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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ILLINOIS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FISCAL YEAR 2002

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Serving the



Public



with



Fairness

Working



Together

with



Pride



ILLINOIS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



Honorable George H. Ryan  
Members of the General Assembly  
Citizens of Illinois

The Illinois Human Rights Commission hereby submits to you its Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2002.

During this year, more than ever before, the members and staff of the Human Rights Commission worked to streamline delivery of services to the public and, therefore, facilitate the fair and impartial hearing of cases involving those who may have suffered discrimination or were accused of discrimination. The guidance administered by the executive director and her extremely competent staff was invaluable in providing a swift and neutral forum.

We give credit and thanks to the people of Illinois who continue to believe that the Human Rights Commission is a fair and professional platform for the resolution of disputes involving inequity and discrimination.

We resolve to continue serving the public with fairness and working together with pride for the good of Illinois.

<i>Rose M. Jennings, Chairman</i>	<i>Sakharat Hussain, M.D.</i>	<i>Arabel Alva Rosales</i>
<i>Era Belka</i>	<i>Yvette Kanter</i>	<i>Daniel C. Sprehe</i>
<i>Dominic DiFrisco</i>	<i>Spencer Leak, Sr.</i>	<i>Isiah Thomas</i>
<i>Marylee V. Freeman</i>	<i>Girrena M. LeBlanc</i>	
<i>Mary Jeanne Hallstrom</i>	<i>James Maloof</i>	

Serving  
the  
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Fairness

# Executive Summary

During fiscal year 2002, great strides were taken to ensure that the citizens of Illinois who came before the Human Rights Commission were served swiftly and with fairness. This was accomplished due to the strength, determination, and hard work of the members of the Human Rights Commission and their dedicated legal and support staff.

Most important, deliveries of services to the public were streamlined and improved during a year of severe fiscal austerity. The entire Commission worked diligently, as a team, to improve processes and achieve hard won stability.

A housing discrimination program was initiated in conjunction with the state Department of Human Rights to process fair housing complaints for the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Fiscal and audit weaknesses were identified; corrective measures were refined and the processes for handling expenditures, reimbursements, and personnel matters were brought into compliance with state guidelines as functions were moved to the Springfield office. Work is underway on long range strategic planning and annual management plans.

An overhaul of office technology was initiated and the office case management system is being refined and upgraded. Administrative procedures for recording employee use of benefit time were streamlined and the Commission premises brought into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act regulations.

Training for judges and support staff was enhanced. Commissioners underwent training regarding internal processes, travel and expenditure regulations, Open Meetings Act requirements, audit procedures, and federal housing regulations.

It has been a year of exceptional accomplishment. I am proud to be a part of this conscientious and devoted group of public servants.

*Katherine A. Parker*  
*Executive Director*

# The Illinois Human Rights Act

The Illinois Human Rights Act forbids discrimination based on sex, age, race, color, religion, arrest record, marital status, handicap, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, unfavorable military discharge, retaliation, and sexual harassment. The Act forbids discrimination in employment, real estate transactions, higher education, public accommodation, and access to financial credit.

The Act is the most comprehensive civil rights legislation in Illinois history. It authorizes a two-part enforcement procedure: 1) the Department of Human Rights, which investigate charges, and 2) the Human Rights Commission, which adjudicates complaints of unlawful discrimination.

# The Illinois Human Rights Commission

The Illinois Human Rights Commission is dedicated to promoting freedom from unlawful discrimination as defined by the Illinois Human Rights Act. The Commission was created December 6, 1979 with the passage of the Act by the General Assembly and its signature into law by Governor James R. Thompson. Its mission is to provide a neutral forum for resolving complaints of discrimination filed under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

The Commission's primary responsibility is to make impartial determinations of whether there has been unlawful discrimination as defined by the Act. Additionally, the Commission is charged with furnishing information to the public about the Act and the Commission.

To fulfill its mission, the Commissioners and their staff strive to provide professional, competent, and considerate service to everyone who seeks information or who has a case before the Commission.

# Working Together

## *The Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Illinois Human Rights Commission*

The Department of Human Rights investigates claims of unlawful discrimination brought under the Act. The Human Rights Commission adjudicates contested charges of unlawful discrimination, following the Department's investigation, when adjudication is warranted according to the Act. The spirit of the Human Rights Act encourages resolutions of claims through the least litigious means. Claims are resolved at many different stages of the investigation and adjudication process.

The Commission acts as a neutral forum for the adjudication of contested claims. It makes findings of fact and law through administrative due process.

# HOW a Claim of Discrimination is Adjudicated

A person may initiate a claim of discrimination by filing a Charge of Discrimination with the Department of Human Rights. The alleged violator is given notice of the charge and the Department conducts an investigation of the allegations. At the conclusion of its investigation, the Department serves the parties with its finding. The Department's finding may be one of the following:

- (1) The claim is dismissed because it does not raise a claim falling under the Human Rights Act, or
- (2) The claim is dismissed because the Department finds that there is not substantial evidence that a violation of the Act has occurred, or
- (3) The Department finds that there is substantial evidence that a violation of the Act has occurred.

When the Department finds that there is substantial evidence that a violation of the Act has occurred, it files a complaint with the Human Rights Commission. This begins the Commission's adjudicative process. If the Department issues no finding of any kind within 365 days of the filing of a charge, the complainant may file a complaint with the Commission, without the Department's finding.

The Commission, through appointed administrative law judges, conducts administrative hearings. There are rules of evidence and witnesses give sworn testimony. Following such a hearing, the presiding administrative law judge issues a recommended order and decision. A hearing before an administrative law judge is similar to a court trial.

The Commission may hear arguments taking exception to the decision of an administrative law judge. The Commission hears arguments of law, based on the record of the hearing, and issues an order similar to an appellate court decision. It is important to note that, notwithstanding the similarities, administrative tribunals are distinct from judicial tribunals and function differently in many ways.

The Commission hears exceptions to recommended orders by meeting in panels of three Commissioners. A party may petition the entire Commission of thirteen members to rehear any order made by a panel. The Commission grants such rehearings at its discretion, usually when it believes it is necessary to create uniformity between its panels or to clarify an important point of law. Additionally, the Commission reviews and approves or rejects the terms of settlements between parties submitted by the Department of Human Rights.

## *Rivers and Sky Chefs, Inc.*

In this case, the Complainant had been discharged from his position as a laborer after failing a drug and alcohol test. The Respondent supplies "in flight" meals to commercial airline companies at O'Hare airport and routinely drug tests employees. The Complainant argued that he had been chosen for drug testing due to race discrimination.

An Administrative Law Judge found that the alleged Human Rights Act violation was "indistinguishable" from two earlier unsuccessful federal court claims that had been filed by the Complainant and recommended the charge be dismissed without public hearing. A Commission panel accepted that recommendation and declined further review. The Complainant then sought review by the full Human Rights Commission. The Commission also declined to review the decision.

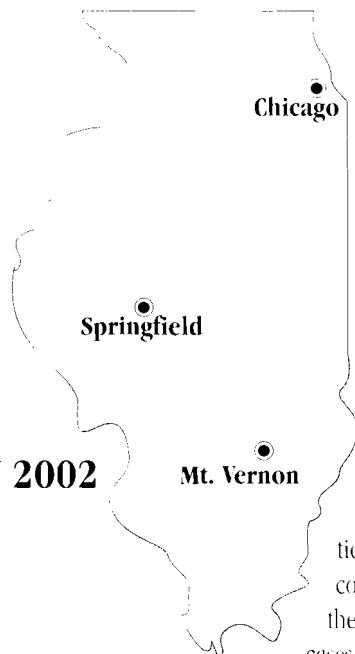
The Complainant appealed the Commission's decision to the Illinois Appellate Court. The Appellate Court sustained the Commission's order.

*It is not uncommon for Complainants to file cases in both the federal and state forums. When this occurs, the Commission case is frequently stayed at the request of the parties until disposition of the federal case.*

*"This has been such a productive year for the Commission and it is due, in large measure, to the stability of the staff and director. There was a cohesiveness and strength in our work as representatives of the people."*

*—Yvette Kanter*

## Public Hearing Locations in FY 2002



### Preparing a Case for Hearing

Because of the complex nature of the relevant law, substantial preparation by the parties, including discovery proceedings and motion practice, is generally necessary before a hearing on the merits of the case. As a consequence, all parties are encouraged to obtain legal representation, and at public hearings, both parties are usually represented by legal counsel. In the Chicago office, there is an oral motion practice for cases in which the site of the alleged

discrimination is located in Cook County. Having an oral motion call greatly expedites the pre-hearing phase of litigation before the Commission because it often produces immediate responses from the opponent of a motion as well as prompt rulings from the administrative law judge hearing the motion.

Motion practice for cases located outside Cook County is generally conducted by telephone conference calls or by mail. There is no set oral motion practice in the Springfield office due to the greater geographic area covered. It would be inefficient to require litigants to travel to the Springfield office for routine motions; instead,

such are frequently decided on the basis of the written motions and written responses. Parties may at any time request an oral argument in person or by conference call on a motion in the Springfield office.

As with any litigation, it can take parties months to years to complete needed discovery and engage in pretrial motions.

### Settlements

Pre-hearing settlement conferences are offered and used extensively at various stages in the resolution of complaints. As a consequence, settlements have been reached after the filing of the respondent's answer, after rulings by the administrative law judge on crucial motions, after completion of discovery, and even during or after preparation of the joint pre-hearing memorandum. The parties in some cases settle after the public hearing has begun or even after the hearing judge has issued a Recommended Liability Determination.

During Fiscal Year 2002, the Administrative Law Section has continued the general practice of having an administrative law judge who will not preside over the public hearing conduct a voluntary settlement conference with the parties and their attorneys immediately before the scheduled public hearing. The Administrative Law Section encourages the parties to participate in a settlement conference because it has

## ***People ex rel and Alpha Christian Registry***

In the early 1990s, numerous complaints were filed with the Illinois Attorney General Office by registered nurses and other medical staff asserting that the management of Alpha Christian Registry, a not-for-profit employment agency located in Harvey, was racially discriminating in their hiring practices. After a thorough investigation of the complaints, the Attorney General brought action against the employment agency alleging that it had, in fact, committed racial discrimination in its temporary nurse placement service. Prior to a scheduled hearing in front of an Administrative Law Judge of the Human Rights Commission, the Alpha Christian Registry entered into a binding agreement with the Attorney General, which required the agency to pay a fine and improve its hiring practices. In 2002, the Commission dismissed the case at the Attorney General's request after the employment agency complied with the conditions of settlement.

*Often, cases pending in front of the Human Rights Commission are resolved prior to the hearing taking place. The spirit of the Human Rights Act encourages resolutions of claims through the least litigious means. Claims are resolved at many different stages of the investigation and adjudication process.*

proven to be a successful tool for final case resolution. "Eve of trial" settlement conferences result in settlements in a significant percentage of cases pending before the Administrative Law Section.

Parties who choose to settle can formalize the terms of their agreement in two ways. First, the most common, parties can settle among themselves without presenting the settlement to the Commission and without making the terms public. Second, parties can submit the settlement agreement to the Commission for approval. These settlements will be discussed in the "Commission Review" section below.

### **Public Hearings**

In accordance with the Act, public hearings are held at a location that is within 100 miles of the place at which the civil rights violation is alleged to have occurred. As a consequence, the Commission's administrative law judges traveled in the course of the year to sites throughout the state as necessary.

The public hearings conducted by administrative law judges at the Commission are very similar to circuit court trials; they are formal and conducted in accordance with the rules of evidence used in the courts of Illinois. These hearings typically last two to three days. They may, however, take less than a half a day at one extreme or several weeks at the other.

*"The Human Rights Commission bears the cries of help from people who don't have advocates. We are the voice of the voiceless and, while this is a responsibility-laden position, it is a pleasant burden because we are making a difference in the quality of life for the people of Illinois."*  
—Dominic DiFrisco



# Selected Commission Final Orders FY 2002

Date Issued	Case Name	Docket No.	Basis of Discrimination
8/1/01	Harris and Vinylgrain Industries	#11382	Default damages
8/1/01	Friedner and Happy Reunion	#S11365	Public accommodations
8/1/01	Barrera and Lakeside Building Maintenance	#11023	National origin
10/10/01	Pettis and McDonald's Corp.	#10754	Sex/pregnancy
10/29/01	Angulo and Home Advantage Midwest, Inc.	#11391	Age
11/28/01	Current and Discovery Zone LP	#10134	Sexual harassment
11/30/01	Albert and Ring Can Corp.	#S10410	Sex/pregnancy
12/3/01	Schaefer and Wilson Pet Supply	#10769	Age
12/18/01	Lutkowski and Vaughn Properties & John Vaughn	#S10883	Sexual harassment
12/18/01	Sparks and Old Ben Coal Co.	#S10917	Sexual harassment
12/19/01	Freese and Dept. of Corrections	#S10083	Handicap
2/7/02	Parrott-Hamilton and School District No. 104	#11182	Race/retaliation
2/14/02	Huber and Montgomery County	#S11158	Age
2/14/02	Buckner and DCFS & Carlton Jackson	#10623	Sexual harassment
3/8/02	Ambrose and III&S Enterprises & Andrew Hayes	#S11520	Sexual harassment
3/13/02	Muhammad and Walsh/Traylor/ McHugh	#9466	Race/retaliation
4/3/02	Vij and Six Flags Theme Park, Inc.	#11106C	Public accommodations
4/3/02	Daugherty and Dewitt County Sheriff's Dept.	#S11345	Retaliation
4/29/02	Morris and University of Illinois	#7641	Race
4/29/02	Stone and D&B Refuse Service	#S11146	Sex
4/29/02	Baker and Village of Niles	#10940	Age/attorney fee
4/30/02	Stiles and Lid Electric Co.	#11181	Handicap

# Production Report

	Cases Filed	Cases Settled by Agreement	RODs Issued	Cases Dismissed	Settlements Awarded	Out-of-Court Settlements	Out-Of-Order Dismisses	Final Settlements Approved
July	16	2	10	16	0	0	0	1
August	10	0	9	19	18	0	1	no panel mtgs
September	15	1	4	14	5	0	0	60
October	26	1	2	20	11	1	0	25
November	15	3	9	10	0	0	0	2
December	21	1	7	7	4	0	0	28
January	23	1	14	16	6	1	0	27
February	15	2	7	18	7	1	0	35
March	20	2	15	3	7	2	0	0
April	20	0	1	30	22	2	0	29
May	22	0	14	15	3	0	0	33
June	25	1	15	6	0	2	0	1
Total	228	14	107	174	83	9	1	241

Pending cases 7/1/2001 - 769

Pending cases 6/30/2002 - 746

*RODs\** Recommended Order and Decision  
Administrative law judge made decision on case and forwarded to Commission

*FOD\** Final Order and Decision  
Administrative law judge dismissed case at request of the parties

*OOD\** Order and Decision  
Commission made final decision based on merits of the case

## Dewberry and Kraft General Foods

In 1993, a female fork lift driver employed by Kraft General Foods in their Chicago plant discovered that, while she was on break, a handmade sign containing a sexually explicit drawing had been attached to the equipment she was driving. She called in the company supervisor and filed an in-house sexual harassment complaint. She stated she did not know who had placed the sign. The supervisor determined that it could be one of four male employees on site during the period in question and interviewed those employees. After questioning the men, the supervisor indicated in writing that he felt Mark Dewberry, the only African-American employee questioned, was the culprit. Dewberry was later fired.

This complex case did not, however, focus on the sexual harassment issue but rather on a claim of racial discrimination. During the hearing before a Human Rights Commission Administrative Law Judge, Kraft Foods argued that Dewberry was dismissed from employment for engaging in sexual harassment of another employee, while Mr. Dewberry argued that he had been discharged in a rush to judgement, based on his race. The judge ruled in Dewberry's favor awarding him loss of pay damages of \$202,000. Kraft Foods filed exceptions to the judge's recommendation, and a three-member panel of Commissioners granted review. In an Order and Decision issued last year, the panel affirmed the judge's finding that the on-site investigation of the sexual harassment allegation had been conducted in a racially discriminatory manner.

*The parties in this case ultimately resolved their differences privately and moved for voluntary dismissal of the matter.*

Members of the Human Rights Commission have adjudicative authority over claims and are responsible for the administration of the Commission by and through Commission staff.

In keeping with the spirit of the Act, most cases are resolved without review by the Commissioners. Following the issuance of a Recommended Order and Decision by the Administrative Law Section, parties may file exceptions to that order. If no exceptions are filed, the Recommended Order and Decision of the administrative law judge is adopted by the Commission as its final order. These cases become final due to "No Exceptions".

When exceptions are filed, the Commission determines whether or not to grant review of the case. The Commission takes review of cases based on its statutory discretion and the nature of the claims presented by the parties. For example, the Commission will not disturb an

administrative law judge's findings of fact unless those findings are contrary to the manifest weight of the evidence presented to the ALJ at the hearing. A petition of exceptions which seeks review to introduce new evidence not raised at the public hearing will not be granted. These cases are closed because the Commission has "Declined Review".

Parties also sometimes reach settlement between themselves even after hearing of the case.

The Commission may take review of any case where one party or another has filed exceptions. In normal practice, only the most contentious or complex cases require Commission review through a three-member panel, or *en banc*. In these cases, the Commission issues an Order and Decision.

# Appropriations

2002

## ***Stefanek and Preferred Consolidation, et al.***

In April 2000, the parties involved in this case agreed to settle an age discrimination claim. The Respondent agreed to pay the Complainant \$10,000 and the employee agreed to dismiss her claim against the company. This year the Commission found that the Respondent did not comply with its agreement and ordered the Attorney General to seek court enforcement of the order.

*When parties submit a settlement agreement to the Commission for approval, the Human Rights Commission continues to monitor the case until such time as it is completely resolved.*

Regular Positions .....	\$1,115,400.00
Contractual Services .....	\$166,300.00
State Employee Retirement .....	\$116,100.00
Social Security/Medicare contributions .....	\$85,400.00
State Paid Retirement Contributions .....	\$44,700.00
Travel .....	\$32,000.00
Telecommunications .....	\$31,900.00
Commodities .....	\$15,000.00
Equipment .....	\$13,900.00
Printing .....	\$5,500.00
<u>Electronic Data Processing .....</u>	<u>\$4,300.00</u>
Total All Funds .....	\$1,630,500.00

*“Unfortunately there are still people in this world who do not understand that it is people's color, physical abilities, gender and other differences that make each of us unique, special, and wonderful. The Human Rights Commission serves as a powerful vehicle of hope. Our goal is to help show the way for all people in Illinois to walk and work side by side, peacefully.”*

*—Arabel Alva Rosales*

Working  
together  
with  
Pride

# The Commission

*The Commission is comprised of thirteen Commissioners appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Illinois Senate.*

		<u>Appointment</u>	<u>Expiration</u>
Rose M. Jennings, <i>Chairman</i>	Chicago	2/1/95	1/20/03
Eva Betka	Palatine	2/8/99	1/20/03
Dominic DiFrisco	Chicago	2/8/99	1/20/03
Marylee V. Freeman	Chicago	3/31/99	1/17/05
Mary Jeanne Hallstrom	Evanston	9/18/91	1/20/03
Sakhawat Hussain, M.D.	Frankfort	5/4/94	1/17/05
Yvette Kanter	Highland Park	5/12/98	1/17/05
Spencer Leak, Sr.	Chicago	1/16/01	1/17/05
Girvena M. LeBlanc	Olympia Fields	2/8/99	1/20/03
James Maloof	Peoria	5/21/97	1/17/05
Arabel Alva Rosales	Chicago	1/10/99	1/17/05
Daniel C. Sprehe	Chicago	2/8/99	1/20/03
Isiah Thomas	Calumet Park	6/20/94	1/20/03

# Commission Staff

*The Commissioners are served by staff in the Chicago and Springfield offices. Staff members include an executive director, a general counsel, an assistant general counsel, a chief administrative law judge, administrative law judges, and administrative operations staff.*

## **Chicago and Springfield Staff**

Katherine Parker, executive director  
 James E. Snyder, general counsel  
 Roma Larson, chief administrative law judge  
 Jack Pearce, fiscal officer  
 David J. Brent, administrative law judge  
 Michael J. Evans, administrative law judge  
 Kelli L. Gidcumb, administrative law judge  
 William H. Hall, administrative law judge  
 Sabrina M. Patch, administrative law judge

Nelson E. Perez, administrative law judge  
 Michael R. Robinson, administrative law judge  
 Mariette Lindt, assistant general counsel  
 Rosela Baker, secretary  
 Leroy Conley, administrative assistant  
 Graciela Delgado, administrative assistant  
 Tonya Harris, receptionist  
 Douglas Hart, receptionist  
 Wilma Johnson, office coordinator  
 Gail Kruger, administrative assistant

# The Commissioners



*Eva A. Betka*



*Dominic DiFrisco*



*Mary Jeanne "Dolly" Hallstrom*

**Eva A. Betka** was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1999. Ms. Betka is Assistant to the Lieutenant Governor and responsible for ethnic, immigration, and constituent issues. Previous work experience includes serving as Employer Education Specialist and as Executive Director of the Polish-American Congress/Foundation. She is fluent in Polish and comprehends Russian and Ukrainian languages.

**Dominic DiFrisco** has served on the Human Rights Commission since 1999. Mr. DiFrisco is a partner with Edelman Worldwide, a Chicago-based public affairs consultancy. He is a board member of the Illinois Arts Alliance, serves on the Advisory Board of the Chinese-American Service League, and is president emeritus of the Joint Civic Committee of Italian-Americans. He is the recipient of numerous awards from the Italian-American, African-American, and Native-American communities.

**MaryLee V. Freeman** was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1999. Ms. Freeman is the Director of Intergovernmental Outreach for the City of Chicago having previously served as the City's Community Group Coordinator and Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department of Sewers. The 2000 Kathy Osterman General Service Award, 1998 Metropolitan Tenants Organization Public Service Award, and 1995 Mary McDowd Settlement House Outstanding Public Service Provider are a few of the many accolades she has received.

**Dolly Hallstrom** was a member of the Illinois House of Representatives when the Human Rights Act was passed into law in 1979. She was an avid lobbyist for the cause. Twelve years later, she was appointed to the Human Rights Commission where she has served ever since. Mrs. Hallstrom is a tireless advocate for the disabled and is currently a legislative resource coordinator for the Protection and Advocacy Agency and lifetime board member of Equip for Equality, which provides implementation of the federally mandated protection and advocacy system in Illinois. (See Tribute to Dolly Hallstrom)



*Sakhawat Hussain, M.D.*



*Yvette Kanter*



*Spencer Leak, Sr.*

**Sakhawat Hussain, M.D.** was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1994 and served as interim chairperson for a period during 1998-99. Born and educated in Pakistan, Dr. Hussain, a gastroenterologist, has been in practice at Chicago's Advocate Trinity Hospital since 1979. He is the founder and first president of both the Indus Society of North America and the Pakistani American Congress. He is the recipient of a patriotism award from the Pakistan League of America and Mayor Daley's 1992 merit award.

**Rose M. Jennings** has served as the Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission since 1999. She was appointed to the commission in 1995. Ms. Jennings is currently a self-employed marketing and promotion consultant. Previous work experiences include assistant director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, marketing director for Playboy Enterprises, and press liaison for the Government of Zaire during the Foreman/Ali championship boxing match. She is on the Board of Directors for Homeless and Abused Children of Chicago.

**Yvette Kanter** was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1998 and re-appointed in 2001. Ms. Kanter is a professional volunteer for the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and successfully directed a fund-raising campaign for the Women's Board of the Federation that exceeded \$8 million. She is a graduate of National-Lewis University with a degree in education and the mother of three children.

**Spencer Leak, Sr.** is the president of Leak and Sons Funeral Home. He is a former Assistant Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections, and was appointed to the Commission in 2001.





*Girvena M. LeBlanc*



*James Maloof*

**Girvena M. LeBlanc** was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1999. Ms. LeBlanc is Director of Purchasing at Oak Forest Hospital of Cook County. She is a graduate of Governor's State University with a degree in Business Administration and is currently working on her Masters in Public Administration. She is an officer of Alpha Beta Gamma National Business Honor Society and a member of the National Association of Purchasing Management. She is a board member of the Rich Township Pantry, an organization serving the elderly and handicapped.

**James A. Maloof** has been a member of the Human Rights Commission since 1997. Mr. Maloof has the honor of being the longest serving mayor for the City of Peoria having been elected to three consecutive terms from 1985-97. Today he is the owner of Maloof Realty. Philanthropically he is involved in activities that range from serving as the Chairman of the Board for St. Jude's Children Research Hospital to establishing a scholarship fund at Bradley University. He is the recipient of an impressive list of awards including the JC Penney Golden Rule, B'Nai B'Rith Man of the Year, US Marine Corps Patriotism Award, and Boss of the Year.



*Arabel Alva Rosales*



*Daniel C. Sprehe*

**Arabel Alva Rosales** was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1999. Ms. Rosales is president of A. Alva Rosales & Associates, Ltd., a marketing, management and technology firm. She is active as Chairperson of the statewide Child Care Business Expo and serves as board member of the Women's Business Development Center and the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce. She was the first woman to serve as Executive Director of the Illinois Liquor Control Commission and, in October 2002, was named to Today's Chicago Woman Hall of Fame. In 2001, she obtained her J.D. from DePaul College of Law where she was the recipient of the school's leadership scholarship and Mayor Daley's Leadership 2000 scholarship.

**Daniel Sprehe** was appointed by Governor George Ryan to serve on the Illinois Human Rights Commission in 1999. A native of Centralia, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Eastern Illinois University in Charleston with a concentration in Political Science. He has worked in Illinois government and politics for over fifteen years and is currently a Government Affairs Consultant representing numerous clients before the Illinois General Assembly. His previous work experience includes Legislative Analyst for the Senate Republican Staff, lobbyist for the McDonald's Corporation, and Assistant to Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra.

**Isiah Thomas** has been a member of the Illinois Human Rights Commission since 1994. Mr. Thomas has been an active leader of the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union for many years.

*"It is a significant honor to be a member of the Commission and to protect the rights of the working people. The current director, judges, and legal staff are the best we've ever had. Where there was once a backlog of as many as 3,000 cases, today many cases are handled in less than six months."*

*—James Maloof*



# "Dolly" Hallstrom

**Human Rights Commissioner 1991-Present**

"...a treasure among us. It is an honor to know her. We are infinitely enriched by her presence. Dolly is a true servant of the people."

—Dominic DiFrisco

"Dolly is the Grande Dame of the Human Rights Commission. She is a living, breathing, passionate example of what it's all about."

—Yvette Kanter

# “You don’t find happiness by seeking it. It comes about only when you are helping others.”

A friend once shared those words of wisdom with Mary Jeanne Hallstrom and she took them to heart. Known as Dolly to friends and colleagues alike, this amazing 78 year-young woman has spent a lifetime helping others. She is, indeed, one of the happiest people alive.

As a young mother raising two children in the late 1950s, she spearheaded a fund raiser for the North Shore Junior League, which raised \$5,000 for the special education of a child with learning disabilities. “We actually came up with the phrase ‘learning disability,’ said Dolly. “At that time, these children could easily have been labeled ‘retarded.’” The fund raiser evolved into the permanent Fund for Perceptually Handicapped Children, an organization Dolly founded and served as president from 1957-63. It was the beginning of her years working with and for children, one of the many groups of people she fights to protect against discrimination.

She went on to become a volunteer lobbyist on behalf of parents of children with learning disabilities and played a key role in the passage of legislation mandating special education for all children with disabilities. From 1968-70, she was the Illinois chairperson of the White House Conference Commission on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities and, from 1975-77, worked with the State Board of Education on behalf of low-incidence handicapped children.

Dolly suffered a stroke in 1978 leaving her paralyzed on her dominant left side and forcing her to relearn all motor skills, including speech. This was shortly after the untimely death of her husband and while she was running for election to the Illinois House of Representatives in her home district of Evanston. Dolly was counseled to drop out of the race, but did not. Instead, more determined than ever, she won the general election with the greatest number of votes any candidate would receive that year.

Since 1983, Dolly has been a legislative resource coordinator for the Protection and Advocacy Agency, which protects the legal and human rights of persons with developmental and mental disabilities. In 1988, she was appointed to the Secretary of State’s Advisory Committee on Human Resources, which recommends state policy affecting persons with disabilities. She is a lifetime board member of Equip for Equality, which provides implementation of the federally mandated protection and advocacy system in Illinois.

**“She is an inspiration to us all. Dolly makes public service all the more worthwhile. She is never afraid to speak her mind.”**

**—James Maloof**

Dolly served with valor during her legislative career and was voted one of the ten best legislators for the greatest number of bills introduced and passed. She lobbied for the passage of the Human Rights Act in 1979, which led to the formation of the Human Rights Commission. Her own agenda included legislation affecting children and adults with physical disabilities, special education, licensing of health professionals, higher education, and women’s issues, particularly the banning of strip searches of women by police in minor traffic offenses. Her interest in legislative affairs continues today.

Dolly’s appointment to the Human Rights Commission by Governor Jim Edgar in 1991 was a tribute to her years of service to others. While it was easy for others to see the obviousness of such an appointment, in typical fashion, Dolly was surprised . . . and pleased. Today, 11 years and two reappointments later, she hopes to continue her work with the Commission for years to come.

“There will always be people we’re going to have to fight for,” said Dolly. “While we have come far as a society in taking care of and respecting the disabled, I don’t know if we will ever get to the point where no one is discriminated against. My concern today is age discrimination. That’s why it is imperative that the work of the Human Rights Commission continues.”