

## IT'S TIME TO VOTE

The SERS Retirement Act requires an active member and a retiree to serve on the Board of Trustees of the State Employees' Retirement System. An election for these positions is held every five years. In order to run for Trustee, members had to have at least eight years of service credit with SERS, and collected 400 signatures from contributing members. The candidates have provided short biographies that are included in this SERS-O-GRAM. They are listed in the order they appear on the ballot.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a ballot and a return postage paid envelope. Read the instructions on the ballot carefully and make your selection. In order for your ballot to count, it must be clearly marked and returned in the envelope provided by May 30. Ballots received after May 30 will be disqualified. We encourage your participation.

After the election results are tabulated and certified, they will be published in the August edition of the SERS-O-GRAM. If you have questions about the election, contact us in Springfield (217-785-7017) or Chicago (312-814-5853).

### Maureen Farmer Zimmerman

I am the Regional Administrator for the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Community Health & Prevention. I served 15 years at the Department of Public Health (IDPH), holding several leadership positions, including Acting Chief of the Division of Oral Health. I received the IDPH Exceptional Achievement Award for outstanding success in organizing and implementing statewide programs.

I have a Masters degree in Human Resources Development from the University of Illinois, and also graduated from Springfield College in Illinois & Southern Illinois University. I was also a Fellow of the Public Health Leadership Institute at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

I have served on the Boards of the Illinois Public Health Association and the Illinois Maternal & Child Health Coalition.

I volunteer at St. Agnes church and school, and at several Springfield community-based organizations. I enjoy music, reading, and spending time with family and friends. My husband Rich and I have two children, Clare and John.

I understand the importance of developing and maintaining a vital retirement system. I'm committed to advocating for employees on sensitive issues facing SERS. I will represent employee interests in enhancing retirement benefits and work to improve employee understanding of SERS. I will also push for continued improvements to benefits and formulas.

### Caryl Wadley-Foy

I have served on the SERS Board of Trustees since 1996. During my term, I have been a strong supporter of increased pension benefits, enhanced member services, improved funding,

fairness in disability benefit appeals, and sound investment policies. My future goals as a Trustee include continuing to enhance benefits, services and funding.

I am 45-years-old and live in Bradley, Illinois. I am married, have one son and a granddaughter. I have worked for the Department of Human Services for 25 years as an Office Coordinator at the Shapiro Center in Kankakee.

I am active in many organizations. I am currently the Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 29, and the Secretary of AFSCME Illinois Council 31; a delegate of the Kankakee Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO (former Secretary-Treasurer); and Co-chair of the Kankakee County Labor Management Association.

I serve as a Trustee for the Village of Bradley; Board of Directors for KFL Community Services, Inc.; Board of Directors of the Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau; a contributing member of the Kankakee County Humane Society, Kankakee County Animal Foundation, and various other charitable and service organizations.

### Carl Norman

I am 57-years-old and live in Springfield. I have been married for 32 years and have two sons and a daughter, none of which live at home but one is still in college. I graduated from DeVry Technical Institute of Technology in Chicago in 1964 and have a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Illinois in Springfield with an emphasis on Business Management.

I started my State career 25 years ago with the Department of Public Aid, Bureau of Information Systems. Currently, I am a Senior Public Service Administrator, working as the Computer Room manager.

As the senior partner of an investment club, my primary interests are researching companies and monitoring the economy. In my leisure time I attend Classic Car shows and participate in Corvette car shows and club activities.

Presently, the Illinois retirement benefits for state employees rank in the middle of the 50 states. For a state of our size and economy, our pension benefits should be within the upper 25% of the 50 states.

My goal as a SERS Trustee will be to maintain a strong retirement fund, while striving to increase the pension formula and assuring that SERS is fully-funded.

## **Pamela Grace Thull**

I would like to play an active role in ensuring better retirement benefits for all employees and have decided to run for the SERS Board of Trustees.

Over the last few months, I've seen my mother struggle with a decision to retire from the Department of Corrections and know a secure financial future, along with my father's future retirement from the Department of Human Services, are the key factors in my decision.

Born and raised in Vandalia, I graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a degree in Accounting, and from the University of Illinois at Springfield with an MBA.

I started my State career in 1992 as an Accountant Trainee with the Department of Employment Security. I then moved to the Environmental Protection Agency where I currently work as a Budget Officer.

I've had the opportunity to participate in the last two AFSCME master contract negotiations where retirement benefits were a key issue.

My educational background and work experience will serve me well if I'm chosen to work on the Board. I would appreciate your support, and if elected, would be available to listen to questions and concerns about retirement benefits from all State employees.

## **Janine M. Toman**

I'm 41 years old, and a life-long resident of Illinois, now residing in Springfield.

I currently work as an Auditor for the Department of Public Aid. My career began with the Chicago Park District. I started State service over 16 years ago as an intern for the Secretary of State. My past positions include fiscal officer, EAP, and confidential assistant to the Director of Personnel.

The highlights of my Driver Service Department employment were managing the Champaign driver's license facility, and traveling the State giving pedestrian safety speeches as 'Seemore the Safety Clown.' I'm also a past statewide budget and personnel liaison for Child Protection, DCFS.

I'm an active United Professionals of Illinois member, and held past memberships in General Services Employees Union and Illinois State Employees Association. My community and professional organizations currently include: Village of Southern View Trustee; Springfield YWCA Board and YMCA member; Old State Capitol Foundation Board; Professional Women's Council Board; charter member of the Lincoln in Excellence Public Service Series; Women's Political Caucus; Illinois Women in Government; Illinois Association of Minorities in Government; AAUW; Junior League; and life member of the U of I Alumni Association.

I hold a Bachelor of Science degree from U of I at Champaign/Urbana, and a Masters in Public Administration from U of I at Springfield (thesis pending).

I want to make sure the State's funding formula requirement guarantees contributions and continues to grow. I want to see benefits increase, not decrease, and that SERS membership continues to be served efficiently and professionally.

I love all sports, especially golf, scuba diving and white-water rafting. I would appreciate your support and vote to the SERS Board of Trustees!

## **Harish G. Bhatt**

Dear friends, thank you all very much for nominating me for the Board of Trustees for the State Employees' Retirement System. My name is the last in the list of candidates on the ballot. Please remember to vote for the last person on the ballot—Harish Bhatt.

I am married with one child. I hold a Masters degree in Business Administration & Management with coursework in Accounting, Economics and Statistics. I have been working for the State for over 20 years, the last 13 with the Department of Employment Security as a U. I. Tax Auditor/Revenue Analyst.

I have been actively involved with many charitable and social organizations, and undertaken several projects to help the local community. I donated bone marrow last summer to save the life of a two-year-old child, and have been organizing bone marrow drives nationwide to help save more lives.

I'm a regular blood and platelet donor, having donated almost seven gallons of blood. Honorary Chairman, March of Dimes WalkAmerica in 1986 & 1987; Member, Board of Directors, March of Dimes, Capitol Chapter, 1986 & '87; as a participant in the March of Dimes Walk-a-Thon, I raised thousands of dollars for this good cause. I'm also a Friend-in-Deed volunteer.

As the president of the India Association of Greater Springfield (IAGS) in 1998, I raised \$1,000 for the St. John's Breadline in Springfield. Past Secretary and Treasurer of IAGS. Last year, as Community Services Coordinator for IAGS, I organized a blood drive, bone marrow drives, Walk-a-thon, etc. This year helped raise about \$30,000 for earthquake victims.

My main goal as a SERS trustee will be to protect and help grow our hard-earned pensions, while working with State employees, Unions, and members of the Legislature to improve your retirement benefits and make it one of the best in the country.

Please vote for Harish Bhatt, I think you will be glad that you did. Thank you all very much for your continued support.