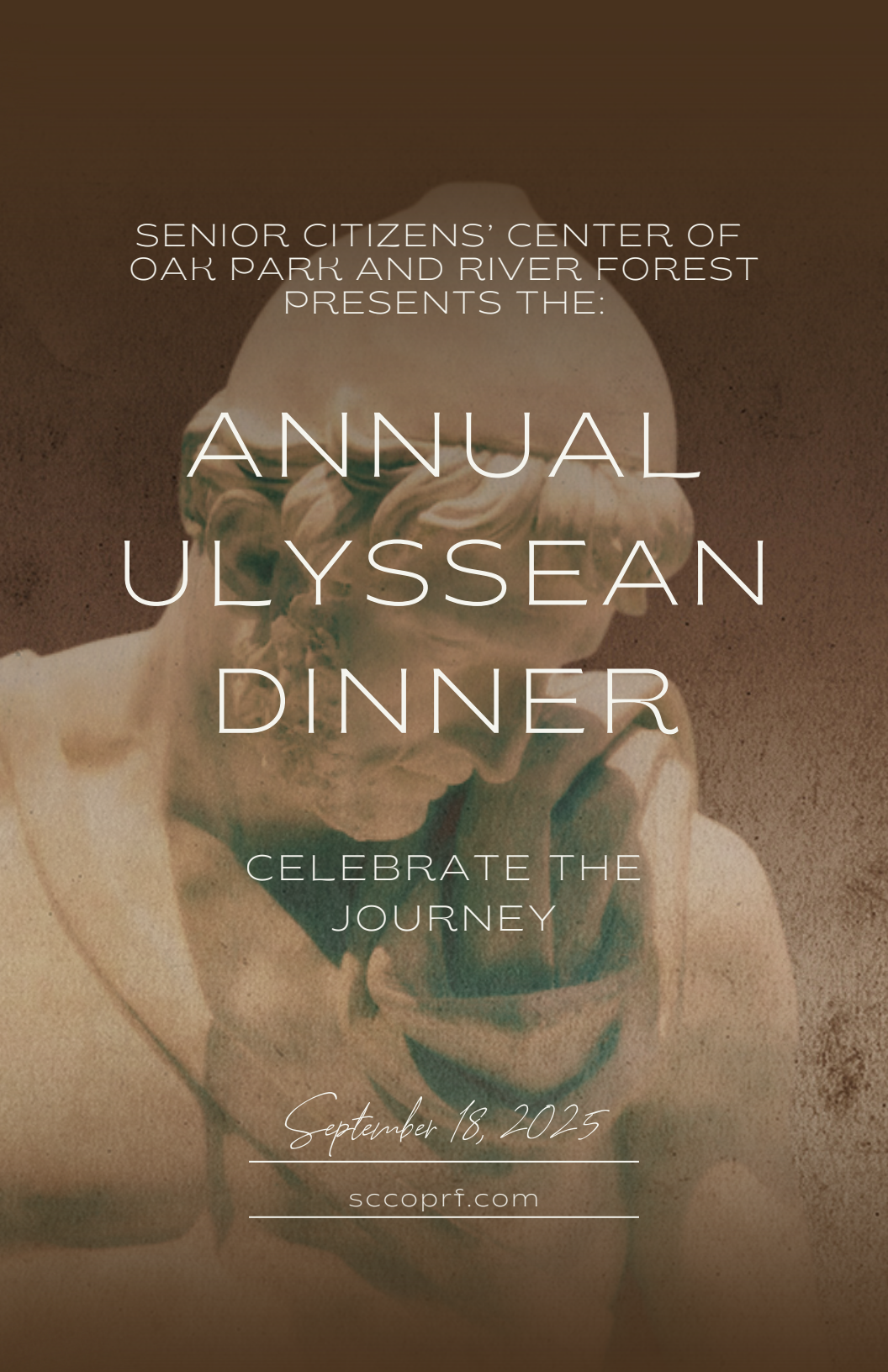




SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTER OF
OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST
PRESENTS THE:

ANNUAL ULYSSEAN DINNER

CELEBRATE THE
JOURNEY

September 18, 2025

sccopr.f.com

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PROGRAM

WINE & APPETIZERS (5:00P)

WELCOME
Georgia Keleher

DINNER (6:00P)

INTRODUCTION OF PAST ULYSSEANS
Jack Kennelly

INTRODUCTION OF AWARDEES &
PRESENTATION OF ULYSSEAN AWARDS

TINA BIRNBAUM
Abby Schmelling

PAULA WALDRON
Janis Martin

CLOSING
Georgia Keleher

Music provided by Ingrid Schimnoski

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 ULYSSEANS

TINA BIRNBAUM PAULA WALDRON

From all the past Ulysseans

2004	Redd Griffin* and Sherlynn Reid*
2005	Virginia Cassin* and Rev. F. Dean Lueking
2006	Lee Brooke* and Chatka Ruggiero
2007	Gus Kostopulos* and Sylvia* & Gysbert* Menninga
2008	Roberta L. Raymond* and Norbert Teclaw*
2009	David Sokol and Sandra Sokol
2010	Lawrence Christmas* and Donald Offermann*
2011	Marguerite Bloch* and Barbara Furlong*
2012	Jeanette Fields* and Jim Bohenstengel
2013	Hariette* & McLouis Robinet and Nancy Waichler
2014	Harold T. Rohlfig* and John L. Hedges
2015	Mena & David Boulanger and Michelle Germanson*
2016	Ann & Gene Armstrong and Marty Noll
2017	Harriet Hausman* and Barbara Ballinger*
2018	Janet & Bob* Haisman and Ken Trainor
2019	Nancy Teclaw* and Rev. Don & Dolores* Register
2020	Margorie* & Galen* Gockel and Stephanie Clemens
2021	Robert Downs, Mary Kay O'Grady, and Charles Williams
2022	John Seaton and Gerald F. Lordan
2023	Rose Meyer* and Tom & Marcia Palazzolo
2024	Marc & Dorie Blesoff, Robert Giles, and Sandy Lentz

**Deceased*

ABOUT THE ULYSSEAN AWARD



Since 2004, beginning with the Center's 50th Anniversary Celebration, we have been honoring distinguished members of the community with our Ulyssean Award.

Ulysses, King of Ithaca, is one of the legendary Greek heroes of Homer's *Iliad*. He is most famous for the ten eventful years he took to return home after the ten-year Trojan War. He is the hero who is chronicled in Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, and is a man with unfailing vision to accomplish his goal, to return home.

Inspired by the 20-year epic of this hero, Tennyson created his poem, *Ulysses*, written in the 1800s. He presents the aging King a few years after his return to Ithaca. Ulysses is restless and seeks a future much like his past life of adventure.

Before he embarks on his final journey, he extols his thirst for adventure and knowledge and encourages his aged friends to join him. He makes a speech to them, ending with,

*"Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."*

It is this thirst for learning, doing, and adventure of body and spirit that is the **Ulyssean Journey**.

The Ulyssean Award honors individuals in the community who exemplify this lifestyle and philosophy.

The specific criteria for the award are: an individual must be age 50 or above, they must have demonstrated commitment to the continued quest for lifelong learning, and they must have had significant involvement in, and made contributions to, the community which have served to broaden our social, educational, and/or cultural horizons.

Congratulations to our 2025 honorees:

Tina Birnbaum
and
Paula Waldron

ULYSSEAN AWARDEE
TINA BIRNBAUM

Tina has dedicated herself to serving the community. An early board member of Sarah's Inn, she helped launch and lead the organization's first hotline training. Since 1998, she has also been a passionate member of the League of Women Voters, serving as Co-President, committee leader, and currently is Vice President. Tina has taught both for-credit and continuing education classes at Triton and Harold Washington Colleges, led parenting workshops through Parenthesis and the Mental Health Board of Oak Park and River Forest, and has authored a book, numerous articles, and has given conference presentations on domestic violence and family relationships.

Tina has been teaching Tai Chi to adults in the Park District of Oak Park's Lifelong Learning program for over a decade, bringing both her enthusiasm and expertise to her students. With nearly thirty years of personal experience, she became certified to teach in 2005. When the instructor of the Tai Chi Colleagues class retired

in 2013, Tina stepped in and has been a dedicated volunteer teacher with the Park District of Oak Park ever since. Inspired by research showing Tai Chi's benefits for slowing cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease and in reducing falls, she initiated the creation of Tai Chi for Absolute Beginners with the goal of making the benefits of Tai Chi accessible to all.

She and her husband, Stanley, have called Oak Park home since 1978, raising two children who are now married, and are now enjoying their four grandchildren. As a lifelong learner, Tina embraces new adventures. Whether singing with the Sounds Good Chorus, taking up improv, or participating in community groups like Arbor West and the 19th Century Charitable Association, Tina brings curiosity, creativity and connection.

And her passion for civic and cultural engagement continues to evolve. Tina is deeply involved with the newly opened National Public Housing Museum in

ULYSSEAN AWARDEE

TINA BIRNBAUM

Chicago and recently joined the Raging Grannies, a spirited group that blends music and activism. She also loves to bake for family, friends, and neighbors, as she nourishes others in every sense of the word.

The PDOP's Lifelong Learning community and the Senior Citizens' Center of Oak Park and River Forest are lucky to have Tina's support and time. We are so grateful she shares her gifts with us all, and we look forward to continue learning right alongside her.

PAULA WALDRON

Paula Waldron is a relatively newcomer to the Village of Oak Park. She was born in New York — proudly hailing from The Bronx. Paula loves people and sharing what she knows with others and in turn loves learning from others. She is a person who inspires people to learn and try new things because she herself is that type of person. After leaving New York, Paula traveled around and called several great East Coast cities home — including Philadelphia and Baltimore before settling with her husband Lee in Columbus, Ohio.

While in Columbus Paula attended Ohio State University graduating with a BS in Secondary Education. Over the years Paula taught in a variety of settings. She was a special education teacher for a Columbus high school and for many years taught classes for teens at Temple Israel in Columbus. She was a Brownie and Girl Scout leader as well as being active in the PTO. During the Viet Nam war Paula helped refugees arriving in Columbus to feel at home in their new

community.

After her children were grown and she retired from teaching her life took on a new focus. She studied art history at Ohio Dominican University. For 15 years, Paula was a docent at the Columbus Museum of Art. What she enjoyed most about her time at the museum was sharing the art with children and adults visitors and the camaraderie among the staff and other docents.

Over the years Paula and Lee often visited their daughter in Oak Park. They fell in love with our community and in 2012 they moved to Oak Park. Almost immediately Paula found a home for her many gifts at the Active Adult Center now called the Lifelong Learning Center. Someone asked Paula if she would be interested in conducting a class about art and of course she said yes. In the class, Paula shares her love of travel and the wonderful art museums she has visited all over the world. She always wants to know, “What does the art do for you? What makes it

ULYSSEAN AWARDEE

PAULA WALDRON

special for you?" Her class is one of the highlights of our programs.

Paula and Lee enjoyed traveling all over the United States and Europe and what she enjoyed most was visiting the art museums, medieval castles, great food and meeting new people. For 61 years they had a wonderful life together raising 3 children and enjoying life to the fullest. Paula loved being married to Lee and loved the life they created together. Sadly, in 2019, Lee passed away and Paula began a new chapter in

her life. She says she has been very fortunate to be able to continue to enjoy traveling, going to museums and getting together with her far-flung family. She also says that she has a guardian angel on her shoulder always watching over her.

Paula absolutely charms everyone she meets and is an inspiration to all of us who know and love her. Tonight we celebrate her curious and playful spirit. We are so glad she and Lee moved to Oak Park.

SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTER OF OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST (SCCOPRF):

The Lifelong Learning Center for
Active, Creative, and Inquisitive Adults
Over the Age of 50



The **SCCOPRF**, chartered in 1954, is the oldest senior citizens' center in Illinois. As of October 7, 2019, we began collaborating with the Park District of Oak Park (PDOP).

Through the Park District of Oak Park's programming, we continue to provide educational, social, and cultural activities for people over the age of 50. Through these activities, older adults can be inspired to continue their quest for lifelong learning, rekindle their creativity and curiosity, and engage with the community. We strive to support individual independence and adventures in learning.

Since partnering with the PDOP, we have the good fortune to bring new and exciting opportunities to the community. This is a wonderful partnership that allows us to continue our mission and develop new ways to serve our neighborhood seniors.

Programming:

Ongoing activities include art, ceramics, crafts, weaving, lapidary and jewelry making, yarn craft, sewing, stained glass, language classes, exercise programs, game days, local trips, creative workshops, genealogy, film and documentary viewing and discussion, tech help, and more!

There are so many programs and classes to choose from thanks to the efforts of the Lifelong Learning team. New classes are added as suggestions are submitted and we are able to support them.

Lifelong Learning listings can be found at pdop.org. Classes are held at the Dole Center, 255 August St., Oak Park. You will find the Senior Citizens' Center of Oak Park and River Forest office there as well.

Membership:

Lifelong Learning membership is \$52/year and is available through the Park District of Oak Park. Registration for membership and programming is available at Ridgeland Common Recreation Complex, the Gymnastics & Recreation Center, the Community Recreation Center, or online at pdop.org/register.

Memberships provide many programs and classes at no additional charge. As a benefit, with a Lifelong Learning membership, there are some additional discounts offered through the Park District of Oak Park.

You do NOT have to live in the Village of Oak Park to participate in our activities. The Lifelong Learning membership is \$52/year for everyone. (The Senior Center Board pays the difference between Oak Park resident and non-resident fees. Scholarships are also available.)

Other Offerings:

The Repair Cafe at the Fox Center brings together members of the community. Volunteers help others by showing how repairs can be made to broken, torn, or non-functioning items, keeping those items out of landfills. Repair Cafe, at 624 S. Oak Park Ave. is open 10:00A-1:30P on the first Saturday of the month. (Active Adult membership is not required.)

Funding:

Thank you to the Economy Shop! We receive monthly grant funding from the Economy Shop where we are in charge of the Housewares room. We are always looking for volunteers to help us sort, price, and display items and also to work on sale days. Come join us as a volunteer or just come to shop!

Thank you! By attending this Award Dinner, you have already helped! A portion of your contribution provides funding for supplies and equipment for our programs, subsidizing out-of-district membership, and subsidizing volunteer memberships.

We would love to hear from you and have you join in! You might want to take a class or volunteer, or simply give us feedback. Please contact us via email or by phone.

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Expressing our Congratulations
to
Tina Birnbaum & Paula Waldron

Like Tina and Paula's commitment to lifelong learning, Belmont Village Oak Park strives to make every day an engaging, purposeful day for residents. Through it all, we can provide a wide spectrum of support – from assisted living to memory care. Our communities are licensed to the highest level throughout the building. And as your needs change, we can change with you, offering the right level of care for where you are right now. Our experienced management team and specially trained staff are here to provide just the right balance of care and support to suit any lifestyle.

We are proud to be a part of the Oak Park community and invite you to step inside and experience all we have to offer!

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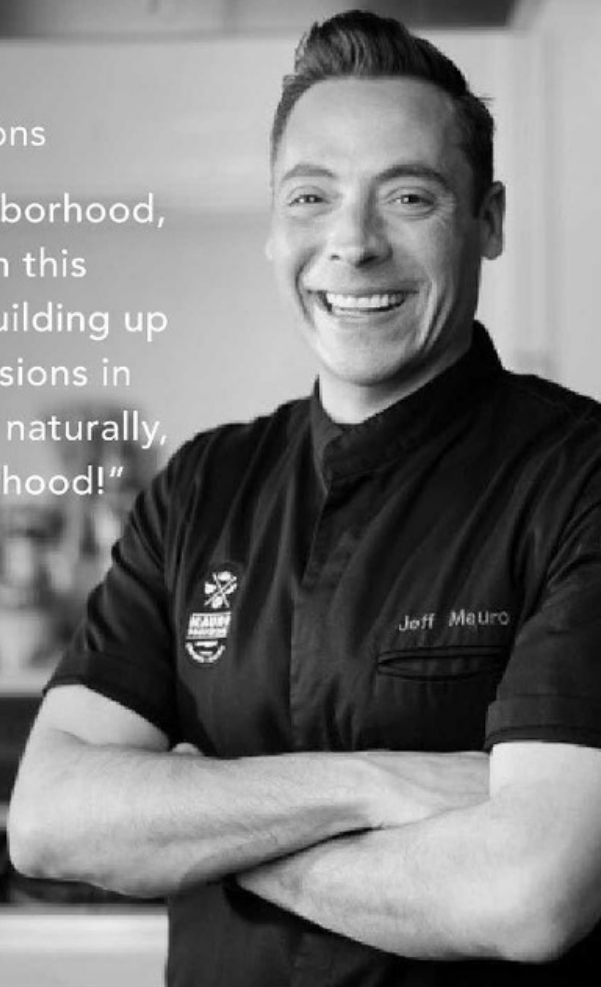
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CONGRATULATIONS

**to the
2025**

ULYSSEAN AWARD HONOREES:

Tina Birnbaum
and
Paula Waldron

Thank you for all you do for our community

**We are proud to celebrate the
2025 Ulyssean Award honorees!**

Congratulations to
Tina Birnbaum
Paula Waldron

***Your money
at work in
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**Congratulations to the
2025 Ulyssean Award**

**Honorees:
Tina Birnbaum
Paula Waldon**

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CONGRATULATIONS 2025 HONOREES:

Tina Birnbaum

and

Paula Waldron

Chris Griffith
Director of Development
p: (708) 703.6734
e: cgriffith@wintrust .com

Funds for Today and for the Future

We are **all in** to help the West Cook community today—and we have an eye on tomorrow too. For over 65 years we've connected philanthropic aspirations with local organizations and initiatives to sustain important work for the long-term benefit of all.

Turn your financial gift into a lasting legacy—starting today and for years to come.



OAK PARK-RIVER FOREST
Community Foundation

To learn more about setting up a charitable fund to benefit causes that matter to you, visit oprfcf.org or call 708-848-1560



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to start, start with us.

Senior and Disability Services

CONGRATULATES

the 2025 Ulyssean Award Honorees
Tina Birnbaum and Paula Waldron
for their commitment to lifelong learning



WHO WE SERVE

- Older Adults (60+)
- People 18-59 with disabilities
- Caregivers & Families

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- ✓ Home Repair
- ✓ Programs

HOW WE HELP



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Cafe



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Delivered Meals, Farmers
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[@OakParkTownship](https://www.facebook.com/OakParkTownship)



[oakparktownship.org](https://www.oakparktownship.org)

LIFELONG LEARNING MEMBERSHIP



The Park District of Oak Park's **Lifelong Learning Membership** is designed for individuals 50+ to enjoy specifically designed programs to foster community and engage in an active and healthy lifestyle. Memberships are \$52/year and members enjoy programming, including arts & crafts, general recreation, and health and fitness in partnership with the Senior Citizens' Center of Oak Park and River Forest. Programs for members are FREE or greatly reduced and take place at Dole Center, 225 Augusta Ave.

Learn more about the Lifelong Learning Membership:





Illinois State Representative • 78 District

Rep. Camille Y. Lilly

***Honored to S.E.R.V.E.
our community.***

On behalf of the 78th District, congratulations to the 2025 Ulyssean Award Honorees, Tina Birnbaum and Paula Waldron!

Today, we celebrate your lifelong commitment to service, leadership, and the betterment of our community. Your dedication embodies the spirit of the Ulyssean journey—bold, purposeful, and enduring.

The 78th District is proud to stand with you as you continue to inspire and uplift those around you.

***– Assistant Majority Leader,
State Representative Camille Y. Lilly***



STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 78TH DISTRICT

CAMILLE Y. LILLY

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***Congratulations Honorees
Tina Birnbaum and
Paula Waldron, and
thank you for your
commitment to
Lifelong Learning!***

SENATOR DON HARMON

Illinois Senate President

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