



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

MICHAEL W. FRERICHS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 15, 2023

CONTACT:

Eric Krol 312.814.1252

Greg Rivara 312.814.1901

Treasurer Frerichs Honors Illinois Leaders During Women's History Month

Frerichs Recognizes Great Achievements of Women in Illinois

CHICAGO – Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs today hosted a celebration to highlight the achievements of women in Illinois. This year's theme for Women's History Month is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

The event, which was held at the state government building at 555 W. Monroe St., honored eight women for their contributions to their communities: a health care leader, an education institute partner, a nonprofit president, an assistant school superintendent, a state representative, a labor field organizer, an Olympic hockey player and development coach, and a motivational speaker.

"Today, we honor women who are educating our youth, creating jobs and inspiring others," Frerichs said. "As treasurer, I have promoted national and regional efforts to promote corporate board diversity, including persuading companies to appoint more women to their boards."

Women's History Month traces back more than 100 years. In 1911, the U.S. first participated in International Women's History Day. In 1980, President Carter issued the first presidential proclamation declaring National Women's History Week. Seven years later, Congress declared March as National Women's History Month.

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

Award Recipients:

Outstanding Service in Business

Esther Corpuz

CEO | Alivio Medical Center

Outstanding Service in Leadership

Dr. Juanita M. Morris

Owner | J Morris Enterprises

Decatur

Outstanding Commitment in Education

Dr. Lorie Cristofaro

Assistant Superintendent | Lockport Township High School

Outstanding Commitment in Community Service

Maria Ontiveros

President | Mercado on Fifth
Quad Cities

Outstanding Commitment as an Elected Official

Hon. Stephanie Kifowit

Illinois State Representative | 84th District

Outstanding Achievement in Workforce and Labor

Tory Woods

Field Representative | LiUNA Laborers' Local 773
DuQuoin/Perry County/Southern Illinois

Outstanding Achievement in Sportsmanship

Kendall Coyne Schofield

Captain | U.S. Women's Ice Hockey Team

Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Humanities

Zinyra Ross

Artisan, Entrepreneur, Motivational Speaker
Global Messenger for Special Olympics

The Treasurer's Outstanding Service in Business Award is presented to Esther Corpuz.

- Since 2014, Esther Corpuz has been the Chief Executive Officer at Alivio Medical Center, a bilingual and bicultural group committed to providing access to quality, cost effective health care to the Hispanic community, the uninsured and underinsured, with inclusion of other cultures and races.
- With over 35 years' experience in healthcare administration, Ms. Corpuz has brought an innovative and holistic approach to enhancing Alivio's practice of delivering patient-centered, coordinated, and cost-effective healthcare.
- Early in her impressive career, Ms. Corpuz was instrumental in establishing several hospital-wide initiatives that address the specific needs of Latino patients. She was a lead supporter in introducing Illinois legislation that requires health care institutions to provide trained medical interpreters, a program she established at MacNeal Hospital 25 years ago.
- The Alivio leadership team created access to year-round drive-through COVID testing and they have been at the forefront of COVID vaccine distributions in some of the most vulnerable communities in Chicago and the western suburbs.
- Esther is an active community leader and currently serves as a founding board member of the Healthy Illinois Campaign which recently secured the Nation's first state-funded health care program for low income and undocumented adults 42 years and older.

The Treasurer's Outstanding Service in Leadership Award is presented to Dr. Juanita Morris.

- Three years ago, Dr. Juanita Morris was selected by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to administer a \$2.3-million-dollar grant to develop and activate the “Jerry J. Dawson Civic Leadership Institute” (DCLI) in Decatur. The 5 Pillars of DCLI are: Law Enforcement, Healthcare, Government, Entrepreneurship, and Education.
- Under DCLI, over 200 students have already participated in paid internships at local businesses, with exposure to careers, behind the scenes business, and civic organizations.
- DCLI partners with non-profit community organizations to bring programs like “Girls Who Code” and the “Summer Math Academy” to Decatur area youth.
- She created a one-of-a-kind six-week “Residential CNA Program” – with a 100% success rate, these students have passed the state of Illinois certification exam and are now in high school, college, or employed in the medical community.
- Dr. Morris also developed a Certified Medical Interpreter Program designed to facilitate the accurate share of important medical information between patients and physicians.
- Dr. Morris and husband Jeremy were the Decatur Macon County honorary chairs for the 2022 Salvation Army Christmas Campaign.

The Treasurer's Outstanding Commitment to Community Service is presented to Maria Ontiveros.

- Maria Ontiveros is co-founder and president of Mercado on Fifth, a nonprofit organization in the Quad Cities area that hosts a weekly outdoor night market and festival along a block on Moline's Fifth Avenue, not far from the Mississippi River waterfront.
- Mercado on Fifth has supported about 130 small businesses and nonprofits in the Quad Cities. Today, vendor spaces at the outdoor markets offer local Hispanic chefs, artists, and entrepreneurs a place to thrive with pride to inspire the next generation.
- Following the Ontiveros family legacy of working hard and providing an opportunity to others, Maria worked with local banks and community partners to offer programs in both Spanish and English. These included more than \$78,000 in micro-grants for minority-owned businesses, a food-sanitation certification course, and no-cost business workshops.
- With the help of a [Minority Business Incubator grant](#) from the State of Illinois, Ontiveros has grown Mercado on Fifth's team and led the way to last year's grand opening of a new, permanent facility. With space indoors and out — including a patio, dedicated food-truck lane, walk-up window, and minority-business incubator space — Mercado on Fifth now can welcome the community year-round.
- Ms. Ontiveros serves as a board member of the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District “MetroLINK”, Visit Quad Cities, United Way Quad Cities, Quad City Arts, and the Two Rivers YMCA.
- She is the Corporate Community Liaison for Group O, a \$950 million diversified services firm, one of the largest Hispanic-owned U.S. companies founded by her grandfather Robert Ontiveros. She also manages the company's charitable arm, which has consistently funded scholarships at Quad Cities area schools, including Black Hawk College and Western Illinois University.

The Treasurer's Outstanding Commitment in Education Award is presented to Dr. Lorie Cristofaro

- Dr. Lorie Cristofaro is the current Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction in Lockport Township High School District 205
- She has over 25 years of experience in Illinois public schools as a social studies teacher, department chair, and assistant principal of curriculum and instruction.
- Dr. Cristofaro is active in many professional organizations and has been the co-chair of the Women in Educational Leadership Luncheon for the past three years.
- In 2020, in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators, Lockport Township High School District 205 joined the national initiative, Redefining Ready – a new research-based metrics to better assess that students are college ready, career ready, and life ready.
- Dr. Cristofaro is a proud graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education and a master's degree in Foundations of Education from Northern Illinois University. She recently received her doctorate from the University of St. Francis.

The Treasurer's Award for Outstanding Commitment as an Elected Official is presented to State Representative Stephanie Kifowit.

- Representative Stephanie Kifowit has served Illinois' 84th District in the State House of Representatives for the past ten years. She brings a wealth of experience to her job as a full-time legislator.
- Representative Kifowit is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and a graduate of Northern Illinois University, where she earned a master's degree in public administration. A former alderman in the city of Aurora, she is also a former substitute teacher and registered financial advisor.
- During her tenure in the Illinois House, she has been the chief sponsor or co-sponsor of countless legislation relating to ABLE assets protection, student investment accounts and sustainable investing, technology development, life insurance benefits, unclaimed property, and college savings.
- She serves as chairperson of the House Personnel & Pensions Committee, and a member of the Revenue & Finance and Veterans' Affairs committees, as well as the Subcommittees on Income Tax and Property Tax.

The Treasurer's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Workforce and Labor is presented to Tory Woods.

- Tory has been a member at Laborers International Union of North America Local 773 for ten years. Her union involvement was greatly influenced by her grandfather Robert T. Simpson, a fierce leader in the Teamsters and Chicago Chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists for over 40 years.
- Tory worked for the Department of Agriculture, both for Perry County and the Jackson County Farm Service Agency.
- After a brief period in human resources, Tory was offered a job for the Perry County clerk's office as election coordinator and was appointed union steward for Labor Local 773 for the government offices. In 2016, she took over the position of Chief Deputy Clerk,
- She was appointed to the Du Quoin Community Development Corporation Board, working to start up or improve businesses in Du Quoin.

- Three years ago, Tory accepted a job with Local 773 as a Field Representative. She serves on the board of Connect 360, with a mission to improve the communications, relationships, and actions of racial and ethnic minority populations.
- Tory was born in Du Quoin and grew up in the AME Zion Church. She graduated from Du Quoin High School and went on to attend John A. Logan College. She has furthered her education with leadership classes concentrating on Labor & Employment Law.
- Tory enjoys volunteering for the Carbondale Warming Center whenever they are in need. She continues to do volunteer work throughout the Southern Illinois communities and her Local.

The Treasurer’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Sportsmanship is presented to Kendall Coyne Schofield.

- Born in Palos Heights, Kendall’s route to a successful hockey career and Olympic glory began in an outdoor ice rink in Orland Park, where she graduated from Carl Sandburg High School and joined Team USA Hockey as a young 15-year-old.
- In her senior year of college, she was named the top female college ice hockey player in the United States.
- Kendall has been a member of the U.S. Women’s National Hockey Team for twelve years and is the current team captain.
- She is a six-time World Championship gold medalist and three-time Olympic champion in women’s hockey, winning silver in 2014, gold in 2018, and silver last year in Beijing.
- In 2019, she was the first woman to compete in the National Hockey League All-Stars Skill competition and was a member of the NHL’s first all-female broadcast team.
- Two years ago, Kendall was hired as the first female player development coach for the Chicago Blackhawks hockey organization, where she also runs her *Golden Coyne*s youth hockey program for girls aged six to eighteen.
- In their spare time, Kendall and husband Michael Schofield run the Schofield Family Foundation, dedicated to providing funding, support, and awareness to improve the lives of others in our beloved communities, including military, first responders, youth sports organizations, and families in need.
- Last year, she published her autobiography titled “As Fast As Her: Dream Big, Break Barriers, Achieve Success” with a foreword by Billie Jean King.
- Accepting the award on her behalf is her father, John Coyne.

The Treasurer’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Arts and Humanities is presented to Zinyra Ross

- Known as “Z”, Zinyra Ross has lived two distinct lives. In the first, she was isolated by a severe cognitive disability and bullied. She was diagnosed with a learning disability and mild mental retardation at age 5 – at age 9, she was still functioning at age 3. After home schooling, she moved to a new school with more support services.
- After expressing an interest in working with animals, “Z” became active with the Youth Volunteer Youth Corps at Brookfield Zoo. She became a peer mentor and part time employee and became

involved with Special Olympics and Habitat for Humanity. After much hard work, she graduated high school with a GPA above 3.5.

- In her present life, Zinyra is confident, courageous, and admired. She is employed at Brookfield Zoo and competes as an athlete for Special Olympics Illinois.
- “Z” is also an incredible artist and innovative entrepreneur. She spends a lot of her “down” time creating unique illustrations. Her characters are whimsical and 100% original. She founded “Just Z,” a brand highlighting her artistic creations.
- By embracing her disability, “Z” uses the gifts and talents she has discovered to create her future with creativity and positive thoughts. More importantly, she inspires others to follow their own dreams.
- For the past six years, she has been a Global Messenger for Special Olympics.

About the Illinois Treasurer

As Illinois State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'-ikz) is the state’s Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$52 billion. The portfolio includes \$26 billion in state funds, \$17 billion in retirement and college savings plans and \$9 billion on behalf of local and state governments. Frerichs’ office protects consumers by safeguarding more than \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property, encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, assisting people with disabilities to save without losing government benefits, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. The Treasurer’s Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

-END-