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Saginaw Mayor Pro-Tem Brenda F. Moore Makes History in Being Named MML President
Muskegon Heights Mayor Kimberley Sims Named Vice President

DETROIT, Michigan – As the Michigan Municipal League’s new board president, Saginaw Mayor Pro Tem Brenda F. Moore is making history.

Moore was selected as the 2019-20 Michigan Municipal League Board president by the 18-member board on Tuesday during the League’s 2019 Convention taking place this week in Detroit. She is the first African American woman selected president in the League’s 120-year history. The board also selected Muskegon Heights Mayor Kimberley Sims as vice president.

“Becoming the MML president is like a dream. The ultimate dream,” Moore said. “I am truly honored that my colleagues voted me in. To be the first African American female League president, I’m excited! I’m excited for the city of Saginaw, I’m excited for the League, and I’m excited for this opportunity.”

Moore served the past year as the League’s vice president and stepped into the president’s role in July when the former president – Ferndale Councilwoman Melanie Piana – resigned to run for Mayor of Ferndale. On Tuesday, the board selected Moore to continue to serve as president for the next 12 months.

“I love the Municipal League,” said Moore, who has been on the League board since 2016. “I truly believe in what the League is about and particularly how they fight for all Michigan communities, including urban centers like Saginaw as well as smaller, more rural communities.”

Moore’s selection as president further cements the City of Saginaw as being a historic community for the League board in a variety of ways. Particularly noteworthy are these facts:

- The League’s first president was from Saginaw – William B. Baum Sr., Mayor – in 1899.
- The League’s second male African American president was from Saginaw – Sylvester Joe Stephens, councilmember.
- And now, Moore is the first female African American president (fourth African American overall), and fourth President to hail from Saginaw.
“Ms. Brenda,” as she’s affectionately known throughout her community, is a life-long resident of the City of Saginaw and a proud graduate of Saginaw High School and Delta College. When elected to city council in 2013, she quickly became involved with the League by attending conferences and training to understand her role as a new official. Since then she has served in leadership roles with the Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, and the League’s Elected Officials Academy (EOA). In addition, she has attained the highest level – the Ambassador Level 4 – of the EOA. She is formerly a bail bonds person and served as a facilitator for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU Local 517M).

Brenda’s historic road to the top at the League was far from the typical journey. Just six years ago, she had zero political experience and was working as a bail bond agent and bounty hunter. For her, being a bail bond agent was about helping people and she viewed it as missionary work. She wouldn’t just facilitate loaning people bond money, but she helped them navigate the court system and get assistance as needed, such as treatment for drug addiction and/or mental health issues.

“It was a fun, adventuresome part of my life,” she said. “I enjoyed it. I enjoyed helping those who really needed it. It was like a ministry for me. People today say, ‘Ms. Brenda, I remember you and you saved my life. I remember you got me out of jail, and I haven’t been in trouble since.’ Those are good stories, when I was able to help people. The good stories always outweigh the bad ones.”

A series of events, including the closure of the Buena Vista School District where she had worked, led her to a successful run for Saginaw City Council in 2013 and she quickly got involved with the League, attending MML trainings and serving on League committees.

As board president, Moore said her focus is on the League’s municipal finance reform campaign and the SaveMICity initiative. She also wants to encourage League members to get more involved with the League and she plans to do that by telling her story.

“My goal as president is to tell my story and to encourage everyone who will listen that there is a way to accomplish their dreams like I have,” Brenda said. “I want to go into communities and inspire others. I'll say, 'Look at me. I'm from little, old Saginaw and now I'm the League president. You can do the same thing I did and represent your community in an outstanding way.' That is my platform – to tell my story.”

The League board on Tuesday also selected Muskegon Heights Mayor Kimberley Sims as the League’s 2018-19 vice president. Sims is now in line to become League president in 2020-21.

“I’m very honored,” Sims said of being selected as vice president. “I’m truly humbled by the fact that my colleagues put that kind of confidence in me, which is a big deal. This is just not representing Muskegon Heights, but small communities throughout Michigan and that’s huge.”

As Muskegon Heights mayor, Sims is working to ensure all voices are represented in the conversation, are heard, and for communities to begin rallying around equity, empowerment, and education. Through her leadership, the Grand Valley State graduate continues to raise the standard of expectation for residents in the county and dreams of a place where inclusion and diversity are celebrated. Sims envisions a place where residents can live, work, and play; a place where differences don’t divide people but are celebrated. The fact that the League will now have its first African American woman board president and an African American vice president at the same time, isn’t lost on Sims.
"That's a big deal to be part of that history," Sims said. "It certainly makes me appreciate the honor all the more. The pressure is on. We have to represent and we have to represent in a way where the firsts can continue to happen within the League. It also further champions the mindset the League has taken on to look at the issues of exclusivity and inclusion and to make some changes to do what's necessary to lead. It says a lot about the League's commitment to move the state forward."

For photos of the League board president and vice president go to the “Awards and Honors” album in this Michigan Municipal League collection on flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/michigancommunities/albums/72157710904993143. Photos can be downloaded from the League’s flickr page for free. We just ask that the following photo credit be given: Michigan Municipal League/mml.org.

For additional information, contact Matt Bach, Michigan Municipal League communications director, at mbach@mml.org and (734) 669-6317.

Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan’s communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan’s greatest centers of potential: its communities. The League advocates on behalf of its member communities in Lansing, Washington, D.C., and the courts; provides educational opportunities for elected and appointed municipal officials; and assists municipal leaders in administering services to their communities through League programs and services. Learn more at mml.org.

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