national prominence gave lasting significance to Lake County when the community of Wickliffe was named in his honor in the 19th century. His contributions strengthened the communication networks and civic institutions that helped unify the expanding nation.

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### **The Patriot Woman**

“The Patriot Woman” represents the countless women who played vital roles in America’s founding. Women organized boycotts, produced homespun goods, raised funds for the Continental Army, served as messengers and nurses, and in some cases took up arms in support of independence. Figures such as Abigail Adams and Molly Pitcher symbolize the resilience and sacrifice women contributed to the Revolutionary cause. Their legacy is memorialized in the Madonna of the Trail monument series, which honors the strength of pioneer women and connects the spirit of America’s earliest patriots to generations who helped build and expand the nation westward.

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