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### Associate Board Member and Alumnus Sharone Mitchell Appointed Cook County Public Defender *"I have this incredible debt of gratitude to this program, to this activity."*

Chicago Debates is excited to announce that Alumnus and Associate Board member, Sharone Mitchell, was recently appointed as the new Cook County Public Defender. According to the Chicago Sun-Times, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said Mitchell is *"a nationally recognized thought leader and policy advocate who has demonstrated the ability to lead regional reform efforts working with myriad diverse stakeholders including the private bar, legislators, practitioners as well as community organizations both large and small."*

Mitchell previously served as the Director of the Illinois Justice Project since 2016 and prior to that, a trial attorney with the office of the public defender. *"My vision for the office amplifies the office's core mission; it is to ensure that this office provides the highest quality of representation for the clients assigned to our care and becomes an engine for progressive systems change,"* he said. Read the [Sun-Times article here](#).

For the last four years, Mitchell, a former Chicago Debates alumnus (Morgan Park, Class of 2001), has been a dedicated Associate Board member for Chicago Debates, participating in the organization's Criminal Justice Lecture Series on [Cash Bail Reform](#) and leading the Board's fundraising efforts through its last two virtual trivia nights. Chicago Debates recognized Mitchell as its Alum of the Year during its High School City Championship awards ceremony on April 10<sup>th</sup>. His move to Cook County Public Defender serves as a testimony to where debate can take you. *"I feel like I went pro in debate—I went from Chicago Debates to going pro as a lawyer. I would always hear if you have a problem with the law, change the law. I might be too literal of a person, but I decided to go change the law,"* he said. *"I was reflecting on my time in debate and thinking about this year's current debate topic of Criminal Justice Reform. I was thinking about how it comes full circle: I was working on this issue, but there were kids that were studying this very issue."*

Chicago Debates is proud to have Mitchell serving the city and county in this capacity and sharing his knowledge and talents with the organization. *"I talk about the public defender's office being a great engine of social change...I think Chicago Debates is a great engine of social change because we are building up the leaders of our city. We're putting them on a path to change the world. I have this incredible debt of gratitude to this program, to this activity. Our city needs people who are going to be actively engaged in our betterment and improvement. I think Chicago Debates does such a great job of molding those leaders."*

You can support Chicago Debates by making a donation at [ChicagoDebates.org/donate](https://ChicagoDebates.org/donate) or by texting CHIDEBATES to 243725.

*About Chicago Debates: Chicago Debates is bridging the opportunity gap for Chicago Public School (CPS) students by providing them with an after-school program that supports their academic, career, and leadership success. Our mission is to advance the educational achievement, community contributions, and life success of Chicago's youth through the transformative power of academic debate. We envision a world in which Chicago youth are empowered to find their voice, succeed in college and career, and become leaders in their community. Debate may not fix all of the world's problems, but it can shape the next generation of leaders who will. We exist to ensure that includes some of Chicago's most marginalized youth. Chicago Debates quickly pivoted to virtually deliver debate programming when school was shut-down last March due to COVID-19. Within this school year, nearly 900 students have participated in 43 tournaments hosted by Chicago Debates.*