

Illinois Department on Aging Announces 2023 Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame Inductees

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SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director Paula Basta today announced three new members of the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame, who will be honored during award ceremonies in their home communities this fall.

“Each of this year’s inductees represents a positive image of aging and has made meaningful contributions over the course of their lives, including in older age,” **said IDoA Director Paula Basta.** “I’m pleased to welcome these three individuals into the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame and to recognize their impressive accomplishments.”

The Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame was established by the state legislature to honor older adults’ accomplishments and contributions to their communities. Each year, up to four Illinoisans aged 65 or older are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in community service, education, arts or the labor force. This year, IDoA received a record-setting number of nominations, and after careful review by a panel of judges, the Department is recognizing three new inductees for 2023.

Hilda E. Frontany, 80, Chicago

Frontany is a longtime community activist whose family first lived in the Water Hotel in Chicago’s La Clark neighborhood when they arrived in Chicago from Puerto Rico. In the late 1960s and 1970s, she devoted her work to addressing the housing crisis that was displacing Latinos and low-income residents from Chicago’s Lakeview neighborhood. As a member of the Lakeview Citizens Council, Frontany provided a public voice for Latinos and helped support homeowners.

Over the years, Frontany has worked relentlessly to protect and advance the rights of immigrants and limited English-speaking communities, having participated in a lawsuit to bring bilingual elections to the city of Chicago. She also advocated for the appointment of Chicago’s first Latino police superintendent, who is credited with initiating the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy for community policing in 1993.

Currently, Frontany is Chair Emeritus of Rincon Family Services, originally one of the first Latino-focused substance use treatment centers. The non-profit organization now serving individuals and families in West Humboldt Park, Avondale, Belmont Cragin and Kankakee has named a building in Frontany’s honor and annually presents a Hilda Frontany Community of Care Award.

Dr. Peter Orris, 78, Chicago

Dr. Orris is a professor at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health and the former Chief of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago Hospital Health Sciences System (UI Health). He has more than four decades’ experience practicing occupational and environmental medicine in the Chicago area.

Previously, Dr. Orris has served as the Midwest Regional Medical Officer for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)/Centers for Disease Control (CDC); Medical Director of the Mount Sinai Hospital and Northwest Community Hospital Occupational Medicine Programs; and as a general internal medicine attending physician at Cook County Hospital for 35 years, where he cared for patients and taught residents in emergency, inpatient, and outpatient clinic settings.

He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and besides UIC, he holds professorships on the faculties of the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and Rush University Medical College in preventive and internal medicine.

Dr. Orris has also served as adviser to the World Health Organization (WHO); local, state, and federal governments; environmental organizations; labor unions; and corporations. He has edited and authored numerous articles, book chapters, and governmental reports in the field of occupational and environmental medicine, environmental toxicology, and epidemiology.

Prior to attending medical school, he assisted with organizing the Youth Marches for Integrated Schools in Washington, D.C., and attended demonstrations in support of voting and workers' rights.

Shirley Paceley, 72, Decatur

Paceley is a published author, international trainer, consultant, and activist with nearly 50 years of experience working with people with disabilities. She is a founding member of the National Coalition to End Violence Against People with Disabilities and served on the Board of Directors for End Violence Against Women International. Paceley has also served as director of Blue Tower Training, where she developed the [WE CAN Stop Abuse curriculum](#) for people with developmental disabilities.

From 2006 until 2018, Paceley participated in the Illinois Imagines Project, a statewide initiative to improve services to women with disabilities who are survivors of sexual violence. The project was directed by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois rape crisis centers, disability service agencies and self-advocates. Project collaborators developed a variety of educational materials for use by rape crisis centers, disability service agencies and self-advocates in Illinois and nationwide.

Paceley has also served on the Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council Responding to Survivors with Disabilities Committee, which developed model statewide protocols for law enforcement and prosecutors to interact with crime victims with disabilities. She has conducted trainings in more than 30 states related to

prevention, intervention and the criminal justice system response to people with disabilities who experience sexual and domestic violence.

These newest inductees bring total membership in the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame to 137.

About IDoA: IDoA serves and advocates for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life. For information about the Department's programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.