



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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Treasurer Frerichs Presents Awards to Chicago Leaders In Honor of Black History Month

Mellody Hobson, Valerie Jarrett, Kendall Gill Among Those Recognized

CHICAGO – Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs today hosted a celebration to commemorate Black History Month and honor leaders in the African American community.

The event, held in the Illinois Room at 555 W. Monroe St., was an opportunity to reflect on the great achievements of Black leaders. The eight honorees included an investment executive, a foundation CEO, a youth sports leader, a City Colleges president, a state lawmaker, a labor leader, a basketball player, and a history museum president.

“We acknowledge the great achievements and contributions of African Americans every day, not only during the month of February,” Frerichs said. “These leaders are investing in companies, making a difference in the lives of our youth, and fighting for a more equitable Illinois. We celebrate their dedication to making our communities a better place to live, work, and raise a family.”

Black History Month is a national effort. In 1926, University of Chicago graduate, author and educator Carter G. Woodson created Negro History Week. In 1976, the annual celebration was expanded to a month. This year’s Black History Month theme is “African Americans and the Arts.”

Treasurer Frerichs honored the following individuals for their outstanding commitment to the community:

Outstanding Service in Business

Mellody Hobson

Co-CEO, President | Ariel Investments

Outstanding Service in Leadership

Valerie Jarrett

CEO | The Obama Foundation

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Outstanding Commitment in Education

Dr. Kimberly Hollingsworth
President | Olive-Harvey College

Outstanding Commitment in Community Service

Eric Davis
Executive Director | The BASE Chicago

Outstanding Commitment as an Elected Official

Hon. Marcus C. Evans, Jr.
Illinois State Representative, Assistant Majority Leader | 33rd District

Outstanding Achievement in Workforce and Labor

Fletcher Holmes
Business Agent, Political Director | Ironworkers Local 63

Outstanding Achievement in Sportsmanship

Kendall Gill
TV analyst, former basketball player

Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Humanity

Perri Irmer, Esq.
President, CEO | DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center

Later this month, Frerichs will hold a celebration in Springfield honoring Downstate Black leaders.

About the Illinois Treasurer

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office is a powerful economic engine that invests in people to drive prosperity, development and growth throughout the state. As State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'-iks) is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$55 billion. The investments help families pay for college and trade school; workers save for a dignified retirement; and local governments process bill payments more efficiently so they can pass along the savings to taxpayers. The office provides financial institutions money to loan to farmers, small business owners, and qualified individuals at below-market rates because better jobs create stronger communities. The office operates the state's largest consumer-protection initiative, the unclaimed property I-Cash program, which has returned a record-breaking \$1.9 billion since Frerichs was elected.

For more news about the State Treasurer's Office, please follow Treasurer Frerichs on X (formerly Twitter) at [@ILTreasurer](#), Threads [@iltreasurer@threads.net](#), Instagram at [ILTreasurer](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on Facebook at [Invested in You – Treasurer Michael Frerichs](#).

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