



**Village Election
Candidates' Statements**

Park Forest, Illinois
Election day is Tuesday, April 6 2021
Make your vote count!

These statements have been provided by each individual candidate and have been published unedited by The Committee for Non-Partisan Local Government in Park Forest as a service to all candidates and to the voters of Park Forest. The statements are the sole responsibility of the candidates. The Non-Partisan Committee is not responsible for the views expressed by the candidates nor the factual content of their statements.

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2021 Candidates' Forum Schedule

Date	Time	Location — Sponsor/Host
Sunday, January 31	1:00 p.m.	Zoom — Non-Partisan Committee
Sunday, February 7	1:00 p.m.	Village Hall — Library – Library Candidates Only
Sunday, February 21	1:00 p.m.	Zoom — League of Women Voters
Sunday, March 21	1:00 p.m.	Village Hall — Park Forest Cooperatives
Tuesday, April 6		Election Day
Saturday, April 10	10:30 a.m.	Zoom NPC Membership Meeting

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There are two candidates who are on the ballot for the library board who did not submit a signed Non-Partisan Candidate Statement and may not participate in the forums. These candidates also did not provide a statement to be included in this brochure.

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An email or letter was sent to the school board candidates for whom we had that contact information, inviting them to submit a statement for this brochure. Those who responded with a statement are included in this brochure. Any other candidates who wish to be added to the brochure on the NPC website may send a 300-word statement and picture by email to: parkforestnonpartisancommittee@gmail.com.

Candidate for Village Trustee



Erin Slone

We, as a village, must maintain the highest level of ethics and integrity: not succumbing to the nepotism, bully tactics, and disinformation being practiced in neighboring communities and our nation as a whole. I am dedicated to empowering our village community to engage in civil, collaborative partnership to formulate sustainable solutions.

I graduated with Honors from The University of Chicago with a Bachelor’s in Economics and have a Master’s in Integrated Marketing Communications from Northwestern. I have two decades of experience as an investment banker and business consultant. I have the proven ability to identify opportunities, develop, and execute strategic plans for growth and development. I have extensive management expertise and am comfortable communicating with C-Suite executives, community stakeholders, public officials, and investors in order to align interests, build consensus, and advance projects and investment.

I believe in service in and around my community. I am a former member and leader of the Junior League of Chicago. I completed the Park Forest Civic Leadership Academy in 2018. I am currently a member of the League of Women Voters of Park Forest. I volunteer at PADS at St. Irenaeus, and am active in outreach ministries with Christian Life Center Tinley Park.

I was raised in Park Forest, and have the experience, skillset, and perspective that our Village Board needs. It would be an honor to serve this community that taught me that people from different backgrounds and beliefs can work together to build something that would make future generations proud. While I appreciate our rich history, there is still more work to be done. I want to be a part of the forward-thinking leadership that ushers in the revival of a new Park Forest - making it again the premier suburb of the Southland.

Please visit www.VoteSlone.com to learn more.

Candidate for Village Trustee



JeRome Brown

Marital Status: Divorce, Children: 1, Occupation: Insurance Producer former Job Developer /PF Trustee/Life Coach

JeRome has been a powerful community servant for 2 decades.

- PF Kiwanis Club Member,
- PF Environment Commission,
- PF Parks & Recreation Advisory Board,
- PF Planning/Development Commissioner,
- PF President- Toastmasters Present Member,
- PF Rotary Club Member/Program Director,
- “Bears On Court” Player raising money for Firefighter Association of America,
- Speaker and Trainer/community job fair

Former ESP for CAPs. A not-for-profit employment agency that provides employment training and job placement services. CAPs has proven successful techniques in working with prospective employees to address the workforce needs of business through strategic hiring. One of CAPs areas of expertise is helping employers access indirect government-assisted programs to maximize their payroll budget. CAPs will assist the employer in making informed decisions in job placements, by providing an easy and convenient process, without the traditional expense.

Former Youth Advocate, previously employed by YAP, mentoring for at risk youths.

JeRome’s influential career includes Management with several fortune 500 companies. Citibank, United Insurance and Smith/Barney. His duties included sales, insurance, financial planning, training and development. JeRome’s aspiration is to bridge his life, educational and career expertise to the Village of Park Forest. Assisting in economic development, infrastructure, education, and safety. Furthermore, he also believes in motivating diverse communities to grow and produce new resources.

Honors: Mayor Richard Daley Ideas & Commitment to the Community Cook County Board President John Stroger- Job/Community Resource Fair Chicago School District Motivational & Keynote Graduation Speaker Lamont Brown- Certificate of Appreciate -Prairie State-Pursuing The Dream with the Browns.

JeRome’s Goal, foster human understanding, and contribute to the betterment of mankind

Candidate for Village Trustee



Theresa M. Settles RN BSN

"Let's live, grow, and discover together!"

I was born in UP Michigan, one of ten children, and raised on a forty-acre farm. I moved to Chicago in 1968, married James N. Settles, Sr., and have two daughters, Sho9mari and Shani. We have resided in Park Forest for 42 years, raising our children, who both attended Indiana Elementary and Rich East High School. We also fostered many children with DCFS. I am a Registered Nurse and was employed at Ingalls Hospital for 39 years. I have prior work experience in banking [First National Bank of Chicago], advertising [Foote Cone & Belding], and have provided Occupational Nursing at the Chicago Heights Ford Stamping Plant. Most recently, I have trained and served as a Medical Advocate in Sexual Assault Services with the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, giving support and information to survivors at local hospitals. I earned a Graduate degree from Governor State University and maintain Premium Alumni status. I am currently serving a second term as Park Forest Trustee, am the Senior Trustee, and the Mayor Pro Tem. I currently serve as Trustee Liaison to the Veterans Commission and the Senior Citizen Advisory Commission. I have volunteered with many local service organizations including: Tall Grass Arts Association; League of Women Voters; Gavin Foundation; Chicago Heights/Park Forest Rotary [Am a Paul Harris Fellow]; NAACP; and the Park Forest Garden Club. I always approach Village service with honesty, dignity, and integrity: collaborating with other elected officials to identify challenges and find solutions for the Village of Park Forest and our residents. As an experienced and degreed nursing professional, I continue to bring my understanding of science, data, and performance management to the quick thinking but compassionate service I have maintained over the years.

Candidate for Village Trustee



Maya Hardy

Chief Professional Officer, United Way of Metro Chicago

Trustee, Village of Park Forest

I am running for election as Trustee in the Village of Park Forest. I have over 15 years in public service and a Master's degree in Communication and Training. My experience and education have instilled the one thing I believe is vital in any aspect of life, and that is to truly listen to people.

I have had the pleasure and honor of serving you as a Trustee since June of 2019. I also function as the Trustee liaison to the Commission on Human Relations, and the Planning and Zoning Commission. During which time, I, alongside my colleagues on the Board, have made many significant and successful accomplishments. Some of which include:

- Development of a Park Forest Community Cares Fund
- Village's grant successes over the past 12 months total \$4,288,750:
- OSLAD/Somonauk Park project
- Army Corps of Engineers project (on Dogwood)
- FEMA funding (for fire department staffing and a bariatric ambulance)
- Significant growth of new businesses and redevelopment
- Stronger police community relations (support of the police Community Engagement Coordinator position)

I have worked hard toward these accomplishments and look forward to continuing making significant progress. Transparency, community assistance, safety, and fiscal responsibility are the core of my priorities.

I have been working hard for you, and will continue to work hard for you. I am your neighbor, and bear the comforts and challenges of each and every decision I make on your behalf. However, I promise to serve honorably, keep your best interest in mind, and to always have an open door, and I humbly ask for your vote in the consolidated election on April 6, 2021.

Candidate for Village Trustee



Judy Hawthorne

I am a lifelong Park Forest resident, product of District 163 schools, proud graduate from Rich East High School class of 1990, and attended NIU from 1991-1994. Having been elected by my peers in 2019, currently, I'm serving as secretary of the District 163 school board and have been on the board since 2015.

Being the mother of five teenagers and a homeowner in the community I love, the success and continued improvement of our Village is very important and personal to me. Like so many of us, I have a vested interest in the Village of Park Forest and will for years to come; I want to help make the best possible decisions for all residents and future generations while maintaining maximum transparency with the public.

During my tenure, some notable accomplishments/goals as a school board member include:

- Interviewed, selected and hired a new superintendent
- Encouraged professional development throughout the district
- Member of CUBE (Counsel of Urban Boards of Education)
- Maintained a balanced budget
- Collaborated with 6 other board members to implement districtwide goals
- Brought districtwide goals to fruition
- Participated in trainings to expand professional development in the areas of implicit bias and cultural sensitivity
- Voted in favor of providing free lunch to all students, regardless of household income
- Avid supporter of local functions, community events, and most importantly, Park Forest businesses whenever possible

It has been a privilege to serve Park Forest and Chicago Heights as a school board member for almost 6 years and I would be honored to be elected to serve the Park Forest Community in the capacity of Village Trustee.

Thank you for your previous support and thank you in advance for your consideration April 6th.

Candidate for Village Trustee



Joshua Travis

My name is Joshua Travis and I am a lifelong Park Forest resident running for Village Trustee because I want to see more for my hometown. I grew up and currently live on Sangamon street. In 2010, I became a proud Rich East alum. I graduated from Illinois State University with a degree in Anthropology and minors in Biological Sciences and Criminal Justice Sciences. In 2018, I graduated from DePaul University with a Masters in Nonprofit Management. I am in my second year as a doctoral student studying Interdisciplinary Leadership at Governors State University and serve as the Executive Director for a nonprofit in Chicago.

I first got involved with village leadership by joining the Youth Commission to advocate for community resources and education in the village. Since returning from school, I have jumped on opportunities to volunteer with village departments and support more families having access to resources. In my youth, I relied on village services to make sure I was prepared for the world. Now I am stepping up to make sure the next generation has a fair chance, just as I did.

I want to build on the success of the past, as the village creates new ways of bringing in and retaining residents and generating income from our enterprise zones. We face new and old challenges as our state and county continues to see depopulation and growing tax burdens that make it difficult for the village to meet its needs. As a Trustee, my number one priority is to see Park Forest invest in Park Foresters. Through smart investments and pushing for innovative business practices, Park forest can once again be the special place where people go to live, grow, and discover.

Joshua Travis, MNM

Candidate for Library Trustee



**Felicia Rangel
(Write-In)**

My name is Felicia Rangel and I am running for Park Forest Library Board Trustee. It has been my pleasure serving as your trustee these past years. The library has shaped and enriched my life and I want to continue giving back to my library and the community. I seek your vote in order to do this.

As a resident since 1976 I have witnessed the major transformation of our library from when I was a teenager to an adult. It is an experience to walk in and see our library being utilized by our youngest patrons looking for a book to our oldest patrons using the computers or taking technology classes.

During the past year we faced the challenge of operating during a global pandemic and continuing to do so, which has impacted the library's engagement as we are used to. People need their libraries for so many things, whether it be for education, recreation, life skills or cultural immersion, and going through a pandemic does not stop these needs.

We have a strong library with a mission to support our citizens and local businesses. I'm excited to offer my work experience and talents to help our library adequately plan for the challenges of future growth within Park Forest and Olympia Fields. I enjoy community service and knowing that I have helped improve our library for future generations is an indescribable joy.

My background as a payroll professional with a strong skillset in accounting, human resources policies and procedures and budgeting are strengths which would serve the board well. I know the primary responsibility of a library trustee is the financial health of the library.

I am asking for your vote for me, Felicia Rangel, to serve as your Park Forest Library Board Trustee.

Candidate for Library Trustee



Alice McBride

My name is Alice McBride and I have lived in Park Forest for 35 years. I am now a retired Social Worker. After several years in direct service, I

went on to hold administrative positions in public and private agencies that served people with hearing loss, developmental disabilities or special education needs. After retirement I moved from being a library patron to becoming an active member of the *Friends of the Library* and served on their board for several years. I worked with library staff to hold 4 annual Friends Pecan Sales, a traditional event for the Park Forest community. I also served on the Board of Directors for the Thorn Creek Audubon Society for 4 years where I gained an understanding of the role and responsibilities of being on a board.

I have maintained an interest over the past 4 years in the Library Board by reading the packets and minutes and occasionally attending their meetings. This interest has led to my decision to seek a Trustee position where I can offer my knowledge and experience to directly support the operation of the library and the board.

I am a practical and methodical person in how I approach my work and I look forward to contributing to the Library Board. I am interested in learning more about what Park Forest residents would like to see offered by the library and then working with the library and other Trustees to include these ideas into the ongoing programming.

I realize the degree of responsibility that a Trustee holds. I also recognize the challenges the library and the board currently face due to the virus. I would consider it a privilege to serve as a Trustee and would work diligently to fulfill the responsibilities of this position.

Janis Elmore



This statement details my interest in becoming Library Board Trustee at the Park Forest Public Library within the Village of Park Forest. I have been in this position for almost two years and know I can continue to be a helpful and experienced member on the committee.

When the Library announced an open position on the Library Board, I jumped at the chance to apply because I have always wanted to do more for the community. During the past nine months the library has been closed to the public due to the pandemic. During this time, we have discussed and voted on several ideas for improvements for the library; including notions like safe and understandable ways for Park Forest and Olympia Fields patrons to have continued access to library materials. We also discussed and developed new methods that would allow computer and faxing capabilities to patrons while staying within the state-wide mandates.

I have been a resident of Park Forest since 1985 and has always been an active member of the community, as far back as working in Marshall Field’s back when it was still here in Park Forest. I obtained my Master’s Degree in Library Science at Dominican University which became a springboard for my library career. As my children went through their education here in District 163, I volunteered with the schools until I eventually became the librarian at Mohawk School, while also working part-time at the Park Forest Public Library.

When the call came to apply for the open position for Library Trustee, I felt it the perfect time for me to get involved. I believe my skills and experience would make me a perfect candidate. As your Library Board Trustee, I can continue to bring real life library experience to the table.

Cheryl Roop



I am Cheryl Roop, and I am running for re-election as CM201-U School Board Member from District 6. My husband and I are life-long residents of the South Suburbs. Our two sons have been provided a wonderful education at Crete Elementary, the former Sixth Grade Center, Crete-Monee Middle School, and Crete-Monee High School. It is my goal that these same positive opportunities and experiences remain for every current and future student of CM201-U.

I have been active in our community for many years with my sons’ schools and sports teams. My motto is, “Actions speak louder than words,” and I strive to live by this creed. As part of my greater personal and professional outreach in the South Suburbs, I am Executive Director of Jones Memorial Community Center in Chicago Heights and work closely with CHSD170. I am a current Board Member of the Bloom Township Food Pantry and a past president of the Rotary Club of Chicago Heights. Additionally, I am a Peer Mentor for the Illinois State Board of Education’s 21st Century Community Learning Center grant program. In the past four years, I have worked hard to add to my knowledge base with no agenda other than providing an outstanding education for all students.

I am running for School Board again because I truly want to finish the work that we have begun. When I first joined the School Board in 2017, it was obvious that there was much work to be done. As a Board, we put aside personal differences to concentrate on much needed changes. We hired a superintendent with a similar vision, created a strategic plan and equity statement with input from all communities, and are diligently working toward meeting the goals and directives of these plans.

I am ready to finish the work!

Candidate for District 227 School Board –
High Schools



Janice Preston

RICH District 227 is on the Road To Excellence... *Punch 143 for Janice Preston to continue our journey.*

With over thirty years of experience as a teacher, principal and consultant to under-performing schools, I bring an analytical lens in my role as vice president of our school board. As a consultant, I provide districts protocols for observing classrooms, analyzing

assessments, designing curriculum, and building capacity among teachers. My schools have demonstrated above average student growth on state assessments during each year of my consultancy. My experience has validated my belief that student growth can be accelerated when exemplary leadership is provided.

As a 26 year resident of Olympia Fields, I understand that the viability of a community is inextricably linked to the academic performance of its schools. Four years ago, I promised to work to move our district from one of subpar performance to one of excellence.

I began our journey by working to eliminate the hiring of part time superintendents and patronage administrators. I wrote the description that led to a nation-wide search for a superintendent, culminating in the hiring of an experienced and highly effective superintendent. As a result, we have:

- Established Fine Arts and STEM Academies
- Expanded Advanced Placement classes
- Established an International Baccalaureate Program
- Extended the school day
- Expanded career and technical course options
- Established dual enrollment programs with Loyola and Northern Universities
- A national award winning Robotics Program
- Received national recognition for the increased number of female students passing the Advanced Placement exams in Computer Science

Every election is important, but April 6 is crucial to the viability of our communities. We must elect knowledgeable board members who work in tandem for school improvement.

Punch 143 and vote for Janice Preston to continue our journey!

Candidate for District 227 School Board –
High Schools



Tiffany Taylor

As a mother of two sons, I have always felt the need to be involved in their educational careers. As is often said, “a parent is their children’s first teacher.” I have observed the need to support our youth both inside and outside of the schools. I began to give back by volunteering my time whenever possible, including coaching and mentoring. As an educational professional, I have had the opportunity to work with students, teachers, administrators and school board members, in the K-12 environment. This has afforded me a well-rounded experience working from all aspects involving schools and boards of education. As stakeholders, parents can expect an enthusiast who is committed to their children’s success, and someone who will work to support the teachers who have made the same commitment. Community members can expect a representative who will work to maintain fiscal transparency, and increase community involvement. Students can expect an advocate that will work to ensure they have a positive learning experience. I have received endorsements from State Representative Debbie Meyers-Martin, Mayor Sheila Chalmers-Currin of Matteson, Mayor James Ford of Country Club Hills, and Mayor Jon Vanderbilt of Park Forest. I am a Matteson Parks and Recreation Commissioner and I serve on the board of Directors for the Gloria J. Taylor Foundation. I have been recognized as a Southland Woman of Distinction, nominated for the Modern Governance 100 Community Boards, and I have been a member of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Joint Annual Conference planning committee for six years. My vision for the Rich Township School District is to build a community of learners who achieve excellence in all that they do. Rich Township High School will become an institution of pride for the communities of Rich Township.

**Candidate for District 515 School Board –
Prairie State College**



Dr. Nakia Hall

I am Dr. Nakia Hall and I am running for the Prairie State College (PSC) Board of Trustees. I am running for this office because I believe I can bring my passion for educational excellence, youth mentorship and effective governance to PSC leadership, while making sound, effective decisions that help to enhance the college, and student and staff experiences. As an educator, PSC graduate, mother of a graduate, and former PSC and

university instructor, I know firsthand the importance of having an exceptional community college.

The issues I would like to address during my board leadership include 1) increasing the declining student enrollment and retention, 2) increasing the college's revenue and making college affordable for all, and 3) increasing the college's appeal and connection with all communities it serves through partnerships, collaboration and engagement.

I believe I am the best candidate for this position because I am a reputable education advocate and community activist that has an extensive background in community involvement, educational leadership and board governance. As a member of the Crete-Monee 201U school board for 10 1/2 years, I served as President for four years. I left the school board to become the Illinois Association of School Boards Director over all school boards in the southland. My experiences have caused me to be extremely knowledgeable about academic board governance, parliamentary procedure, board relations, school board finance, personnel matters, student needs/programs, community relations, strategic planning, facilities/maintenance, and safety/security matters. Additionally, my history of working alongside community leaders, state legislators, and congresspersons make me the perfect candidate to leverage relationships that will bring the best resources to PSC. My degrees include an A.A., B.S. – Elementary Education, M.A. – Professional Counseling with School Counseling, and Ed.D. – Ethical Leadership.

I humbly ask for your vote on April 6th.

Email Nakia4PSC@gmail.com

Facebook @FriendsofDrNakiaHall

**Candidate for District 515 School Board –
Prairie State College**

Bishop Ronnie White

Our challenge is to highlight and elevate the value of Prairie State College as we deliver equitable education outcomes and a channel of talent. As a current trustee I want you to know that Prairie State College is our beacon of hope and full of opportunities. Prairie State College strives for excellence to provide the best education for our students.

We have lived through political unrest that has left us jarred and evaluating or questioning our beliefs we've held all our lives. Prairie State College is a saving grace for so many of our students who face systemic hurdles that make their efforts to attain post-high education more difficult. Our students have been challenged just as we have been challenged, but their lives are less established, their futures less certain. The responsibility is on us to find ways to meet their needs. I will continue to do that work.

In 2015 I was elected to the Prairie State College Board of Trustees and was elected by my colleagues to serve as Secretary until 2018 when I was elected to serve as Vice-chair and currently hold that position. During my tenure on the Board of Trustees, Prairie State College has received the Government Finance Officers Award each year 2015 through 2020; we've had a balanced budget yearly; there have been no tuition increases in four (4) years; there are numerous new programs, enhancements to programs, structural improvements, IT improvements, new faculty, Administrators, tenured faculty, and successful union contracts have been negotiated.

I am well-qualified to continue to serve on the Prairie State College Board of Trustees. The time is right to do what's right. I ask your support on April 6, 2021, to cast your vote to re-elect me, Ronald J. "Ronnie" White, Keep Bloom Strong!

Bishop Ronnie White, DMin PhD BCC BCMHC QMHP

International Conference of Police Chaplains

President-elect 2019-2021





Website: www.pfnpc.org



www.facebook.com/parkforestnpc

Thank You

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Your continued contributions are greatly appreciated.

Contact a board member for information regarding opportunities to make a contribution and/or volunteer your talent. Volunteers are needed.