



**Village Election  
Brochure of Candidates' Statements**

Park Forest, Illinois  
Election day is Tuesday, April 4, 2023

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**2023 Candidates' Forum Schedule**

Location: Village Hall Board Room  
Day and Time: Sundays at 1:00 p.m.

Date	Sponsor/Moderator	Candidates
Jan 29	Non-Partisan Committee/Judge Ray Funderburk	Mayoral and Village Trustee Candidates
Feb 5	Library/Barbara Sturges	Library Candidates Only
Feb 19	League of Women Voters/Cynthia Butler	Mayoral and Village Trustee Candidates
Mar 19	Park Forest Cooperatives/Chip Young	Mayoral and Village Trustee Candidates

Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> – Election Day

Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> @10:30am – NPC Membership Meeting

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## Candidate for Village Mayor



Jonathan Vanderbilt

Mayor Jonathan Vanderbilt is a fourth generation Park Forester who graduated from Huth and Rich East High School, currently employed as a Local 1185 Union Carpenter. His wife Kathleen, graduated from Talala, Crete-Monee Middle and High School, together raising their three boys who are fifth generation Park Foresters.

Jonathan Vanderbilt has received numerous awards during his tenure as Mayor.

- 2019, he received the Early Walker Philanthropist Service Award for Volunteerism,
- 2020 was selected the “Mayor of the Year” by the Southland Black Chamber of Commerce and Industry as the award aims to recognize the Mayors in the region who have shown a commitment to enhancing their respective communities they went on by stating that “2020 was an incredible challenging year for business and individuals alike. President Vanderbilt’s efforts to better Park Forest during these unprecedented times have not gone unnoticed. Throughout numerous government shut downs and stay at home orders, President Vanderbilt has shown great care for his residents through hosting food giveaways, PPE dispersion events, diaper and supply drives and gas giveaways.”
- 2021 was chosen to receive the Celebration of Service Award by the Boy Scouts of America Calumet District.

As Mayor, Jonathan has worked with Village staff and the Board of Trustees to address issues such as high property taxes and increased water bills due in large part, to depopulation. Jonathan worked alongside fellow board members and staff to solve these problems by building a solar field to offset water plant energy usage, implemented a Neighborhood Redevelopment Initiative through the South Suburban Trades Initiative, reintroduced the Beautification Awards Committee, organized and Chaired the 2020 Census Committee and developed with heavy resident input the Five year strategic plan, increased funding for infrastructure all while having a 0% tax increase in three of the past five years!

Please visit [JonVanderbilt.com](http://JonVanderbilt.com)

## Candidate for Village Mayor



Joseph Woods

My journey of service to the Village of Park Forest has been an organic process—from Poet Laureate to Library Board Trustee, to Village Trustee in 2019. I am honored to have worked alongside such committed and civic-minded leaders.

A career in public service has prepared me to serve as Mayor. As Village Trustee, I chaired the 2020 Census Committee and serve as Trustee Liaison to the Economic Development Advisory Group and the Police and Fire Advisory Group. As Mayor, I will work to establish a sustainable budget, protect our environment, promote ethical government, and ensure that Park Forest remains a vibrant, livable community for our residents. I believe it is imperative though that we realize a new vision.

I am a product of Quigley North High School, Loyola University of Chicago, Roosevelt University, the Park Forest Civic Leadership Academy—and my mother, Doris, who “knitted my pattern of thought with grandma’s hands.”

I served three administrations for the Office of the Illinois Attorney General, advocating for the rights of consumers, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, veterans, and victims of crime, and was subsequently elected President of Local 4408 American Federation of Teachers for the Attorney General Northern District.

Our Village is at a crossroads. What we decide in the next four years will be critical to the future of Park Forest. I’m not running AGAINST ... I’m running FOR “the urgency of now!” I’m running for Mayor. It’s not about ME, it’s about WE!

These past years we have fought to live while in the midst of anxiety when faced with our own existence, yet somehow, we survive.

Join us in the campaign to **L.I.V.E.** for Leadership—Integrity—Vision—Equity. A vote for WE is to live deliberately ... in Park Forest.

Candidate for Village Trustee



**Andrew Gladstone**

My dad, a WWII GI, moved his family to Park Forest in 1951 in hope of raising his family in a community that welcomed everyone. He and his wife, Barbara, lived here until their deaths in 2005. I grew up in Park Forest, went through the school system, graduated from Rich East, married my wife Georgette who had moved to Park Forest in 1949 with her GI dad and mom, raised a family, served as an educator and dean at Crete-Monee High School, and continue to live a quality retirement here.

Like many families in Park Forest, Georgette and I started our life together in the Co-ops. I served as President on the Cedarwood board of directors. Later I had the opportunity to serve my community as village trustee.

One of the greatest rewards in teaching and being a dean is helping students achieve their very best to become productive members of society. Being a trustee enabled me to work for a better Park Forest in innovating a vision of creating a brighter future for our residents. Living in this community from toddler to senior, my B.A. from Northern Illinois University, my Masters in Education Administration from GSU, working with youth through coaching, being an educator and a dean, knowing the history of Park Forest, and making Park Forest my home my entire life give me the confidence to best serve the residents of Park Forest as a trustee.

Candidate for Village Trustee



**Tiffani Graham**

I have served the Village of Park Forest for two three-year terms and have an uncompromising commitment to leadership and service. Because of the commitment I have to this community, I would like your support for a third term. I am proud to serve as Trustee Liaison to the Youth Commission and the Human Relations Commission. I served in volunteer leadership roles which include the Park Forest League of Women Voters, Tall Grass Arts Association, Debbie Martin's Women's Advisory Council; and Dr. Charles Gavin Foundation and past President of Southland Rotary. My goal is to continue supporting and participating with our team to revitalize our Park Forest neighborhoods. I will continue to speak up for all of Park Forest. To support the hidden gem which Park Forest is with the art exhibits, live theater, a wonderful library, and music venue. Work to maintain our independent source of clean drinking water, which is vital to our health. Continue working to obtain funding for our continued infrastructure improvements and Downtown revitalization. With the community and the Village Board working together, we can keep Park Forest a vibrant community to raise a family.

## Candidate for Village Trustee

**John Moore**

I am excited about the opportunity to run for Village Trustee. Since returning to Park Forest in 2014 to assist my parents, I have seen the Village's potential despite its challenges. The Village Board's decisions over the next four years can be the difference between our community prospering and deteriorating.

As a Trustee, I hope to work with my colleagues on the Village Board to cultivate economic development, seek solutions to solve our property tax crisis and fight to keep our community safe. I am a member of the Economic Development Advisory Group, which has allowed me to engage with other residents and work with Village staff. As a trustee, I will encourage residents to serve on the Village's various boards and commissions. We must ensure that the Village Board remains supportive of our award-winning Village staff.

In 1974 my parents moved our family from Chicago to Park Forest so my brother, sister and I could attend better schools. I was fortunate to attend Indiana School, Huth Upper Grades Center in Matteson and graduate from Rich East. After graduating from the University of Dayton, I began my career as a public relations professional in the entertainment and hospitality industries, first as a publicist with John Iltis Associates and then as a public relations manager for Planet Hollywood International. I've also served as State Marketing Manager for the State of Illinois. I am an adjunct faculty member at Columbia College Chicago, where I teach communication courses. I am currently a local elected official's political director, a self-employed marketing communication consultant and belong to the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

Non-Partisan local government is a tradition in Park Forest and I pledge to adhere to those principles. I look forward to using my lived and professional experience to deliver more for Park Forest.

## Candidate for Village Trustee

**Joshua Travis**

**"A vote for the future of Park Forest"**

My name is Joshua Travis and I have lived, grown, and discovered all that Park Forest has to offer for over 25 years. I first got involved by joining the Youth Commission in 2019. Since then, I have partnered with leaders and residents to support Park Forest needs such as food drives, workforce development training, and advocating to keep our schools open and accessible for our youth. As we continue to rebuild- we must work with nonprofits and community leaders to regain our lost resources. The resources that made me a fighter and survivor.

I attended Forest Trail and Rich East before graduating from Illinois State with a degree in Anthropology and minors in Biological Sciences as well as Criminal Justice Sciences. I graduated from DePaul's School of Public Service with a Master's in Nonprofit Management. I am currently seeking a Doctorate degree from Governors State University focused on using data and evidence to implement community building strategies.

Decades of depopulation means higher property taxes, increasing bills, closing of vital programs, and higher crime. To overcome these challenges, the village must practice bold leadership through innovative partnerships and elevating our accomplishments by working with our neighbors, build the community by listening to residents and taking concerns seriously, and above all else - develop new resources and programs to replace what we have lost and keep the community safe and healthy.

If elected, my top priorities will be:

- Generating revenue from our natural resources to improve the quality of our roads and infrastructure.
- Expand the building department to offer resources and guidance to help residents meet code expectations before sending fines and court dates.
- Expand the neighborhood watch program and bring free surveillance equipment to each home throughout the village.

## Candidate for Library Trustee



**Katherine Coleman**

My name is Katherine Coleman, I am a life-long Park Forest resident currently running for Library board trustee. I have been attending programs at the Park Forest Library since I was a child. I love to read and have instilled that love for books in my children. As a homeschool mom of 4, the library is our go to place, we utilize the programs, resources, and study rooms. The library is an underrated resource in the community, and I would love to see our community, especially our youth, take advantage of all the things our library has to offer.

I am a proud product of the Park Forest school system for elementary school and high school. To further my passion for community and children I obtained my Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Eastern Illinois University. After graduation I spent 10 years working in district 163. I have watched students grow from children to adults and realize how vital the library is to our neighborhood.

I currently work part time for the Park Forest Water Department as a meter reader. I am outside boots on the ground interacting with the people of the village every month. I have listened to the people; I can tell how important family is in Park Forest. As I Library Board Trustee, I would bring a mix of experience in the community and a fresh set of ideas to help keep the library a safe and engaging place for those families to continue to thrive.

I am not naïve to the challenges that can be presented. However, I am confident that I would be an asset. I have been known to go the extra mile to help initiate positive outcomes in all facets of my career, this position would be no different.

## Candidate for Library Trustee



**Felicia Rangel**

My name is Felicia Rangel, and I am running for Park Forest Library Board Trustee. It has been my pleasure serving as your trustee these past years. The library has shaped and enriched my life and I want to continue giving back to my library and the community. I seek your vote in order to do this.

As a resident since 1976 I have witnessed the major transformation of our library from when I was a teenager to an adult. It is an experience to walk in and see our library being utilized by our youngest patrons looking for a book to our oldest patrons using the computers or taking technology classes.

During the past couple of years, we faced the challenge of operating during a global pandemic, while maintaining service levels for our community. People need their libraries for so many things, whether it be for education, recreation, life skills or cultural immersion. The library director and staff did an excellent job of providing these services and I am proud to have been part of the board during this journey.

We have a strong library with a mission to support our citizens and local businesses. I'm excited to offer my work experience and talents to help our library adequately plan for the challenges of future growth within Park Forest and Olympia Fields. I enjoy community service and knowing that I have helped improve our library for future generations is an indescribable joy.

My background as a payroll professional with a strong skillset in accounting, human resources policies and procedures and budgeting are strengths which would serve the board well. I know the primary responsibility of a library trustee is the financial health of the library.

I am asking for your vote for me, Felicia Rangel, to serve as your Park Forest Library Board Trustee.

Candidate for Library Trustee



**Alan B. Shnay**

I was 5 or 6 years old when I first visited the Park Forest Public Library. I have clear memories of checking out Lyle Lyle Crocodile, Where the Wild Things Are, and The Cat in the Hat. Over the years I scoured the children's section, then the young adult, and finally the adult sections for new and interesting things to read. Magazines, especially Downbeat, and many vinyl LPs followed me home from the library as well.

Years later, upon returning to Park Forest, I found the library to be a familiar friend. Of course, it had changed, as all friends do, but it was still a vibrant and important part of our community.

Our job as a Library Board Trustee is to maintain and enhance the library's vibrancy and important standing in the Village and the region, by ensuring it is responsibly run fiscally, legally, and structurally.

I was appointed to an open Library Board position in the summer of 2021 and during that time, we have managed to reduce the tax levy and have begun the process to have true drive-through service available for patrons. We are also guiding the Library out of the never-ending pandemic into a different and somewhat unexpected future. I would greatly appreciate your support on April 4th, 2023, so I can continue working with the Library Director and the Board in maintaining the library's status as an important facet of the communities of Park Forest and Olympia Fields.

Candidate for Library Trustee



**Bathsheba Wyatt-Draper**

I have been a resident of Park Forest for the last 20 years. I have always wanted to be a part of something that helps to make living in Park Forest special. As a reader and lover of the library I thought it would be a good place to start. Computers crash, get hacked and can steal your identity. A book only shuts down when you stop reading it, it enhances your thinking and can help you grow into the person you want to be. I want to be a part of making the Park Forest library the library that others want to be like, where families want to come, where minds are encouraged for the better.



Website:

[www.pfnpc.org](http://www.pfnpc.org)

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

[www.facebook.com/parkforestnpc](http://www.facebook.com/parkforestnpc)

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