

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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For More Information:

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

773-378-5902

Ford Names Advisers at General Assembly Inauguration

SPRINGFIELD- After his inauguration as state representative of the Eighth District of Illinois for the 99th General Assembly, State Representative La Shawn K Ford, D-Chicago, readies for the new legislative session by announcing his volunteer advisers for 2015. His advisers will meet once a month to provide counsel on current events and issues important to the Eighth District and the state of Illinois. Advisers will work with Ford on issues involving Veteran Affairs, Health, Higher Education, Early Childhood Education, Criminal Justice Reform, Parks and Recreation, Youth Engagement, Second Chance, Community and Family Engagement, Elementary and Secondary School Education, Housing, and Small Business and Workforce Development.

“We should all come together to work on the many challenges that confront the Eighth District and the state of Illinois,” said Ford. “The advisers who have agreed to serve are already engaged in the community, and I commend them for their willingness to increase their involvement in government and for accepting the challenge to get more people involved in the process.”

The names, positions and biographies for State Representative Ford’s 2015 advisers:

Name: Jonathan Tate

Position: Veteran Affairs Adviser

Bio: Jonathan Tate served 9 years in the United States military with service in both the U.S Air Force and U.S Army. While on active duty in the Air Force, he served on the Airmen’s counsel as Vice President in charge of community engagement. He developed a program that would link at-risk youth with a service member mentor. He was a member of Airmen Against Drunk Driving, a free service to service members that prevented drunk driving off duty.

He was deployed in 2014 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Kuwait. While on deployment, he was handpicked by the 108th Sustainment Brigade Commander for his Special Team as the Resiliency Program Manager overseeing 9 countries in Southwest Asia. While serving as Resiliency Manger in Kuwait, Jonathan created a program that connected 140 military supporters in the states with soldiers overseas. The program was featured in an article from the Desert Voice and became the standard for resiliency programs in Southwest Asia.

He currently is a Non Commissioned Officer with the 108th Sustainment Brigade in Chicago where he works on community relations between military and local community members. He is an honor graduate (cum laude) of Northeastern Illinois University with a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Social Science. As a college intern, he developed a veterans program for the 8th district that successfully connects veterans with free resources and benefits. He has been a Community and Veterans Coordinator for the 8th district since 2010 with State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford.

Name: Dr. Thomas Huggett

Position: Health Adviser

Bio: Dr. Huggett earned his Bachelor of Science with Distinction in Biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin; Doctor of Medicine from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine; and Masters of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health. Working on the West Side of Chicago since 1995, Dr. Huggett is a family physician with a passion to provide quality health care to residents of underserved communities. Collaborating with other community partners, he realizes the importance of implementing community-based and clinical interventions to improve the community’s health. Along with seeing patients in the office and the hospital, he has led a team of providers as Mobile Health Team Coordinator to provide primary medical and mental health care as well as social service and behavioral health support to patients in 20 homeless shelters on Chicago’s West Side.

Presently serving as Family Physician and Mobile Health Team Coordinator at Lawndale Christian Health Center after working for Circle Family HealthCare Network for 19 years, he works with a team of health care providers to ensure the provision of a full spectrum of quality health care. Dr. Huggett is an advocate for AIDS prevention and health education, and provides clinical care to large panel of HIV patients. He has been instrumental in implementing educational and prevention projects in areas such as adolescent violence prevention, smoking cessation and on-site HIV testing in homeless shelters. Dr. Huggett has been an Adjunct Assistant Clinical Professor at the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and teaches medical students and residents. He is well known in Chicago’s West Side communities and has been a resident himself in the Austin community since 2003.

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In recognition of his work, Dr. Huggett has received the 2003 Award for Outstanding Service from the National Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network, the 2009 Medicine Award from the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, Chicago, and Illinois Primary Health Care Association's 2013 Award of Excellence – Primary Health Care Clinician Devotion Award. He has also worked as Volunteer Health Adviser for Illinois State Representative La Shawn K. Ford since 2006, working on health policy issues such as expanding HIV screening, increasing the use of food stamps in farmers' markets, and preventing childhood obesity. He was appointed to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Human Services Medicaid Access Advisory Committee in 2012. He has traveled extensively and served in many roles in the health care field. Some of his work includes: serving as District Health Officer through the Peace Corps for three years in the East African country of Malawi; Consultant for Malawi CHAPS Project sponsored by Africare, Washington D.C; serving as Volunteer Physician in Likuni, Malawi; and serving as Supervising Physician with volunteer Northwestern medical students in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. He has also worked as an Emergency and Family Physician in Wisconsin and Missouri. The theme of his work has been providing health care himself and working on community-based public health initiatives to improve the health of residents of underserved communities.

Name: Dr. Charles C. Brown

Position: Higher Education Adviser

Bio: Dr. Brown earned his PhD in Community Psychology from National Louis University in Chicago. He also holds a MA in Psychology (Behavioral Science) and a BA in Behavioral and Social Sciences. He currently is a psychology Instructor at East-West University in Chicago since 2010 and at National Louis University since 2011 as a Psychology Instructor. Dr. Brown provides classroom instructions on various disciplines. He is solely responsible for course content, lecturing and communicating with students of diverse backgrounds. He designs curriculum material that focuses on engaging students in an interactive learning process. Dr. Brown is known to foster independent thinking, and demonstrating an interest in his student's academic success. Dr. Brown has taught various courses such as Introduction to Psychology, Life Span Development, Psychology of the African American experience, Child Development, Theories of Personality and Introduction to American Government Skills.

Name: Ruth Kimble

Position: Early Childhood Education Adviser

Bio: Ruth has been an advocate for quality care and education for young children for the past 20 years. She began her career as the owner of Channing's Childcare Home care and she opened her daycare center in 2006 where she presently serves as the Director. She is the President of Austin Childcare Providers Network with a membership of 80 small businesses. She serves as a co-chair of Austin Coming Together. She received an Advanced Certificate and Associate Degree of Early Childhood Education from Malcolm X City College and a B.A from Northeastern Illinois University. She is presently the chair for Austin Early Childhood Collaborative.

Name: Melissa Williams

Position: Criminal Justice Reform Adviser

Bio: In 2003, Williams received her Juris Doctorate at John Marshall Law School in Chicago. She graduated at the top 25%, of her class and was admitted to Illinois Bar in November 2003. She also received a BA in Political Science with a Minor in African American Studies at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. She received honors for "Outstanding New Staff" in Student Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago, featured for her pro bono efforts as an attorney in the Journal American Bar Association and highlighted in Who's Who in Black Chicago. From July 2004 to June 2005 she served as a staff attorney for Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing, Inc. in Chicago. As a Staff Attorney in the Tenants' Advocacy Project, she coordinated intervention programs for Chicago area tenants in disputes with their landlords. While here, she would review intake interviews as completed with tenants, investigate landlord's violations of law and attempt to negotiate settlements between parties. She courageously defended tenants in eviction court by initiating lawsuits on their behalf, conducted research and discovery, and prepared pleadings as necessary. Melissa would also participate in community training programs on housing issues throughout the Chicago area as a guest speaker. From June 2008 to June 2009 she worked at the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights in Chicago as the Cabrini Works Program Associate Director. While as Associate Director she provided administrative leadership for start-up contract programs that offered case management, employment, and clinical counseling services to Cabrini Green Residents to assist them in the public housing relocation process. She managed a caseload of over 1000 families and monitored processes to ensure that consent decree between Cabrini Residents and Chicago Housing Authority were not violated in the resident relocation process. From April 2010 to January 2011, Williams served as Executive Assistant to Bureau Chief/Director where she performed specialized tasks as designated by Bureau Chief. While at the Cook County Bureau of Community Development she served as Director of Legal Affairs, Human Resources, and Compliance Divisions for the Bureau and Interim Program Manager for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program ("NSP") administered by Cook County. In 2012-2013, Williams was a chief organizer and advocate bringing together more than 80 community groups that signed on as proponents and 35 legislators who joined the bill's Chief Sponsor Rep. Ford to support HB 3061 (formerly HB 5723), the Illinois Sealing Bill, to seal certain criminal records for non-violent offenses to increase opportunities for rehabilitated citizens to contribute to society. Her persistence, dedication and organizing abilities led to the passage of the legislation and signature into law by the governor in August 2013, helping thousands of ex-offenders. She currently works at UIC's Student Legal Services where she is the sole attorney responsible for developing the strategic direction and goals for the Student Legal Service office. The office assisted 28000 + students from the University of Illinois campuses in Chicago, Rockford, and Peoria. She developed comprehensive programs and services to address the legal needs of UIC students where she advised, counseled and guided students in regard to their legal concerns and rights within various areas of the law. She effectively organized educational workshops and presentations for students and supervised paralegal and law clerk staff. Williams directs the daily office operations where she consults and collaborates with internal and external constituencies.

Name: Randy Williams

Position: Parks and Recreations Adviser

Bio: Randy has been with the YMCA for five years working for several locations managing youth activities. He has worked with Chicago Park District for 20 years in such positions as Instructor of Sports for six years and manager of several large facilities. He has worked to help network and bridge the gap between several organizations such as Chicago Public Schools, Bethel New Life and YMCA.

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Name: Sharif Walker

Position: Youth Engagement Adviser

Bio: Sharif Walker has dedicated his career to administrative leadership and youth advocacy specializing in building positive and productive urban environments for young people since 1995 when he began his professional path in Chicago as a behavior management specialist with Ada S. McKinley East, an alternative school for students with special needs.

Since then, Walker has utilized his passion for youth and his skillset as a team leader with After School Matters (ASM), the country's leader in providing teen programming. Walker began working with ASM in 2000 as a Program Specialist overseeing apprenticeship programs that prepared teens for jobs with the Chicago Park District. Four years later, Walker was promoted to Regional Director, a position he currently holds, presiding over 6,000 plus opportunities annually for Chicago teenagers.

In 2002, Walker also founded Pyramid Players Productions (P3), a not-for-profit organization empowering young people to develop hope and build self-worth through inspiring performance-based arts and sports programming in the Austin community. P3 currently provides opportunities for Austin youth in theater, baseball and its high-profile dance company, Move Me Soul.

Walker holds a BA from the HBCU Lincoln University of Missouri, and has served as an active member of Alpha Phi Alpha, Incorporated, since 1989. Walker is also the current board president for the "collective impact" group Austin Coming Together. In 2012 Sharif was recognized with the Ember Award by the Black United Fund of Illinois celebrating an emerging generation of African-American leaders who are making a difference in the fields of government, education, business, media and community service. Sharif Walker currently resides in the Austin community on the West Side of Chicago.

Name: Roy Flowers

Position: Second Chance Adviser

Bio: Roy Flowers is a former ranking gang member and ex-felon of 13 years, now turned productive community member. Roy has 15 years of experience and knowledge of turning around ex-felon's current struggle to opportunity with his life experience. Roy's experience has helped him earn the respect and trust of ex-felons' returning from incarceration. A real estate owner and landlord of 8 years, Roy recently is a licensed barber of 12 years at Herb's Barber shop on the West Side. Roy mentors ex-felons in the community on how to navigate into society after being released from prison, and visits AA and NA meetings to help support ex-felons that are struggling with substance abuse problems.

Name: Dr. Steve Sewall

Position: Community and Family Engagement Adviser

Bio: Dr. Steve Sewall is a veteran Chicago educator, freelance writer, former real estate broker and media entrepreneur. A forty year resident of Chicago and Glenview, was educated at Harvard (B.A.), Yale (M.A.T.) and U. C. Berkeley (Ph.D). Today he is the Director of Chicago Civic Media, whose dynamic citizen-participatory media content and program innovations have empowered thousands of Chicago students and adults since 1992 to address and resolve systemic issues like school reform, public drug dealing, student rights and youth violence. Dr. Sewall's accomplishments include a long-term partnership with The Austin Voice newspaper. In the late 1990's it led to the creation of the West Side Drug Area Shutdown Project. In 2014, his work contributed to the creation of the Austin Parents Political University.

On the strength of his "Full Story" proposal for citizen-participatory, violence-reducing media, Steve was recently invited by Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, to create a Violence and Media Task Force for the Violence Prevention Task Force chaired by Dr. Hasbrouck. As a freelance writer, Steve's articles on school and media reform have appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Reader and the Chicago Tribune.

As an educator, Steve has taught English literature and writing courses at Northwestern University, Oakton Community College and Chicago's Newberry Library. In the 1980's he was the founding Headmaster of the Thomas Jefferson Academy, an independent K-8 elementary school for 80 boys and girls with a unique philosophy of Education for Life Purpose that was located near Wrigley Field. Steve currently lives in Glenview with his son Joe, a junior at Glenbrook High School.

Name: Ken Hunter

Position: Elementary and Secondary Education Adviser

Bio: Ken Hunter has been a teacher and an administrator for 40 years; 21 in Catholic schools and 19 in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) including the last 11+ as principal of Prosser Career Academy, which was recognized as the #1 school in Illinois for teaching disadvantaged students; father of Patrick, Golden Apple Scholar and first year CPS teacher; PhD (CAND) at University of CHICAGO in Education and Policy Studies; chair of Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) "Language Arts Advisory Council"; member of the following of ISBE's State Testing Review Committee, Steppenwolf Theatre's committee for the public square, Brookfield Zoo's "Levels of Engagement Education Committee, Chicago Art Institute's Teacher Advisory Panel, North River Commission Board of Directors, Executive Producer of documentary, "Love is a Verb".

Name: Phyllis Logan

Position: Housing Adviser

Bio: A 25 years veteran in the Real Estate Industry, a Roosevelt University Alumni, an accountant by trade, Phyllis Logan has a passion for teaching anyone who wants to learn. A civil rights advocate for the past 30 plus years, a real estate business owner for over ten years (advocating for equitable economic concerns that affect small business owners), an aspiration to be a part of "A Change" and ran a 2007-08 political campaign to be a state legislator, Logan is the recipient of many merit awards from her professional industry and from community stakeholders at large; she has a tendency of wanting to learn more.

Currently, Phyllis Logan is the Founder and Executive Director of Universal Housing Solution CDC, an Illinois Chartered – IRS 501c3, housing counseling, financial coaching & community development center. In this capacity, she is responsible for the management of internal & external business and of the Center's capacity building for human and financial resources. Their goal is to be a HUD Housing Counseling Agency. Prior to founding UHS CDC (2012), Logan held the position of VP of Operations with VOCMA, a local faith-based community organization in Chicago. She was charged with providing the 16 year old agency with organizational & leadership development. Logan is credited for: renewing the vision, building capacity, establishing public & private relations, designing & facilitating educational programs for adults, high-school students, and she started an after school programs for K-8 graders. Logan provided guidance and training for board members and was instrumental in implementing & staffing (volunteers & workers) for housing programs and establishing the organization as a HUD Certified Housing Agency. Under the leadership

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of Phyllis Logan, the agency qualified to participate in federal and state programs; the National Foreclosure Mediation/Modification Program, the Illinois Predatory Lending Data program and the Illinois Hardest Hit program and the agency was a recipient of donated foreclosed properties. Over 2,600 Cook County residents received assistance during her tenure.

Logan is a current member of: the Illinois Housing Development Authority's Foreclosure Working Group, Oak Park's Community Development Citizen's Advisory Committee, Congressman Danny K. Davis' 7th Congressional District Housing & Foreclosure Advisory committees, State Representative La Shawn K. Ford's Austin West Cook Community Foreclosure Collaborative Advisory Board, the Community Media Advisory committee, the Eisenhower Task Force committee (reconstruction of the I-290), and has served on the Urban Land Institute's panel of community stakeholders for the proposed Cook County Land Bank and a Dearborn Real Estate Board member. She serves on the NAACP National Board's Resolution Advisory Committee and as the NAACP Illinois State Conference of Branches 2nd VP & Economic Development Chair. Logan is the local NAACP Chicago Westside Branch's 1st VP & its Housing Committee chair. She has for the past 10 years and is currently the host of the NAACP CWB's Cable Access Network TV cable show. Logan serves on the NAACP Illinois State Conference Executive committee & is State Conference Economic Chair and, for the past three years is the "State Financial Freedom Campaign Chair." FFC is a national/statewide initiative, bringing educational & wealth building programs to many Illinois NAACP communities.

Phyllis Logan is active with many community groups; the Austin African American Business Network Association, the Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Chicago Black Chamber of Commerce, the Dearborn Realist Board, Advisory Board member on the Far South Side Chamber of Commerce, the Housing Economic Network, and the Chicago Rehab Network.

In her past, Phyllis Logan has owned, operated & managed a real estate company and was a licensed real estate continuing education instructor. She has established a twenty five year long cliental base of small business owners and individuals. From 2001-2007, under the directive of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressmen Davis and Congressman Rush, Phyllis Logan served on the development & implementation advisory boards for the Chicago's "With Ownership Wealth" Homeownership Initiative (a seven year program). Growing up on the West Side of Chicago in Garfield Park, Logan has managed to stay her course! Phyllis Logan holds an undergraduate degree in Accounting from Roosevelt University, an Economic Development Finance Professional Certificate, from the National Development Council and many Professional Certifications from Neighbor Works, NCLR, NAREB, CAR, USGBC and the CCLF organizations.

Name: Melody Winston

Position: Small Business and Workforce Development Adviser

Bio: Melody Winston is a woman of distinction and passion with a heart to empower others. Melody began her career serving as a realtor for one of Chicago most prestigious realty companies. Her proven success in that arena lead to more than a decade of managing commercial properties as well as owning and operating Golden Eagle Construction Company as a licensed General Contractor. Melody was born on the Seymour Johnson Air Force base in North Carolina where her father was a Top Gun Fighter Pilot. She is the eldest daughter of Ms. Carolyn Williams and Dr. William S. Winston, Founder and Pastor of Living Word Christian Center located in Forest Park, Illinois. Living Word is a multi-cultural, non-denominational church with more than 20,000 members. Melody is also an heir to Clarabelle Williams which started the first Black-owned medical clinic in the United States, along with her sons Dr. Jasper Williams, Dr. Charles Williams, and Dr. James Williams.

Melody is currently the Executive Director of Corporate Property Assets for Living Word Christian Center where she manages the organization's multimillion dollar portfolio of assets. In addition to that role, she is the Director of Real Estate and Construction for Living Word Christian Center, the Forest Park Retail Center located in Forest Park, Illinois, (33-acres) as well as the Washington Plaza located in Tuskegee, Alabama (17-acres). Melody oversees operations, construction, and economic development for these entities which garnered the interest and placement of national tenants such as: Walmart, Pizza Hut, Planet Fitness, Ashley Stewart, Kmart, Taco Bell, Ultra Foods, Hibbett Sports and Famers Home Furniture. Additionally, Melody serves as the Vice President of Golden Eagle Aviation, which is a fixed base operation (FBO) that specializes in Jet Charters, Jet Maintenance, Fuel Services and Pilot Services. Golden Eagle Aviation is located in Tuskegee, Alabama at Moton Field, home of the famous Tuskegee Airmen. After all of the demands and responsibilities of business life, this mother of four enjoys quality time with her family, both immediate and extended. Her positive energy, tenacity and drive impacts the lives of many people and will serve as an outstanding legacy into the future.

For more information, contact one of Ford's constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park at [708-445-3673](tel:708-445-3673), 4800 W. Chicago Avenue in Chicago at [773-378-5902](tel:773-378-5902) or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at [217-782-5962](tel:217-782-5962) or visit www.lashawnford.com.