



Fourth District Appellate Justice Lisa Holder White has been appointed to the Illinois Supreme Court. **ILLINOIS APPELLATE COURT**

History made on Illinois' top court

Holder White replacing Garman, becomes 1st Black woman on bench

By Clare Spaulding
Chicago Tribune

A month after the first Black female justice was confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court, similar history is being made on Illinois' highest court.

Fourth District Appellate Justice Lisa Holder White was named Tuesday to replace Justice Rita Garman on the Illinois Supreme Court, becoming its first Black female justice.

Garman, 78, on Monday announced she's retiring July 7, and Holder White will take her place on the bench the next day, the court said.

Firsts are nothing new for the 54-year-old jurist, who was both the first Black judge in central Illinois' 6th Judicial Circuit and the state's 4th District Appellate Court in Springfield.

"In the past many Blacks have not had the opportunities that I've had, the opportunity to get my education, to get a law degree, to work as an attorney, to serve as a judge," Holder White, who was born and raised in Decatur, said in an interview.

"I'm grateful. And this is important not just for the Black community, but for the community as a whole. It shows the importance and value of coming together and helping each other."

Holder White, like Garman, is a Republican, so the court will maintain a 4-3 Democratic majority. Both women have been trailblazers in the Illinois judiciary.

Holder White's appointment follows the Senate confirmation April 7 of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson as the first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Holder White said as a justice she "didn't really take a position" on Jackson's nomination to the high court but noted it was "historic" and an "exciting time for the country to see the progress made."

After earning her law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in Urbana-Cham-

Turn to Justice, Page 6

WAR IN UKRAINE

Russia batters vital port

Ukraine's top envoy suggests Kyiv may pursue wider goals

By Elena Becatoros and Jon Gambrell
Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — Russia pummeled the vital port of Odesa, Ukrainian officials said Tuesday, in an apparent effort to disrupt supply lines and Western weapons shipments as Ukraine's foreign minister appeared to

suggest the country could expand its war aims.

With the war in its 11th week and Kyiv bogging down Russian forces and even staging a counteroffensive, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba seemed to indicate that the country could go merely beyond pushing Russia back to areas it or its allies held on the day of the Feb. 24 invasion.

The idea reflected Ukraine's ability to stymie a larger, better-armed Russian military, which has surprised many who had anticipated a much quicker end to the conflict.

One of the most dramatic examples of Ukraine's ability to prevent easy victories is in Mariupol, where Ukrainian fighters remained holed up at a

steel plant, denying Russia's full control of the city. The regiment defending the plant said Russian warplanes continued bombarding it.

In recent days, the United Nations and Red Cross organized a rescue of what some officials said were the last civilians trapped at the plant. But two officials said Tuesday that about 100 civilians were believed to still

Turn to Ukraine, Page 14



Ron and Liddy Bartelstein take in the bird sanctuary Tuesday near Montrose Beach in Chicago. **STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

Lights out, eyes open

The annual bird migration has begun; birding pros offer hope and advice

By Darcel Rockett
Chicago Tribune

Peggy Stenger casually admits to having a freezer of dead birds.

The Cleveland native, who lives in the South Loop and works in the Loop, collects the creatures when she sees them on the ground, often dead or injured from midflight collisions with buildings in her neighborhood.

Stenger puts the dead birds in Ziploc bags and labels them with the date, time and location they were found, to later be dropped off at the Field Museum for further research and documentation. The live ones are carefully placed in brown paper bags and sent off to a rehabilitation center.

"I've always loved birds," said Stenger, a volunteer with the Chicago Bird Colli-



A black-throated green warbler at the bird sanctuary near Montrose Beach.

sion Monitors. "When I was a child, our dentist gave us bird cards when we were good, which I always thought was odd, but I just learned to love birds. I rescued a pigeon more than 10 years ago and I took it someplace. And the people there said, 'There's a group that goes around and rescues the birds that hit the buildings.' I was like, 'I want to do that.'"

This week, conservationists have been busier than usual in their hunt for dead and injured birds as millions of birds flew across Chicagoland in what experts said was one of the biggest migration movements of the season. More than 8,700,000 birds crossed Cook County May 9 to May 10, according to the migration dashboard that allows residents to see how many birds are migrat-

Turn to Birds, Page 6



Aleksey Ruderman near his home in Milwaukee on April 25. **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Former detainees file suit over unpaid work at jail

McHenry County violated trafficking law, immigrants allege

By Robert McCoppin
Chicago Tribune

Aleksey Ruderman swept and mopped the floors of McHenry County jail, wiped tables, and cleaned the showers and the toilets — all against his will and without being paid a dime, he says.

Ruderman, a Jewish immigrant from Belarus, was held at the jail on civil immigration charges from 2016 to 2019. He was detained after serving five years in prison in a fatal drunken driving case. He said he deeply regretted the incident and since has changed his life.

While facing possible deportation, he said, he was forced to help clean the jail on the Jewish holiday Rosh Hashana, in violation of his religious beliefs.

"It was terrible what happened," Ruderman said about his criminal case. "I feel terrible about that. ... But now I'm talking about a completely different matter. I don't think it's right to make someone do something a person doesn't want to do. It's not about myself, this is about people who were wrongfully treated before they got deported, who don't speak English, who don't know about how the laws work in this country. This is wrong."

Now Ruderman is part of a

Turn to Lawsuit, Page 8



Lawsuit

from Page 1

lawsuit accusing jail officials of forcing immigrant detainees to do labor against their will and paying them nothing.

Sheriff's Chief James Popovits said deputies didn't force the detainees to do anything; they worked of their own will.

"We don't have any forced labor," he said. "It's all their choice."

The federal suit is part of a wave of litigation nationwide claiming that immigrant detainees were made to work in violation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which prohibits labor compelled by force or physical restraint.

Previously, many of the suits were filed against private contractors such as CoreCivic and GEO Group, in some cases claiming unjust enrichment or violations of minimum wage. The suits have had mixed results.

In this case, the complaint is lodged against the county and Sheriff Bill Prim. State law ended county detentions of immigrants in February. But the suit seeks more than \$5 million in damages, as well as class-action status, to represent all former immigrant detainees held in the jail in the past 10 years.

Labor behind bars is common in the United States. The 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, allows both as punishment for crime.

The county jail does have jobs that paid inmates and detainees \$3 a day, including in the kitchen and laundry, and on road crews, officials said.

Chief of Corrections Michael Clesceri also wrote in an email:

"All inmates and detainees are responsible for doing their part to keep their cells and dayroom areas clean. The common dayroom cleanups are rotated daily by cells. Inmates and detainees are not paid for this function however. It is spelled out in the inmate handbook under housing unit rules and regulations. These are not considered jobs, rather



Elena Melamed with her husband, Aleksey Ruderman, near their home in Milwaukee on April 25. **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

a shared responsibility by all inmates/detainees to maintain a safe and healthy clean living environment."

The Illinois Department of Corrections reported that roughly 25,000 of its inmates get paid for work, making on average about \$200 a year. They work in food service or learn skills such as welding for an average of \$1.30 an hour. Almost two-thirds of people incarcerated in federal prisons had jobs there as of a 2014 survey, making from 23.5 cents to \$1.15 an hour.

Inmates who participate in jobs programs have fewer repeat offenses and are more likely to get jobs after their release, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and federal work programs have waiting lists for participation.

Critics have equated some prison work programs to

modern-day slavery, and have called instead for better real-world job training and rehabilitation programs. They have particularly derided privately run prisons that profit off inmate labor.

But the 13th Amendment exception applies to those convicted of crimes. That's why the recent spate of lawsuits alleging forced labor has focused instead on immigrant detainees, who generally are accused of civil violations, not crimes, and are awaiting a court ruling on whether they could stay in the United States legally or would face deportation.

Since 2003, McHenry County had a contract to hold detainees for what is now U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE. The federal government paid \$95 per day per detainee, with an average of 240 inmates a day from

2016 to 2021, which generated more than \$41 million, according to the suit.

Despite calls from protesters to end the practice of incarcerating immigrants, the county board voted in 2021 to continue the practice, arguing that it generated revenue and kept detainees closer to home than if they were held out of state.

But state lawmakers passed the Illinois Way Forward Act, which prohibited such contracts. Both McHenry and Kankakee County jails stopped holding detainees by February, though McHenry is appealing the issue in court. ICE released some of the detainees, and transferred the rest to detention facilities in other states.

Six detainees are named as plaintiffs in the suit. Some have been released, some have returned to the countries they left and at least one, Ruderman, has won a court ruling allowing him to stay in the country.

Ruderman came to the United States in 2001 at age 19, under the Lautenberg Amendment, which made it easier for some people in former parts of the Soviet Union to emigrate. Ruderman, the son of a political activist in Belarus, said he was trying to get away from

antisemitic persecution by neo-Nazi and pro-Russian forces in his country.

In 2008, Ruderman was charged in Wisconsin with driving drunk and striking and killing a 40-year-old woman as she walked along a road at 2 a.m. He pleaded guilty to a reduced charge, but had a prior driving under the influence case and was sentenced to five years in prison.

Ruderman testified of his remorse for what happened, and that he was haunted by nightmares about what happened. A rabbi testified that Ruderman has changed his life and strives to be a better person.

But the U.S. Department of Homeland Security detained Ruderman and initiated removal proceedings against him, and he spent several years in civil detention. Last year, an immigration judge ruled that Ruderman was eligible to stay on humanitarian grounds and to keep his family together.

Now, Ruderman is living in Milwaukee with his wife and stepchildren, while the federal government appeals the decision. Like many detainees, Ruderman said, he just wants to work and stay in the country with his family.

While in jail, he said, if

detainees refused to work, guards threatened to report them as being noncompliant, which could hurt their immigration cases, he said.

McHenry County correctional officers "recruit" inmates for its inmate worker program in the kitchen, laundry room and custodial services, the sheriff's website states. The jail also has a road crew program in which inmates pick up trash or do road maintenance. "The Worker Program is a means of positive and productive interaction for the inmates and can help them with job opportunities upon release," the sheriff's website states.

One of the plaintiffs' attorneys, Raphael Janove, said that some detainees were paid a nominal fee to work in the kitchen, but the lawsuit deals with only those who were forced to work without pay.

Regardless of the circumstances of each detainee's case, Janove said, forced labor is inhumane.

"There's a real human cost," Janove said. "The law's pretty clear. State actors cannot essentially profit off the uncompensated labor of their civil detainees."

rmmcoppin@chicago.tribune.com

HAVE INTIMACY
AGAIN!



FREE CONSULTATION
and free blood flow evaluation \$0

Our 80%* success rate means

you can live **LIFE TO THE FULLEST** again
and improve your intimate relationships.

*Based on National Results

Treat your erectile dysfunction today.

CALL NOW! 872-231-8181

908 North Elm St #205,
Hinsdale, IL 60521



PEAK PERFORMANCE FOR MEN
Visit us at Peakperformanceformen.com

Crestwood sewer project expected to relieve flooding woes for hundreds

By Mike Nolan
Daily Southtown

At least three times each year, it rains hard enough that dozens of Crestwood residents living near 135th Street and Central Avenue experience flooding, according to acting village Mayor Ken Klein.

A \$7.6 million project kicked off Tuesday by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District is expected to make that flooding a thing of the past, Klein said following a ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony.

The work is expected to be completed by fall 2023, and includes installing a 6-foot diameter storm sewer under 135th Street, from Central to the nearby Crestwood Drainage Ditch to the east, and improving the ability of that ditch to handle a greater flow of water, according to the district.

Stormwater drainage culverts to the north, under Cal-Sag Road, will also be improved.

The start of work in the coming weeks follows eight years of planning, engineering and analysis, according to MWRD.

"They're just thrilled for it," Klein said of residents.

Klein was named acting mayor last year after Lou Presta stepped down from the job before pleading guilty to federal bribery charges and being sentenced last month to a year in prison. Klein, a village trustee and Presta's son-in-law, will be eligible to run for a full term as mayor in spring

2023.

With the increasing prevalence of significant downpours, flooding has become of greater concern in the 135th/Central area, where some 200 homes are affected, he said following Tuesday's ceremony.

Klein said Tinley Creek, the waterway to the immediate west of that area, can't handle the volume of water produced by those storms.

Many years ago, under former Crestwood Mayor Chester Stranczek, a dike had been erected to try to divert the flow of stormwater from the creek, but the new sewer should be a permanent solution to the problem, Klein said.

The new sewer line will run under 135th from just east of Central to connect with the Crestwood Drainage Ditch, also referred to as the Laramie Ditch, which runs north and south to the west of Cicero Avenue.

Like Tinley Creek, it empties into the Calumet Sag Channel to the north, and some of the work MWRD will do includes clearing overgrown vegetation and stabilizing the Crestwood Creek's banks to improve the flow of water, according to the district.

The project is expected to result in 82 homes and businesses being removed from the flood plain, which would relieve those property owners of the requirement they carry flood insurance, Klein said.

In conjunction with the sewer work, Crestwood will

widen 135th Street to add a center turn lane, and install sidewalks along the north side of 135th, particularly along the stretch in front of the Nathan Hale schools, he said.

While there are sidewalks on the south side of 135th Street, they're spotty on the north side, and a concern has been the safety of children walking to and from the schools, Klein said.

"We've always wanted sidewalks on 135th," he said. Klein said he did not know offhand the cost of the widening and sidewalk work, but that Crestwood has received grant money to offset some of the cost.

Installing the new storm sewer will involve crossing over school property. Cook County Elementary District 130, which operates the schools, has agreed to easements to allow the construction work as well as rebuilding of a junction structure on school property, where the new sewer line will connect with the drainage ditch.

District 130 Board President William Werner said Tuesday he didn't anticipate the construction would interfere with school activities. Werner said much of the work might take place during the summer.

"That is what they're shooting for," he said.

Werner said the project "is a win-win for everybody," noting the flood control benefits and the new sidewalks for the school.

mnolan@tribpub.com