



JB Pritzker, Governor  
Paula A. Basta, M.Div., Director

One Natural Resources Way, Suite 100, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
Phone: 800-252-8966 • 888-206-1327 (TTY) • Fax: 217-785-4477

## PRESS RELEASE

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**CONTACT:**  
Mike Dropka 312-909-9046  
[Michael.Dropka@illinois.gov](mailto:Michael.Dropka@illinois.gov)

### **IL Department on Aging Recognizes Cook County Resident; Organization *Presents 2020 Senior Hall of Fame; Governor's Engaging Aging***

**Chicago** – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is proud to announce Morton Grove resident Vivian Mitchel as its 2020 Senior Hall of Fame inductee for her dedication to the workforce, and the Cook County Sheriff's Office as its 2020 Governor's Engaging Aging awardee for their commitment to providing services for our older Illinoisans. IDoA Director Paula Basta took time to recognize them at a recent one-day virtual symposium focused on COVID-19, its impact on older adults, and the Aging Network - attended by over 600 individuals.

Specifically, Vivian Mitchel, 84, of Morton Grove, is the 2020 inductee for the Labor Force Category. Vivian has been an energetic worker and supportive community builder for the entirety of her adult life. Serving in various professional roles, she spent many years working at Oakton Community College, where she founded the Emeritus Program; an umbrella for multiple senior programs and services with the motto "Older people are healthier when they have a purpose". Later in her career, Vivian worked tirelessly at the North Shore Senior Center planning and executing memorable day trips, play acting classes, entertainment luncheons, and the Super Senior Day. Her commitment to value and excellence helped ensure that her programs and activities were enjoyable, meaningful, and successfully promoted fellowship among those individuals most in need.

The Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame was created by the Illinois General Assembly in 1994 to honor Illinois residents ages 65 and older for their personal achievements in four separate categories. Since then, 125 people have been inducted into the Hall of Fame including the 2020 inductees. Mitchel is one of four inductees for 2020. She represents the Labor Force category. The other three are: Community Service, Education, and Graphics and Performing Arts.

The Cook County Sheriff's Office was nominated by AgeOptions. When the pandemic began in the middle of March, AgeOptions was able to solicit the support of the Cook County Sheriff's Office to help them deliver shelf-stable, frozen and hot meals to their clients. Seniors were getting hit especially hard by the virus, shutdowns, shelter-in-place orders, and increased demand for home delivered meals. Officers would fan out all over Suburban Cook County to deliver meals; from Hanover Park to Ford Heights. At first older adults were surprised to see the officers, but they soon came to expect and rely on their new temporary home delivered meals drivers. Special thanks to Lieutenant Yolanda Collins-Watson, Patrick Flannery, and Katie Walsh who coordinated the work with the Cook County Sheriff's Office. These individuals were a virtual control tower operation, connecting officers with home delivered meal routes across 130 communities!

The recipients of the Governor's Engaging Aging Award are nominated by the 13 Area Agencies on Aging. The award recognizes groups and organizations who lead by example and have gone above and beyond to make a positive impact in the lives of our older Illinoisans this past year.

**--more--**

Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.  
[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

“It is a true honor to recognize Vivian and the Cook County Sheriff’s Office for their service to their community,” said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. “They are dedicated individuals whose contributions reflect the agency’s principles of respecting yesterday, supporting today, and hoping for tomorrow. We thank them for their commitment and generosity.”

Current and previous award winners can be viewed [on our website](#). Created in 1973, IDoA strives for efficient and effective access to services that prevent premature nursing facility placement and maximizes the state’s 2.7 million older adults’ ability to remain as independent as possible within their community. For more information about programs and services to assist older adults in Illinois, their families and caregivers, log on to the department website at: [www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging) or contact the **Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 888-206-1327)** or by email [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov).

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