Meet Sheila Simon

Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon offers a lifetime and legacy of public service. She is a lawyer, teacher and working mother.

Her record includes four years as a Jackson County prosecutor fighting crime, a decade as a Southern Illinois University law professor teaching young legal minds and participation in the Illinois Reform Commission, which aimed to restore ethics and trust in government.

As Lieutenant Governor, Simon is the second highest executive officer in Illinois, and her mission is to make government more accountable, accessible and transparent for the taxpayers of Illinois.

She acts as the Governor’s point person on education reform and is leading efforts to increase college completion, inspire ethical government, protect our military bases from closure, improve services in rural areas and keep our waterways clean and safe.

In her first year in office, Simon conducted a fact-finding tour of the state’s 48 community colleges to highlight the role they play in increasing the state’s college completion rate. Simon wants 60 percent of working-age adults to hold meaningful college degrees or certificates by 2025, up from 41 percent today.

Simon is setting a higher standard for ethical leadership by releasing detailed financial profiles of herself and her senior staff each year so the public can see if any potential conflicts of interest exist. To safeguard taxpayer dollars, she requested a 2012 budget that is a fraction of a percent of the state’s overall spending and equal to the lowest appropriation request for the office in the last 15 years.

Public Service

Simon graduated from Georgetown University’s law school in 1987. Instead of choosing to work at a large corporate law firm, she chose to serve clients without financial resources at Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance. She advocated there for people facing domestic violence, discrimination and loss of housing.

Simon then prosecuted DUI and domestic violence cases as an Assistant State’s Attorney in Jackson County. Four years later, she helped launch the Southern Illinois School of Law’s domestic violence clinic while also teaching legal writing as part of the faculty. The domestic violence clinic continues to serve clients and train law students today.

Ethical Leadership

For Simon, serving the community also means political participation. As a Carbondale City Council member, she was a conservative steward of the city’s budget and consistently advocated for open, ethical government. Her record on ethics made her a natural choice for Governor Quinn’s Illinois Reform Commission, which helped pass the first campaign contribution limits under Illinois law.

Family

Family has been and continues to be an important part of Simon’s life. Her parents, the late Paul and Jeanne Simon, served in the Illinois House together, and were a lifelong team of public servants. Her father, Paul, is remembered across the state for his honesty and integrity in public service.

Simon and her husband, Perry, were married in 1987, and they have two daughters, Reilly and Brennan. Perry teaches at John A. Logan Community College in Carterville, Illinois. Filling out their extended family are the members of Simon’s band, Loose Gravel, with whom she has performed the banjo and bassoon for more than 10 years.