



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan, President Kari K. Steele lead state in raising African American Flag for Black History Month



Elected officials, MWRD Commissioners and MWRD staff joined MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan and MWRD President Kari Steele for the raising of the African American flag on Feb. 4, 2020.

On Tuesday, February 4, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Vice President Barbara McGowan and President Kari K. Steele led the raising of the African American flag for the first time on MWRD's main office building to commemorate Black History Month. This event was a kickoff to a series of events this month to honor the amazing accomplishments of local African American history makers.

"This was a truly wonderful day and we are beyond thrilled with the enthusiasm everyone had on this historic occasion," said Vice President McGowan. "I am truly grateful for all of the support leading up to and during this event."

MWRD Commissioners and staff were joined by distinguished guests, including Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, Illinois Supreme Court Justice P. Scott Neville, Jr., Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle; *(continued)*

MWRD Raises AA Flag for Black History Month, *cont.*



Vice President Barbara McGowan stands proudly beneath and next to the African American flag.



MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan and President Kari Steele address the onlookers at the inaugural African American flag raising ceremony to celebrate Black History Month.



African American flag raised on the MWRD Main Office Building for the first time.

Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough; Alderman Stephanie Coleman (16th Ward); Alderman David Moore (17th Ward), Alderman Derrick Curtis (18th Ward); Alderman Jeanette Taylor (20th Ward); Alderman Michael Scott, Jr. (24th Ward); Alderman Walter Burnett (27th Ward) Alderman Chris Taliaferro (29th Ward); Alderman Emma Mitts (37th Ward); and Karl Brinson, President, Westside NAACP.

Historian Dr. Conrad Worrill discussed the history and symbolism of the flag, stating that “the shoulders of African American men and women who we stand on today we owe so much for their leadership.”

“I am proud of my heritage. We are raising the red, black and green Black heritage flag as an expression of our support for the Black community and commitment to diversity,” said President Steele.

Vice President McGowan and staff will continue to bring speakers throughout the month to offer overviews in advancing diversity.



Front row (L-R): Alderman Derrick Curtis (18th Ward); MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos; MWRD Commissioner Kim DuBuclet; MWRD President Kari K. Steele; Secretary of State Jesse White; MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan; MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore; Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough; Alderman Emma Mitts (37th Ward); and MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila. Back row (L-R): Illinois Supreme Court Justice P. Scott Neville, Jr.; Alderman Michael Scott, Jr. (24th Ward); Cook County Board Chairman Toni Preckwinkle; Alderman Walter Burnett (27th Ward); MWRD Commissioner Cam Davis; Alderman Jeanette Taylor (20th Ward); Alderman Chris Taliaferro (29th Ward); and Alderman David Moore (17th Ward).

- On Tues, Feb. 11 at noon, the MWRD will honor former U.S. Senator and State Comptroller Roland Burris, Secretary of State Jesse White and Attorney General Kwame Raoul.
- On Tues, Feb.18 at noon, the MWRD will celebrate the first African American MWRD Commissioners and Department heads, including President Thomas Fuller, Vice President McGowan, Commissioner John W., Rogers, Research & Development Director Cecil Lue-Hing, Human Resources Director Beverly K. Sanders, Information Technology Director Keith Smith, Chief of Police Clifton Thomas, and Director of Finance/Clerk Mary West. (*continued*)

MWRD Raises AA Flag for Black History Month, *cont.*

- On Tues., Feb. 25, Springfield resident Kathryn Harris will portray Harriet Tubman in a one woman show. Tubman guided more than 300 people from slavery to freedom after using the Underground Railroad to escape slavery herself in 1849.
- On Thurs., Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. a final tribute will be held to recognize the Montfort Point Marine Association, members of which were part of the first segregated unit of Marines during World War II. The Association is led by President Sharon Stokes-Parry.

All Black History Month events will be held at the MWRD's main office building, 100 E. Erie St., Chicago, Ill. For more information, visit mwrdd.org or call 312-751-4035.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.