

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

FEDERAL CORRUPTION TRIAL

BURKE GUILTY

In dramatic fall, longtime master of Chicago’s machine politics convicted on 13 counts

Racketeering charge alone carries up to 20 years in prison, with sentencing in June



Former Chicago Ald. Edward Burke leaves the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago on Thursday after being convicted by a federal jury. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

In 14th Ward, where former alderman was king, conviction greeted with both shrugs and cheers

By Caroline Kubzansky and Gregory Royal Pratt
Chicago Tribune

Michele Ryba credits former Ald. Edward Burke with the fact she feels safe walking to the CTA Orange Line at dawn.

For her, the quality of life in the Southwest Side’s 14th Ward is more important than the corruption case federal prosecutors brought against the ward’s former longtime alderman that resulted in Burke’s conviction Thursday on all but one of the 14 counts that he used his public position

to extort businesses.

On a recent night, Ryba, 61, considered whether a guilty verdict would make her think differently about Burke’s legacy. She took several moments, then shook her head.

“I can’t say it wouldn’t matter if he committed a crime, but he was a good alderman and he got things done for the ward,” she said.

And therein lies the pro and the con that makes Burke’s case intensely local yet also ubiquitous across Chicago as alderman

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MIXED VERDICTS FOR OTHER DEFENDANTS:
Real estate developer Charles Cui, who was accused of hiring former Ald. Ed Burke’s firm to do property tax appeals in exchange for Burke’s intervention in a permit dispute for a pole sign for a Binny’s Beverage Depot, was convicted on five counts. Meanwhile, Burke’s longtime aide Peter Andrews Jr. was acquitted of all counts. A complete acquittal is rare in Chicago’s federal courthouse, particularly in a high-profile corruption case.

By Jason Meisner, Ray Long and Megan Crepeau
Chicago Tribune

Seven weeks ago, officials at Chicago’s federal courthouse used brown butcher paper to cover up large hallway displays highlighting infamous political corruption cases, featuring names like Walker, Ryan, Blagojevich and Vrdolyak.

On Thursday, a federal jury added another name to that inglorious roster: Edward M. Burke.

In a verdict that will reverberate through city politics, Burke was convicted of racketeering conspiracy and a dozen other counts for using the clout of his elected office to try to win private

law business from developers.

The nearly clean sweep of guilty verdicts capped a stunning fall for Burke, the former head of the city Finance Committee and a Democratic political machine master who served a record 54 years in the City Council before stepping down in May.

The jury of nine women and three men deliberated for about 23 hours over four days before reaching its verdict on the 19-count indictment.

In addition to racketeering, Burke also was found guilty

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Governor’s mansion all spruced up for holidays

By Christopher Borrelli
Chicago Tribune

The Governor’s Mansion in Springfield looks lovely right now, at the holidays. If you happen to be near, swing by. It is, after all, the people’s house, and if you are a resident of Illinois, it’s your house, too (albeit, only certain rooms during designated visiting hours; also, don’t touch anything, and forget spending the night, but it’s yours). With that in mind, I drove to Springfield the other day to see how my holiday decorations look. I was inspired by a new book, “A House That Made History: The Illinois



Illinois first lady M.K. Pritzker, who decorated the Governor’s Mansion in Springfield for the holidays, has written a new book about the building’s history. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Governor’s Mansion, Legacy of an Architectural Treasure,” by our state’s first lady M.K. Pritzker.

The archival images in the book of Christmas decorations at the Governor’s Mansion suggested I’d find something smart, predictable yet elegantly

designed. Still, J.B. does seem to be mulling a White House run, so I was secretly concerned my holiday decorations could lean populist. Would they put inflatable Minions on the lawn?

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ELECTION 2024 STATE’S ATTORNEY

Candidate faces scrutiny over reversed conviction

Police coerced 11-year-old into false confession; O’Neill Burke defends role in prosecuting boy

By A.D. Quig and Sam Charles
Chicago Tribune

Two short years after joining the Cook County state’s attorney’s office, Eileen O’Neill was lead prosecutor in the 1993 murder case of Anna Gilvis, an 83-year-old woman found dead and beaten inside her Chicago Lawn home, her hands tied and throat slashed.

The crime was heinous. But just as shocking was that the defendant was an 11-year-old boy, referred to in court documents only as “A.M.” because he was a juvenile. O’Neill helped

secure A.M.’s conviction, which was later thrown out by a federal judge who said his confession to police was coerced.

O’Neill — now Eileen O’Neill Burke — is one of two Democrats running in the March 19 primary to replace Kim Foxx as Cook County state’s attorney. O’Neill Burke’s record as a prosecutor, criminal defense attorney and judge has come under increased scrutiny as she campaigns as a candidate who, while keeping some of Foxx’s reforms, would bring a more “balanced”

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