



JUDY BAAR TOPINKA

Treasurer

Judy Baar Topinka (Republican) was elected State Treasurer in November 1994, becoming the first woman in Illinois history to hold this post and the first Republican to be elected Treasurer in 32 years. Topinka made history again in November 1998 and in 2002 when she won second and third terms as Treasurer, becoming the first woman to be re-elected to a statewide office and the first State Treasurer to win three consecutive terms.

As Treasurer, Topinka has taken a business-oriented approach to the office — streamlining banking, collection and investment processes, taking advantage of the latest technology, and racking up record investment earnings for the state. She promotes maximizing the state's resources by making the state's money work harder for its citizens. The local government investment pool has consistently earned an AAAm rating from Standard & Poor's, its highest rating. She also has developed low-interest loan programs that encourage community and job development, promote safe and affordable day care and provide added financial support to many vital social service programs.

Financial education efforts have expanded significantly during Topinka's tenure. Through her office's Financial Education Division, money management programs are now available for children, high school students, young adults, adults in transition and senior citizens. Under Topinka's leadership, the office's Bank at School program for grade-school children has expanded to serve more than 300,000 students statewide through a partnership with more than 700 schools and 400 financial institutions. Her innovative college savings program, Bright Start, is among the fastest growing college savings programs in the country.

As administrator of the state's Unclaimed Property program, Topinka has returned a record amount of unclaimed property to its rightful owners and raised public awareness about the program. The program helps reunite owners with their unclaimed property, such as bank accounts, proceeds from wills and estates, contents of abandoned safe deposit boxes and utility deposit checks.

Born in Riverside on Jan. 16, 1944, Topinka graduated from Ferry Hall School in Lake Forest in 1962, and earned her B.S. degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in 1966. Topinka established herself as an accomplished journalist in the Cook County suburbs, including 11 years as a reporter and editor for several award-winning community newspapers. She also served as a public affairs executive with the American Medical Association and as a public relations advisor to area political candidates and organizations.

Topinka began her political career as a state representative from Chicago's western suburbs in 1980. Serving two terms in the Illinois House of Representatives positioned her for a successful bid for the Illinois Senate in 1984, where she served for a decade before becoming State Treasurer.

In 2002, Topinka made history again when she was elected to a two-year term as chair of the Illinois State Republican Party — the first woman to lead a major party in Illinois.

Topinka continues to reside in her hometown of Riverside. Her son, Joseph, is a major in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps.

Web site: www.state.il.us/treas