



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

MICHAEL W. FRERICHS

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

*Jesse White, actor Harry Lennix, baseball player Curtis Granderson,
Bakery owner Hart among those recognized*

Video will be posted here: <https://cms.illinois.gov/agency/media/video/videos.html>

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 a bakery owner, former secretary of state, university president, youth violence prevention founder, state senator, labor leader, baseball player and actor.

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

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

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

Outstanding Service in Business

Stephanie Hart

Founder & Owner | Brown Sugar Bakery

Outstanding Service in Leadership

Jesse White

Former Illinois Secretary of State | Founder, Jesse White Tumblers

Outstanding Commitment in Education

Dr. Katrina Bell-Jordan

President | Northeastern Illinois University

Outstanding Commitment in Community Service

LaVonte Stewart

Founder & Executive Director | Lost Boyz Inc.

Outstanding Commitment as an Elected Official

Hon. Elgie Sims Jr.

Illinois State Senator | 17th District

Outstanding Achievement in Workforce and Labor

Chynna S. Hampton

Equity Director | Climate Jobs Illinois

Outstanding Achievement in Sportsmanship

Curtis Granderson

Retired MLB Player | Founder, Grand Kids Foundation

Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Humanity

Harry Lennix*

Actor | Founder, Lillian Marcie Center Project

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

*Not in attendance

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 \$60 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 \$2.2 billion since Frerichs was elected.

For more news about the State Treasurer's Office, please follow Treasurer Frerichs on Instagram at [ILTreasurer](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Facebook at [Invested in You – Treasurer Michael Frerichs](#). You can find our weekly newsletter [here](#).

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