



**Cook County Board President
Toni Preckwinkle**

and

**The Cook County Commission
on Women's Issues**

Present

*The 22nd Annual
Peggy A. Montes
Unsung Heroine
Awards Breakfast*

78 EAST WASHINGTON STREET
CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER
PRESTON BRADLEY HALL
EIGHT IN THE MORNING
TWO THOUSAND AND NINETEEN
THURSDAY, THE SEVENTH OF MARCH



**22nd Annual Peggy A. Montes
Unsung Heroine Awards Breakfast
Thursday, March 7, 2019
8:00 - 10:00 a.m.**

PROGRAM

Welcome

Judy Hsu, Anchor, ABC 7 Chicago
Mistress of Ceremonies

Remarks

Peggy A. Montes, Chairperson
Cook County Commission on Women's Issues

Toni Preckwinkle, President
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Presentation of Awards

Judy Hsu

Closing

Judy Hsu



**The Cook County Commission
on Women's Issues**

COMMISSIONERS

Peggy A. Montes
Chairperson

Dr. Frances G. Carroll
Dorian K. Carter
Claudia Castro
Rebecca Darr
Vera G. Davis
Eileen Dordek
Michelle Garcia
Trina Janes
Susette Lunceford
Marjorie A. Manchen
Iris Millan
Echelle Mohn
Kelley Nichols-Brown
Danielle Ruffatto
Hon. Ginger Rugai
Dr. Aparna Sen-Yeldandi
Judy Weiner Arvey
Rev. Dr. Janette Wilson
Bernarda Lo Wong





Cook County's Unsung Heroines

As an annual event in observance of Women's History Month, the Commission on Women's Issues honors one woman from each of the seventeen County districts, and an eighteenth honoree, selected by the four at-large members of the Cook County Women's Commission. All eighteen women are recognized for their vital contributions to their respective communities. The award places these women's achievements within the larger fabric of history and commemorates the powerful impact women have had on the development of our social, cultural, economic, and political institutions. The County honors these remarkable women as a way to bring their stories to light, to thank them publicly, and to celebrate the tradition of achievement and commitment to the greater good that is embodied by women leaders throughout the history of Cook County. Although their stories do not usually make the news, their contributions are truly newsworthy. These women are being recognized for using their time, talent, spirit, and enthusiasm to enrich and improve the lives of others.

Peggy A. Montes Unsung Heroine Award

Peggy A. Montes, an educator, fundraiser, leader, and champion of women's issues and rights, was the driving force behind the creation of the very first Unsung Heroine Award for the women of Cook County. As a way to recognize and honor her remarkable achievements, in 2010 the award was renamed the "Peggy A. Montes Unsung Heroine Award." On March 16, 2010, the Cook County Board of Commissioners acknowledged Ms. Montes in a special way by introducing a resolution honoring her as a true heroine and officially renaming the award in her honor.





Bobbie Jean Ward

1st District

Vera Davis, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Brandon Johnson, Cook County Commissioner

Bobbie Jean Ward grew up in Louisiana and was heavily influenced by watching her parents active involvement in civil rights actions with the NAACP. Their sacrifice taught her to never give up on her goals and that failure is never an option. She graduated from Northeast Louisiana University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. She is married to Dr. Sydney Ward and has five grown sons.

Ms. Ward's professional career in healthcare spanned 43 years and was distinguished by dutiful caring and commitment, excellence in quality patient care, and being an advocate for patients and families. She worked at several west side Chicago facilities. In 1983, she joined the staff at West Suburban Hospital where she worked until her retirement in 2016.

In her retirement, Ms. Ward continues her legacy of service with a multitude of activities. She helps others as an advocate, working collaboratively to bring progressive improvement to her community. She sits on the Patient Family Relations Board at West Suburban Hospital. She is actively involved with the Galewood community as a Block Representative in partnership with Alderman Taliaferro's office. Ms. Ward has galvanized residents in Galewood on issues such as affordable housing, economic development, crime prevention, and safety. She is also active with the Chicago Police Department Community Policing. She is known not only for her beautiful landscaping and flower gardens, but for engaging the children on her block in gardening. Ms. Ward stays active in good works of all kinds, and is cherished for her love of family, friends, and community.





Anne Gordon

2nd District

Dorian Carter, Cook County Women’s Commissioner

Dennis Deer, Cook County Commissioner

Anne Gordon grew up and graduated from college in Indiana, then moved to Ohio to teach fourth grade. In 1977, she married Wayne “Coach” Gordon and moved to the Lawndale community of Chicago. She and Coach led a Bible study for high school students; out of this Bible study, Lawndale Christian Community Church (LCCC) was born in 1978. Anne was intricately involved in founding Lawndale Christian Health Center, Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, Lawndale Christian Legal Center, and Lawndale Christian Fitness Center.

For more than 40 years Anne has served as the First Lady of LCCC and has worked in many aspects of church and community life including youth ministry, Sunday school, women’s ministry, married couples ministry, and trainings in Stephen Ministry and Alternatives to Violence.

The Gordons have three grown children and two grandchildren. Anne continues to live in North Lawndale where she teaches preschool and serves on the board of Lawndale Christian Health Center.





Erin Toole Williams

3rd District

Dr. Frances Carroll, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Bill Lowry, Cook County Commissioner

Erin Toole Williams recently launched A Road To Somewear (ARTS), a curated collection of apparel, accessories, and home decor. Through this platform, Erin uses her experience and expertise as a fashion contributor, apparel designer, fashion consultant, and concierge to help enhance the lives of others.

Erin is also self-employed as a Concierge Liaison who advises tourism-focused businesses and helps them connect to and strengthen their relationships with the concierge community. She is a member of the Chicago Chapter of the National Concierge Association.

Erin spends much of her time volunteering at Saint Ignatius College Prep, her alma mater, where she is the founding member and Co-Chair of the Claver Society, which raises money for scholarships for African-American students. She is a co-creator, designer, and buyer for the Saint Ignatius Spirit Wear Store and a recipient of the Golden Rose Award. She served as the Chair of the Saint Ignatius Women's Society from 2015–17 and was a recipient of the 2017 Alumni Medal.

Erin is a graduate of Fisk University where she majored in Spanish and minored in Mass Communications. Her greatest accomplishment and joy is being the proud mother of two thoughtful and kind-hearted children.





Julia A. Hunter

4th District

Echelle Mohn, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Stanley Moore, Cook County Commissioner

Julia A. Hunter is the Founder and CEO of Work2gether4peace (W24P). W24P is a website dedicated to the social and civic welfare of Chicago's southeast side communities.

After graduating from Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois, she began to fulfill her professional mission in social work with Catholic Charities and Envisions, Inc., a career that spanned more than 20 years. While working passionately to change the lives of her client families, Julia also worked to change the lives of the people in her community by engaging in numerous social, nonprofit, school, and community organizations. It was not long before her passion project became a full-time career.

As a photographer, videographer, and webmaster, Julia engages the community as a historian by documenting significant events. W24P footage includes performance art, town hall meetings, protests, workshops, and positive loitering actions. W24P's community calendar works in conjunction with local faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and businesses to provide a forum to display their community announcements, activities, and resources.

Work2gether4peace has received South Shore Chambers, Inc.'s Community News and Awareness Award. Alderman Mitchell of the 7th Ward also presented Julia with the Community Service Award.

Julia has resided in South Shore for more than 30 years and has raised her son, Orlando R. Hunter, who is an integral part of W24P. Julia's goal is to have Work2gether4peace leave a lasting impact on both the community's and city's future.





Lori J. Wilcox
5th District
Kelley Nichols-Brown, Cook County
Women's Commissioner
Deborah Sims, Cook County Commissioner

In 2011, Lori Wilcox made history as the first elected City Clerk of the City of Chicago Heights and is currently serving her second term. In March 2018, Lori won a historic election as the Bloom Township Democratic Committeeman, being the second woman and youngest person to hold the seat. She is the Co-Chair of the Cook County Democratic Party's Outreach Committee and a member of Governor Pritzker and Lt. Governor Stratton's Veteran's Transition Team.

Lori is a Combat War Veteran of the United States Army. Joining the Army in 1993 at the age of 17, her tenure in the military took her to Germany, Japan, Korea, Austria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina for Operation Joint Guard from 1997 - 1998. She served proudly as an Administrative Specialist, Postal Operations Sergeant, and a Reserve Hospital Unit Administrator until 2005.

Lori holds a Bachelor of Arts from Western Illinois University, an ABA-approved Post-Bachelor Paralegal Certificate from Roosevelt University Chicago, a Master of Education from AIU and is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education - Ministry Leadership from Liberty University. She is a certified, registered and master's municipal Clerk. She is a 2015 Alumna of the Illinois Women in Leadership Public Fellowship and was selected by the Chicago Defender as one of 50 Women of Excellence in 2016.

Lori is a single mother of three school-aged children, a cancer survivor, and a public servant called to action to fight for equity in schools, public health, and civic engagement to empower, educate and engage constituents.





Dannen Rose

6th District

Susette Lunceford, Cook County Women’s Commissioner
Donna Miller, Cook County Commissioner

Dannen Rose came into the world as a fighter. Dannen was born prematurely at the University of Chicago Hospital and spent more than five weeks in the hospital before being able to go home. Dannen is the daughter of Danielle Bowens and Allan Rose and younger sister to brother Kivan. She is currently a fifth grader at Churchill Elementary Public School in Homewood, Illinois, where she plays the viola in the orchestra program. Her favorite subject is math and she loves playing computer games. Dannen is also an animal lover.

For two years, Dannen had been asking her mother to allow her to collect pajamas for the patients at Lurie’s Children’s Hospital. Her thought was that the patients didn’t want to wear “those ugly gowns.” Last year, her mother finally gave in and they held the first “Let’s Jam Pajama Drive” in the south suburbs, collecting more than 300 pairs of pajamas to donate to the patients at Lurie’s Children’s Hospital. Dannen is already making plans for the second annual drive.





Ilda Hernandez
7th District

Michelle Garcia, Cook County Women’s Commissioner
Alma E. Anaya, Cook County Commissioner

Ilda Hernandez is a *promotora de salud* at ENLACE Chicago in Little Village. As a *promotora de salud*, also known as a community health worker, she serves as a public health worker who is a trusted member of the community in which she lives and has had personal experience. This allows her to serve as a liaison between residents and providers, and to validate the knowledge, culture, and traditions of local families.

Ilda provides healthcare education about the HC3 Coalition, of which she is a member. In addition, she provides peer support to community members with public benefits regarding health insurance enrollment, healthcare navigation, and mental health and basic needs referrals. Through her work, Ilda assists residents in overcoming barriers to accessing care, such as the need for safe transportation or child care, and in connecting with additional resources, such as community-based programs and food, housing, and legal services. Ilda’s work is integral to the families of Little Village and the 7th District of Cook County.





Ashley Novoa
8th District

Iris Millan, Cook County Women’s Commissioner
Luis Arroyo, Jr., Cook County Commissioner

Ashley Novoa grew up in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, and had been living in the Logan Square neighborhood until recently, when she and her family moved to Portage Park.

Ashley is the founding executive director of the Chicago Period Project (CPP), an organization that aims to “empower homeless and in-need people to experience their periods with dignity.” In an effort to demonstrate resilience in the wake of the November 2016 presidential election, Ashley and several fellow mothers harnessed their fears, uncertainty, and frustration to create CPP.

The Chicago Period Project has generated thousands of menstrual hygiene product donations, created and distributed hundreds of period kits, raised money for operating costs, and formed partnerships with local businesses. CPP’s goal is for the 29 percent of Chicago residents living below the poverty line to have healthy periods, and to raise awareness about the issue.





Dorothy Malachowski

9th District

Marjorie Manchen, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Peter Silvestri, Cook County Commissioner

Born Dorota Klimek in a small town in southwestern Poland, Dorothy immigrated to the US with her parents when she was eight years old.

She holds a degree in business and is the CFO for a manufacturing company that she founded with her husband in 1975. They have two sons, Michael and Alex, who are now grown and also work in the family business.

Dorothy has long supported many different charities and became involved with the Gift from the Heart Foundation in the late 1980's. Gift From the Heart provides assistance to children with disabilities from abroad where the medical treatment that they require might not be available, at no cost to the families. The foundation also provides programming to local families around education and awareness, healthy child development, family advocacy and support, and assistance with pediatric medical care. Working with Gift From the Heart gave Dorothy the opportunity to have hands-on experience helping children while they undergo lifesaving treatments here in the US, many of whom come from her homeland, Poland. She first became involved in supporting the foundation through donations, then joined the Board of Directors, and in 2011 became President.

This work more than anything else gives her joy and a feeling that she is making a difference in the lives of others. To this day the Gift from the Heart Foundation has assisted more than 900 children in their struggle for health and life.





Joyce Dugan

10th District

Eileen Dordek, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Bridget Gainer, Cook County Commissioner

Joyce Dugan has volunteered and served the community of Uptown for decades, making it a better place for all who live, work, or receive social services in the neighborhood. A long-term volunteer at Sarah's Circle, which provides services to women who are homeless, Joyce also served on the board and engaged others to volunteer with Sarah's Circle. Recently, as a resident of the Breakers Senior Living, she coordinated with her neighbors to volunteer, fundraise, and donate needed materials to Sarah's Circle.

Focusing on helping people with mental illness and homelessness, Joyce served on the boards of Community Counseling Centers of Chicago and Deborah's Place. She currently volunteers with Imerman Angels Cancer Support, mentoring people undergoing treatment for leukemia and blood cancers.





Amy McNicholas

11th District

**Hon. Ginger Rugai, Cook County Women's Commissioner
John P. Daley, Cook County Commissioner**

Amy McNicholas' life changed in an instant. John, her fifteen-year-old son, complained of a headache one morning that quickly became an emergency room diagnosis: a brain tumor. The McNicholas family exhausted all avenues for help before arriving at the terrifying conclusion that treatment and medicines for pediatric brain cancer were few.

John died nine months after diagnosis. The family was heartbroken, but Amy turned grief into passion and determination to help others in the same situation. Since then she has given selflessly to support and guide families who have a child afflicted by this insidious disease. While Amy knew finding a cure could not happen overnight, an immediate initiative could. Always remembering John's dreary, boring days in the hospital, Amy funded "John's Cart of Fun," donating 30 iPads for teens to use at Lurie.

John McNicholas lived his life to the fullest and faced his illness with courage and grace; inspired by his memory, Amy launched the John McNicholas Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (JMPBTF) in 2011 seeking better care and a better cure. Since then, Amy's foundation has generated \$2 million of funding for a team of some of the most exceptional and promising research doctors in the field.

Amy has engaged some of the most professional and talented members of the community to the Board of Directors, while also creating a Junior Board composed of high school students, to raise awareness and serve the cause. Because pediatric brain cancer is grossly underfunded and the public awareness is minimal, five of these teens will be sent to Washington DC this summer to advocate for awareness and financial assistance in Congress.





Janet Giangrasso

12th District

Danielle Ruffatto, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Bridget Degnen, Cook County Commissioner

Janet Giangrasso was raised in Villa Park, about 30 miles west of Chicago. Janet has long been inspired by her mother, Anne, who raised Janet and her four sisters to be strong-willed and independent and to stand up for what is right. What Anne wanted most of all was for Janet and her other daughters to be good people who helped others.

Janet received a degree in Communications and then traveled to London to attend the Drama Studio and continued her theater studies in New York. There she volunteered for the Covenant House for runaway teenagers and worked at a residence for people with special needs. Nine years later, Janet moved to Napoli and taught English as a second language, before she moved back to Chicago, married, and had a son, Jacopo.

Janet has tried to pass on her mother's desire to help others to her son, and together they have volunteered for Friends of the Elderly, Refugee One, food drives and many, many marches working for change. Last year she brought her 98-year-old father with her to shut down the Dan Ryan for an anti-violence protest.

Now, Janet works part time as a bookkeeper and runs Anne's Haven, which she founded and named after her mother as a way to honor her for the woman she was – giving so much of herself to her girls and others. Anne's Haven is an open space for women, girls and transgender individuals. The space is what women bring to it, whether it be social events, workshops for women by women, support groups, gathering with friends over coffee, or professional events. Anne's Haven is there for all women, for whatever their needs may be.





Karen Chavers

13th District

Trina Janes, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Larry Suffredin, Cook County Commissioner

The Chicago area's nonprofit community mourned the death of revered community activist and leader Karen Ruth Chavers on August 23, 2018 after a long battle with cancer. Chavers was a champion in the fight for fair housing and community preservation.

Born in New Orleans, Karen's family moved to Chicago when she was a child. A life-long Catholic, she graduated from St. Elizabeth High School, and attended Olive Harvey College and Mundelein College.

From the early 1980s to 2000, Ms. Chavers led the Evanston Neighborhood Conference and its teen empowerment program. She also served as a founding board member and later as an advisory board member of the Shorefront Legacy Center, which collects, preserves, and educates people about Black history on Chicago's North Shore.

It was her dedication to solving fair housing issues that best defines Ms. Chavers' community engagement. In 1994, she served as board president of Open Communities, an organization that promotes housing, economic, and social justice in north suburban Chicago.

In 1999, Ms. Chavers helped organize North Suburban Housing Partners, a housing coalition of two dozen organizations working to draw attention to housing issues on the North Shore. She was a board member of Turnstone Development, a nonprofit that creates and preserves affordable housing opportunities for low-income families and seniors on the North Shore.

In 2003, when Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin took office, Ms. Chavers was appointed the District Director, a position she held until her passing.





Stephanie Zwilling

14th District

Judy Weiner Arvey, Cook County Women’s Commissioner
Scott Britton, Cook County Commissioner

As a clinical therapist in her North Shore-based private practice, Stephanie has been working with teens, young adults and their families for over 20 years. She has extensive experience in program development, staff supervision, clinical therapy, crisis management and program administration.

In 2017, Stephanie founded Providence Farm, a community for young adult men in recovery from substance abuse and mental health disorders. Providence Farm was developed in response to seeing young adults in the Chicagoland area return home from out-of-state treatment programs, and struggle to re-integrate and create recovery capital in the communities they call home.

As a Northbrook-based therapist, Stephanie was often saddened watching clients who wished to return home to the North Shore from treatment or sober-living environments, but had no community to support them. Research is clear that a supportive fellowship of other recovering young people—connection—is the single greatest asset in sustained recovery. Without connection, and faced with integrating a sober lifestyle alone, clients were struggling. Supporting recovering young people and their families became the inspiration for Providence.

Paving a path for a recovery home in the affluent North Shore communities was often met with strong community resistance. “NIMBY” (Not in My Backyard) rhetoric, fear and stigma surrounding people with substance use disorders posed significant barriers to achieving special permitting through the Village of Northbrook.

Stephanie hopes that the partnership between Providence Farm and the Village of Northbrook helps change the dialogue about how communities can create space for residents who need extra support.





Joane McLeod

15th District

Rebecca Darr, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Kevin Morrison, Cook County Commissioner

Joane McCormack McLeod is a mother of five and grandmother of seven. She is married to Hoffman Estates Mayor Bill McLeod. She works as an IT Business Analyst at Links Technology. Joane is passionate about protecting women and allowing children to achieve every dream they have. She was born in the small town of Cando, North Dakota.

Joane spent six years on the Board of Directors for the Children's Advocacy Center, and now serves on the Advisory Board. While serving on the Fiftieth Anniversary Commission with Hoffman Estates, she organized a bench silent auction with proceeds for 20 benches going to the Children's Advocacy Center.

A longtime supporter of the WINGS Program, Joane organized silent auctions at the Hoffman Estates Mayoral Balls with all money going to WINGS, raising \$10,000 to \$20,000 each year.

She has volunteered as a Girl Scout leader and Boy Scout leader, and provided leadership for her local PTA.

Joane also serves on the Hoffman Estates Celtic Festival Commission, Transit Task Force, Western Area Advisory Committee, and the Sixtieth Anniversary Commission, which is currently raising money for the Emergency Self Help Fund. She has previously served on Arts Commission, Celebrations Commission, and Emerging Technologies Commission.





Judith De La Mora-Macias

16th District

Claudia Castro, Cook County Women's Commissioner

Jeffrey Tobolski, Cook County Commissioner

Judith De La Mora-Macias is a long-time Melrose Park resident with a proud Mexican heritage. As a predominant member of the community, she has been the leading force in various events over the years.

She currently works as the Director of the Center of Integration and Development of Melrose Park (CID), assisting the community with information on topics that interest, educate, and advance the large immigrant population that lives in Melrose Park. A few of these endeavors include Spanish and technology classes for youth, and English, citizenship, and technology classes for adults. For 11 years she has guided the organization committee for the Expo of Programs and Services in Melrose Park. This outreach program has helped more than 8,000 community members by sharing services from government agencies and non-profits to local residents, at no extra cost to them.

Judith's relentless desire to be involved in her community is also shown through her work on the Dia del Niño event, which gathers family and children every spring to enjoy fun and games. Resilience, determination, and genuine care for her community inspire Judith to be involved in a number of committees and organizations such as Federación Jalisciense del Medio Oeste de los Estados Unidos (FEDEJAL), North American Institute of Mexican Advancement (NAIMA), and the Necahual Foundation.





Nazneen Hashmi

At-Large District

Bernarda Lo Wong, Cook County Women's Commissioner
Rev. Dr. Janette Wilson, Cook County Women's Commissioner
Dr. Aparna Sen-Yeldandi, Cook County Women's Commissioner
Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President

Nazneen Hashmi is a Muslim Indian woman who migrated from Hyderabad to the United States with her family when she was 18. With her parents being unemployed in the US and her siblings being too young, Nazneen became the family's only breadwinner. She worked three jobs at the age of 18 to provide for her entire family and continued to work full-time to support her family throughout college, eventually earning her master's degree. Today, Nazneen is an Adjunct Professor at IIT and a certified software test engineer and ISO auditor. She raised two wonderful children, one of whom is a member of the US Air Force. Having a son in the military has made Nazneen passionate about helping our troops and veterans. For many years, she has provided care packages for the troops who are deployed and volunteered in veterans' centers.

Also passionate about women's issues, Nazneen is a certified domestic violence advocate and has volunteered for 20 years at Apna Ghar, an organization that provides shelter and advocacy to immigrant women who are survivors of domestic violence. Nazneen also volunteered at Streamwood Women's Club, raising funds for women's shelters, clothing drives, and job training. She is a WorknetNCC volunteer, providing job training workshops, resume writing, job search tactics, mock interviews, mentoring, and coaching.

Some of Ms. Hashmi's other civic engagements include serving as an election judge, serving on the Board of the YMCA, serving on the Board of Indo-American Democratic Organization, and serving on the Community Relations Commission Board at Streamwood Village for 10 years.





Cook County Commission on Women's Issues Commissioner Biographies

Peggy Montes, Chairperson

Peggy A. Montes is a native Chicagoan who has devoted her life to serving her fellow citizens, especially women, girls and disadvantaged children. She is noted for her philanthropic and volunteer successes in reaching goals for her beloved causes. Not many teachers leave their profession to lead organizations and found institutions. However, she has done just that and is still moving creatively into the future. Best known as a community, educational and women's rights activist and Founder/President of the Bronzeville Children's Museum (still the first and only African American children's museum in the country), she is also a seasoned civic and cultural leader. She is a member of the Illinois Arts Council and Illinois Book Advisory Committee, a founding member of the Leadership Advisory Committee of the Chicago Art Institute and a member of the Black Creativity Advisory Council of the Museum of Science and Industry. She is a former Trustee of Chicago State University where she served for over sixteen years, two years as Trustee Board Chairman. She became the first female Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the DuSable Museum of African American History and now holds the position of Chairman Emeritus. She co-founded Leadership Illinois and was selected as one of the top women leaders in U.S. by Leadership America. She has received numerous awards and honors, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of African American Museums, Trustee Award from the DuSable Museum, HistoryMakers Award, Salute to Excellence Award from Illinois Governor George Ryan, Phenomenal Woman Award from State Farm, and Woman of Excellence Award from the Chicago Defender.





Dr. Aparna Sen-Yeldandi, Commissioner At-Large

Dr. Aparna Sen-Yeldandi has worked over two decades in public and private sectors in the areas of teaching, information technology, university research and strategic planning. During her tenure in the City of Chicago and Chicago Housing Authority, she worked with many human services agencies and spearheaded many inter-governmental projects. Dr. Sen-Yeldandi is the former Executive Director of Apna Ghar (Our Home), an agency that provides comprehensive, culturally appropriate services to the victims and survivors of domestic violence focusing primarily on South Asian and other immigrant women and children. She serves as Co-Chair on the Board of Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, on the advisory council of Women's Economic Justice, and as a Board Member of the Natya Dance Company, an internationally known dance company based in Chicago. Currently, she is working as a consultant for the not-for-profit sector providing mentorship, project management, strategic planning and resource development.

Vera G. Davis, 1st District

Vera Garner Davis is a retired educator from Chicago Public Schools. Since retirement, she has worked with several organizations that provide needed services to the community. She is currently chairman of the Chicago Westside Branch NAACP where the fight continues for equality for all. She is president of the Bright Leadership Institute. She is a member of Carey Tercentenary African Methodist Episcopal Church where she serves as President Pro Tem of the Steward Board and has served in many other capacities including Christian Education Director and Sunday School Superintendent. She has sat on the boards of Loretto Hospital Foundation, Family Focus Foundation, Illinois Hunger Coalition, Illinois Partnership Office Advisory Council, Hands Up Recovery and The University of Chicago Advisory Committee for Cancer Research. She is married to the Honorable Danny K. Davis, Representative of the 7th Congressional District of Illinois.





Dorian K. Carter, 2nd District

Dorian K. Carter is Special Assistant to the Chairman and CEO John W. Rogers, Jr., of Ariel Investments. Commissioner Carter serves her community through an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of women and girls. In 1999, she co-founded The Glass Slipper Project, a 100% volunteer program that provides impoverished junior and senior high school girls with proper attire to attend their prom. Since its creation, the Glass Slipper Project has dressed more than 23,000 girls throughout the Chicago region. In addition to her efforts on behalf of The Glass Slipper Project, Dorian also serves on the Local Advisory Board for New Leaders. Commissioner Carter is a member of The Cook County State's Attorney's African American Advisory Council. She is also a member of The Links, Inc.

Dr. Frances G. Carroll, 3rd District

Dr. Frances G. Carroll is a retired educator and former principal of the Nancy Jefferson Alternative School located in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Commissioner Carroll is a current member of the Life Member Youth Guidance Board of Directors, a Trustee at the University of Illinois, a member of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and a Central Region Representative to the International Connection Committee. She has served on the Program Planning Committee to assist in the selection of the Public Meetings, and partnered with community groups in planning health fairs for her district. Dr. Carroll assisted Cook County in the planning of domestic violence legislation, the County Child Care Initiative, collected cell phones for victims of domestic violence, and lobbied for equal pay for women.





Echelle Mohn, 4th District

As a former educator with over 25 years of experience, Commissioner Echelle Mohn has a passion for computer science. She has taught in various settings and has developed a full curriculum designed to teach students technological skills and financial literacy skills. She established a financial literacy group, Future Innovative Technologies (FIT), to encourage youth and young adults to pursue entrepreneurship. Echelle's community work remains strong in South Deering, Jeffery Manor neighborhood, where she founded and still serves as President of South Deering Manor Community Association. She is an active member of her church, serving with the IT Ministry at Trinity United Church of Christ (TUCC), Media Ministry, Church in Society, and Financial Consortium Council. She co-hosts for the Financial Literacy Academy at Endeleo Institute. Her three sons, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Kevin, Jr., are her greatest pride and joy.

Kelley Nichols-Brown, 5th District

2018 Unsung Heroine recipient Kelley D. Nichols-Brown is the Director of the Chicago Heights Public Library with a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is also a combat war veteran who served in the United States Army Reserve from 1990 – 2002. Since 1991, Kelley has worked in public and academic libraries and has implemented many successful programs which she has presented to the Illinois (ILA) and American (ALA) Library Associations. For nearly a decade, Commissioner Nichols-Brown has been an active participant of Supreme Martial Arts Academy, LLC (SMA), a taekwondo school co-owned and operated by her husband and six sons. SMA has competed in state and national tournaments and does community outreach at libraries, schools, and community centers. Kelley continues to be an advocate for literacy, youth, local talent, and the less fortunate by implementing innovative programs and collaborating with other community organizations.





Susette Lunceford, 6th District

Susette Lunceford has more than 20 years of experience as a human resources professional. She currently serves as the Director of Training & Development at a minority-owned managed care organization. Over her career Commissioner Lunceford has been an advocate for equal employment opportunities in the workplace. Prior to her current role she served as an independent consultant and designed and taught workforce entry programs for individuals in underserved communities. Susette and her husband focus many of their volunteer efforts by participating in organizations that assist youth in gaining access to educational resources. She holds a bachelor's degree from Andrews University, a MBA from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and a MA from Roosevelt University.

Michelle Garcia, 7th District

Michelle Garcia has been working for Access Living as the Latino Community Organizer since 2009. Her work focuses particularly on educating and collaborating with the Latino community about disability rights and services. Through her work she has had the opportunity to collaborate with other Latino groups and organizations that work within the Latino Community, which has helped expand their knowledge about disability-related issues. She is the coordinator of a Latino advocacy group called Cambiando Vidas, whose mission is to create social change within the Latino Community. As a Community Organizer, Michelle is responsible for increasing the number of Latino leaders with disabilities; as well as raising awareness of disability issues and how they intersect with issues such as immigration and healthcare within the Latino community. Her work includes planning numerous educational forums and events in different areas of the city, to educate Latinos with disabilities about disability rights and services.





Iris Millan, 8th District

After graduating from Northeastern Illinois University, Iris volunteered in Senator Durbin’s and then-Alderman Manny Flores’s offices. This work inspired Iris to pursue a career giving back to the community that gave her so much. Iris’s first opportunity came when she was hired to be the Director of Community Affairs in Alderman Joe Moreno’s office. In that position, she helped her neighbors gain access to community services, worked to improve our schools, and protected our parks and green space. Following her work in Alderman Moreno’s office, Iris worked at St. Joseph Services helping to bring the community together to support and lift the most vulnerable populations through education. Today Iris works at the City Colleges of Chicago, where she identifies and establishes community partnerships to provide better services and support for students and their families around issues of immigration, housing, food insecurity, educational achievement gaps, civic engagement, and financial literacy. For Iris, giving back to the community never ends, which is why she also volunteers in her children’s school and accepted a volunteer appointment to the Cook County Commission on Women’s Issues.

Marjorie A. Manchen, 9th District

Marjorie A. Manchen is an attorney with the law offices of Smith & Smith in River Grove. She concentrates her practice in domestic relations, guardianships, probate and other family law matters, as well as municipal work. Commissioner Manchen is also the Village Clerk of River Grove, elected in 2009, and has achieved designations as a Registered Municipal Clerk and Certified Municipal Clerk. She serves as a member of the Board of Directors of Guerin College Preparatory in River Grove since 2008, and formerly served as the chair and president of the Guerin Alumnae Board. Marjorie served as Chair of the Elmwood Park Plan, Zoning & Development Commission for 11 years. She was also a member of the Elmwood Park Civic Foundation, a wish-granter for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) in Kane County, IL, where she represented abused and neglected children.





Eileen Dordek, 10th District

Eileen Dordek is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, specializing in treating anxiety and depression. Since 2009, Commissioner Dordek has served on the board of Personal PAC, which focuses on electing pro-choice state and local officials in Illinois. She is a member of the Women Leaders in Business committee of the Greater Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce. As a graduate of the Illinois Women’s Institute for Leadership, which trains women to run for office, she is also proud to serve on the advisory council for Cause the Effect, a PAC focused on electing more women to local office, headed by Cook County Commissioner Bridget Gainer. Commissioner Dordek is a longtime volunteer and supporter of the LGBTQIA-focused About Face Theatre.

Ginger Rugai, 11th District

Ginger Rugai served as a Chicago Alderman from 1990 to 2011. Commissioner Rugai began her career as an English teacher at Queen of Peace High School. Before becoming Alderman, she served as Assistant Director of the Beverly Area Planning Association, a member of the Illinois Senate Staff and Administrative Aide to State Senator Jeremiah Joyce. She was elected for her first term as Alderman in February 1991 and re-elected four times. Alderman Rugai was appointed to former Mayor Daley’s Task Force on Women’s Health and the Cook County Commission Women’s Issues. She is also active in the Mercy Home for Boys and Girls Leader Council. She received her BA and MA from Loyola University and a Doctor of Public Policy (HC) from Saint Xavier University. Ginger and her husband, Ado, have three children and nine grandchildren.





Danielle Ruffatto, 12th District

Since beginning her career, Danielle Parisi Ruffatto has passionately represented those who otherwise would not have access to an attorney. In her current position as the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic's Director of Emergency Services, Danielle supervises the attorneys and Client Support Coordinator in the Emergency Services Division, and represents survivors of domestic violence Order of Protection cases. Previously Danielle served as the Director of Pro Bono and Training, managing DVLC's interns and volunteers and overseeing staff training, and worked as a DVLC staff attorney, representing clients in Order of Protection and Family Law cases. Danielle is an adjunct professor at DePaul University College of Law. She received her BA, with honors, from DePaul University in 2001 and her JD from the University of Illinois in 2004.

Trina Janes, 13th District

Trina Janes was appointed by Commissioner Larry Suffredin in 2003. She is a native of Evanston and now lives with her family in Skokie. She works a consultant with Haymarket Public Strategies. Commissioner Janes is a graduate of Evanston's public schools, Bates College and the Kellogg School of Management. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco and is the former president of the Chicago Area Peace Corps Association and past Executive Committee member of the National Peace Corps Association. Trina's most important role is being the mother of two rambunctious boys.

Judy Weiner Arvey, 14th District

As a 35-year resident of Northbrook, Judy Weiner Arvey has been very involved in the community. After graduating from National Louis University, Judy went on to be a teacher at Skokie School District 68 for seven years. Judy continued her service to the community as an active member of District 30's PTO, Glenbrook North Parents Association, Glenview North Booster Club, Northfield Township Democrats and Northbrook Civics Foundation. Judy recently retired, though she stays busy helping a friend in the event planning business. She also currently serves as a Mission Brook Sanitary District trustee and is a member of Moms Demand Action. In her free time, Judy enjoys reading, movies and travel.





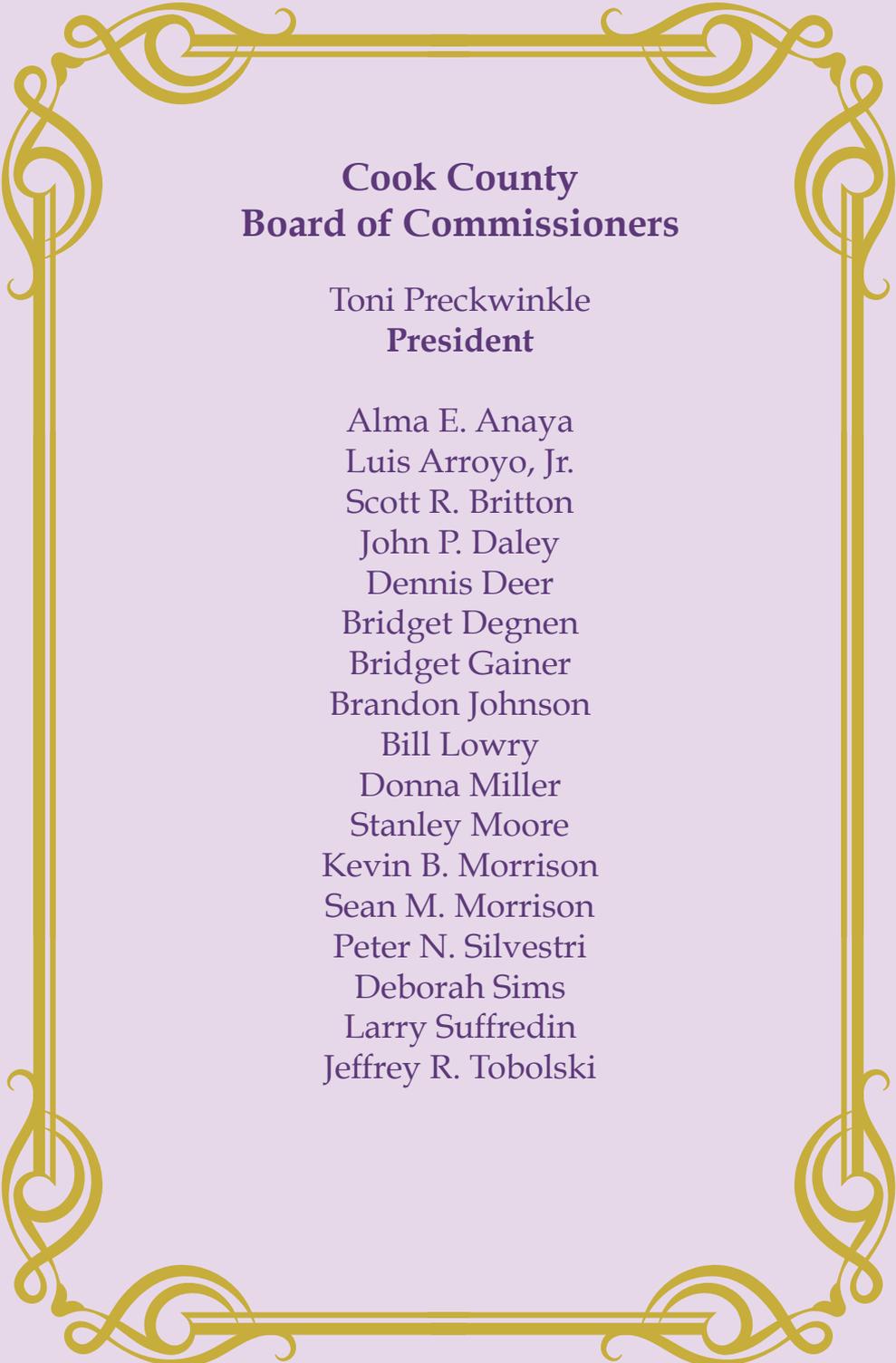
Rebecca Darr, 15th District

Born and raised in Alton, Illinois, Rebecca Darr completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois. Prior to joining WINGS, she lived in San Jose, CA, working with homeless families and as the director of a nonprofit alternative school for abused children and adolescents. While in California, she earned her master's degree in clinical psychology. Rebecca Darr joined WINGS as Executive Director in 1999 and was named the Chief Executive Officer in 2014. Under her leadership, the organization has become one of the largest agencies in the state of Illinois providing services and housing to homeless women and children, and to victims of domestic violence. In 2005, WINGS built and opened the first and only domestic violence shelter in northwest Cook County and over the years added 30 units of transitional and permanent housing to allow women and children sufficient time to heal from the trauma of abuse. On Valentine's Day in 2016, WINGS opened the first new domestic violence shelter in the city of Chicago in over a decade. Darr serves on several other boards and state-wide coalitions as part of her effort to advocate for stronger legislation and increased resources to prevent and end domestic violence.

Claudia Castro, 16th District

Claudia Castro is an Assistant General Counsel with the Illinois State Board of Education in Chicago. Prior to joining ISBE, she was with Odelson & Sterk, Ltd. She began her legal career as an Assistant State's Attorney with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. Commissioner Castro also served as Chief Legal Counsel for the Illinois Concealed Carry Licensing Review Board and as the General Counsel in Springfield for the Illinois Coalition against Sexual Assault. Throughout her career, she has worked closely with the Latino communities, providing assistance and education in criminal justice and immigration issues. She continues to work passionately for the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Her litigation experience and fluency in Spanish earned her a position as an instructor with the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG) Alliance Partnership Program, where she participated in training programs in trial advocacy for prosecutors throughout Mexico. In 2012, Commissioner Castro was named as one of the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin's Forty Illinois Attorneys under 40 to Watch. Claudia was also recognized as "Who's Who in Hispanic Chicago 2017" by Negocios Now.





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