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**DOROTHY BROWN LEADS HISTORIC MEETING
WITH LABOR REPRESENTATIVES TO FACILITATE QUALITY MANAGEMENT
OF CLERK'S OFFICE WORK FORCE**

CHICAGO (November 28, 2006) – On Saturday, Nov. 17, the Honorable Dorothy Brown led an historic dialogue between her management team of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County ("Clerk's Office") and the leadership of AFSCME Local 3368, as part of her ongoing effort to ensure that the Clerk's Office is managed and operated effectively.

AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Peter Schmalz and AFSCME Local 3368 Acting President Jacqueline Greer were among the union leaders who spoke during the Clerk's Office Annual Bureau Retreat before an audience of almost 500 senior staff and managers. The purpose of the session was to renew the relationship between Management and the Union by discussing the role of the union steward in the work place, handling grievances at the local level, and distinguishing between acting in the role of union steward and employee. The session was convened to follow-up on a commitment made in August 2006 when Clerk Dorothy Brown and AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Peter Schmalz signed the 2004-2008 Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Clerk's Office, and echoed a shared theme of greater professionalism and better compensation for the more than 1700 unionized employees of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Clerk Brown set the tone for the dialogue by reminding everyone present, "It is fundamental that labor-management relations are conducted in a cordial, courteous, and civil manner." Clerk Brown added, "We must treat everyone--managers, employees, and customers-- with courtesy and respect." AFSCME Council 31 Regional Director Peter Schmalz agreed, "Even when there are disagreements, it is important to talk things through." He further noted, "Union stewards are representatives of the collective bargaining unit under state and federal law and the law requires stewards to represent employees in all instances." Clerk Brown reminded managers that when Union stewards enter a manager's office during the grievance process, they enter as Union representatives on equal footing with managers in an effort to resolve workplace disagreements.

The Bureau Retreat was held at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. College Preparatory High School in Chicago to promote quality assurance in the Clerk's Office and to review 2006 accomplishments and 2007 goals under the Clerk's Office Five Strategic Pillars of 21st Century Technology, Customer Service, Employee Training and Development, Operational Efficiency, and Financial Accountability.

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