

Lori T. Healey (1959-2025)

Lori T. Healey, a distinguished civic leader whose legacy shaped the Chicago skyline and city spirit, passed away May 3 following a brief battle with pancreatic cancer.

Born in New Orleans in 1959 to Col. Stephen and Linda (nee Sigley) Thomas, Lori's youth was spent on military bases with her family, as her father was a surgeon with the United States Army. She earned a BA in economics and an MS in Public Administration from Kansas State University, who recognized her as a



Distinguished Alumna. Lori is survived by her loving children and grandchildren: son, Ramsey Al-Abed (Christina Kozaya, and daughter Mylo, 2); daughter Emily Thompson Lewis (Steve Lewis and children Oliver, 6; Zoe, 2; and Nora, 6 months), and partner Walt Eckenhoff. She was predeceased by her parents and brother, Stephen A. Thomas.

Lori devoted her professional life to public service, urban development and community building, beginning her career as a policy aide to former Kansas Governor John Carlin in 1983.

Lori was a transformative force in Chicago's civic and business landscape, known for her strategic vision, dogged determination, collaborative leadership and unwavering commitment to the city she loved.

Lori's career spanned both public and private sectors. She served as Chief of Staff and Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development under former Mayor Richard M. Daley, overseeing over \$1 billion in economic development investments. She later led Chicago 2016, the bid to host the Summer Olympics and Paralympics Games, working closely with Mayor Daley and former President Barack Obama, as well as the 2012 NATO summit. Both initiatives demonstrated her ability to unite diverse stakeholders for the public's benefit.

In 2020 Lori joined the Obama Foundation as Senior Vice President and Executive Project Officer, overseeing the design and construction of the Obama Presidential Center, a 19.3-acre campus in Jackson Park. Her work on this project, which is set to open in 2026, reflects her dedication to creating spaces that inspire and empower communities.

As CEO of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (McCormick Place), Lori spearheaded major developments such as the Marriott Marquis Chicago and Wintrust Arena, both while leading North America's largest convention center. Her leadership contributed significantly to Chicago's tourism and convention industries.

Her work in the private sector included serving as president of Clayco's Chicago Business Unit, a development and design-build firm, and as CEO of Tur Partners, an international business development firm founded by Mayor Richard M. Daley. She was principal in the Development Group for the John Buck Company and at Perkins + Will.

Lori served as Deputy Director for Business Development and Chief of Staff of the Illinois Department of Commerce & Community Affairs under former governors James R. Thompson and Jim Edgar. Lori's talents were instrumental in "Build Illinois," the state's largest infrastructure and development plan, including working with several of Illinois' largest corporations such as Motorola and Sears.

Beyond her professional achievements, Lori was deeply involved in civic organizations, serving on many of the city's most prominent boards, including the Chicago Fire Department Foundation, Choose Chicago, the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, the Chicago Sports Commission, the Chicago Urban League, the City Club of Chicago, Navy Pier, Chicago Architecture Foundation, and World Business Chicago. She was also an advisory board member of the Loyola University Health System, Civic Consulting Alliance, and the Civic Federation.

Lori was an avid horsewoman, and, through years of dedicated training, she competed in dressage at a national level with her beloved horses. She enjoyed golf and downhill skiing; was a rabid supporter of all teams Chicago; traveled extensively; and loved good food and wine shared with family and long-time friends. Lori leaves a wide network of friends, colleagues, and mentees.

All are welcome to join a celebration of life that will be held Tuesday, May 13 at Women's Park & Gardens, 1827 South Indiana, Chicago, beginning at 9:30am.

The family requests donations in Lori's memory be made to the [Chicago Fire Department Foundation](#), the [Chicago Police Memorial Foundation](#) or a favored philanthropy reflecting Lori's commitment to community, children, and women's empowerment.