



Illinois Ethics Matters

April 19, 2021

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Honesty, Integrity, Service

A newsletter from the Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies
of the Illinois Governor

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Recent News

- The OEIG is pleased to announce the hiring of **Mary Lou Lydon** as an Administrative Assistant in its Complaints & Compliance unit.
- OEIG staff recently presented at the Executive Ethics Commission's ethics officer conference on March 23 and 24. The OEIG thanks the EEC for the invitation to present.
- The Hiring & Employment Monitoring Division released its quarterly report for the first quarter of 2021. The report is available [here](#).

Recently Released OEIG Investigations

Misconduct with Renovation of Historic Statue

In OEIG Case #16-01491, the OEIG investigated allegations related to the renovation of the Eternal Indian Statue, also known as the Blackhawk Statue (Statue). The Statue is an almost 50-foot tall, 100-ton cement statue located in Lowden State Park that was dedicated in 1911 as a tribute to Native Americans. The OEIG received a complaint that then-Executive Director and then-Treasurer of the Illinois Conservation Foundation (Conservation Foundation) had committed \$100,000 in privately donated Conservation Foundation funds as collateral for a line of credit extended to a vendor, Conservation of Sculpture and Objects Studio, Inc. (CSOS), and that CSOS had received nearly all of the \$100,000, but did not repay the loan in full.

The investigation revealed that more than \$86,000 of Conservation Foundation funds paid to CSOS remained unaccounted for. In addition, the Executive Director had assigned an interest in Conservation Foundation funds to secure the CSOS line of credit without the approval of the Conservation Foundation Board, as required, and falsely certified that the action was authorized by the Board. Lastly, the OEIG found that the Treasurer committed misfeasance by signing bank documents that were not accurate.

The investigative report, [In re: Eric Schmidt, Dr. Robert Russell, and Conservation of Sculpture and Objects Studio, Inc. \(OEIG Case #16-01491\)](#), is available on the OEIG website.

Improper Hiring Practices and Gift Ban

In OEIG Case #19-01088, the OEIG initially investigated a complaint that a Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) employee improperly favored Hispanic-owned businesses that participated or sought to participate in CTA's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. During the investigation, additional allegations arose that resulted in findings against the employee.

The OEIG concluded that the employee improperly attempted to influence the hiring process for a position when he requested that a friend be interviewed and failed to disclose to CTA's human resources staff the nature of their relationship. The OEIG also found that the employee had accepted a golf outing ticket, worth \$400, from a vendor in violation of the Gift Ban provision of the Ethics Act and the CTA Ethics Ordinance.

In response to the report, CTA provided additional training to the employee on hiring procedures and directed him to return the value of the improper gift to the vendor. The report, [In re: JuanPablo Prieto \(OEIG Case #19-01088\)](#), is available on the OEIG website.