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CONTACT US

At the Chicago Defender

Main operator (312) 225-2400

Advertising ext. 174

Editorial ext. 136

Classifieds ext. 154

Circulation ext. 161

Customer Service Hours

Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Editorial submissions to the Chicago Defender

letters@chicagodefender.com

businessnews@chicagodefender.com

editorial@chicagodefender.com

eventcal@chicagodefender.com

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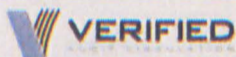
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Peggy Montes' Bronzeville Children's Museum: A jewel in the community



Peggy Montes, founder, president and visionary of an important African American institution. *Defender/Worsom Robinson*

programming that children are exposed to at the Bronzeville Children's Museum. She was named the first female chairman of the board of trustees, and the Building Committee. With Montes at the helm, \$3.5 million Harold Washington Wing was constructed. Additionally, she served as trustee and secretary of the board of Provident Hospital during the leadership of the Defender's John Sengstacke, alongside fellow trustees who aided in the construction of the new Provident Hospital-now known as Provident Hospital of Cook County.

Among her countless other accomplishments, she co-founded Leadership Illinois, a women's rights empowerment group, and was ultimately named one of the top 100 women leaders in the U.S. by Leadership America. She traveled to Beijing, China as a delegate to the 1995 United Nations Women's Conference and served as Illinois state co-chair of the U.N. Women's Conference the following year. Ever the approachable one, Montes caught the eye and ear of the White House, as President Bill Clinton appointed her to the White House Women's Conference, while Illinois Governors Jim Edgar, George H. Ryan and Rod Blagoievich have all appointed her to varying lofty posts.

Peggy proudly lives in the city with her husband, and is the mother of a son who is an attorney and a daughter, an educator-mirroring her

own career roots. She is the grandmother of three grandchildren, but a close second is her obvious love of world travel. She has visited Venezuela, Haiti, Russia, Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe), South Africa (Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg), the Caribbean, Europe and China (Beijing, Huiarou, Xian, Hanzhoo, Shanghai, Macau, Hong Kong), with more destinations to come.

She has received multiple awards every year since 1999. Some are the State of Illinois Governor's Human Rights Award, The History Makers Award, Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of African American Museums, 2006 State Farm Phenomenal Woman Award, the 2006 NCNW's Making History Award, 2006 State Olympian Woman Award of Distinguished Service and the Chicago/Calumet Underground Railroad "True North" Award. She also received the Mary Herrick Lifetime Achievement Award, the Chicago State University Lifetime Achievement Award and the Chicago Defender's Women of Excellence Award in 2007. In 2008, she received the OSMOSIS Community Award.

Not to be missed, Peggy Montes' Bronzeville Children's Museum is located at 9301 South Stony Island Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. Tours, field trips and a host of monthly special programming is available by dialing 773/721-9301.

When it comes to African American institutions, the South Side of Chicago can boast of many. The DuSable Museum, The Chicago Defender, old Provident Hospital & Medical Center and Chicago State University to name only a few. Fifteen years ago, Peggy Montes left a career as an educator with the state's public school system and stepped out on faith to found the Bronzeville Children's Museum, situated at 9301 S. Stony Island Ave.

To date, the \$2.5 million Museum still stands as not just the first, but the only African American children's museum in the U.S. Focused specifically on kids aged 3 through 9, the Museum took it's name from the thriving Black metropolis that is Bronzeville, the center of African American life and culture here for so many years, and now in the midst of a steady renaissance.

Montes seized upon a dream in making sure the Museum came to fruition. Always one to serve-especially in the arenas of women's and children's issues, the native Chicagoan has worked tirelessly over the years, including stints within the Washington mayoral administration, and on several boards, commissions and committees throughout city, county, state and national government.

She spent 27 years with the DuSable Museum, and brings a large part of that foundation to the



Montes poses with the children during a Bronzeville Children's Museum workshop. *Defender/Worsom Robinson*

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