

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

MADIGAN TRIAL

‘Son of RICO’ set to oversee in court

Federal judge will use expertise trying Madigan proceedings

By Megan Crepeau, Jason Meisner and Ray Long
Chicago Tribune

Chicago has long been known as a place where there are no coincidences. But one of the biggest political racketeering cases in the city’s history — USA v. Michael J. Madigan — actually did land randomly at the bench of a judge nicknamed the “Son of RICO.”

U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey turned 5 the year his father G. Robert Blakey’s revolutionary legislation, the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statute, was signed into law.

The statute, designed to go after organized crime, made the elder Blakey into legal royalty. His son chose a legal path that, for the most part, kept his boots on the ground. “Jack” Blakey spent most of his career as a prosecutor, both for the federal government and at Cook County’s rough-and-tumble criminal courthouse.

But he kept in touch with the RICO legacy, helping draft the Illinois racketeering legislation that focused on powerful street gangs. And in 2014, as a nominee for the federal judgeship, his introduction to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee also mentioned his famous father.

“It is a twofer,” then-Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Illinois, said of Blakey. “We are getting Jack and his dad. ... If there is any state in the union that needs experts on RICO, it is Illinois.”

This week, Madigan — a former Illinois political powerhouse fallen spectacularly from grace — is going to trial on RICO charges

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Barrages backdrop to Oct. 7 events

Israel, Hezbollah, Hamas fire salvos; war victims grieve

By Melanie Lidman and Tia Goldenberg
Associated Press

RE’IM, Israel — Israelis held somber ceremonies Monday to mark a year since the deadliest attack in the country’s history, a Hamas-led raid that shattered its sense of security and has since spiraled into wars on two fronts with no end in sight.

Hamas marked the anniversary of its Oct. 7, 2023, attack by firing a barrage of rockets at Tel Aviv, underscoring its resilience after a year of war and devastation in Gaza. Lebanon’s Hezbollah, which has been firing rockets into Israel for the past year in support of its ally Hamas, launched more than 170 across the border on Monday.

As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to press Israel’s campaigns on all sides, the military said fighter jets targeting Hezbollah positions bombed

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Mayor Brandon Johnson announces six school board nominees he'll appoint once the current board resigns at Sweet Holy Spirit Church in Chicago on Monday. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

Johnson appoints new members to school board

‘I am going to stand firm,’ mayor says after shake-up, ongoing CPS strife

By Alice Yin, Nell Salzman and Ikram Mohamed
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson debuted most of his new Chicago Board of Education on Monday, his latest move to wrest back control of the Chicago Public Schools systems after weeks of strife between him and embattled CEO Pedro Martinez.

Following Friday’s dramatic announcement of all seven board members’ resignations, Johnson sought to wipe the slate clean at a South Side news conference in which he rolled out replacements until a new 21-member hybrid board is installed in January. But the noise surrounding last week’s stunning shakeup has hardly died down, with condemnation continuing to pour in from City Council, including Johnson’s progressive allies, as well as Springfield.

During a lengthy and combative news conference at a South Side church, Johnson attempted to cast the turmoil as an attack on his identity and progressive values — after a group of hecklers shouted down the beginning of his remarks by chanting “This board is not legit, not legit!”

“The most legitimate existence of anyone in this country is the legitimate existence of a Black man,” the mayor retorted, as the small group of mostly Black female protesters filed out. “I understand that there are individuals that wish to use this as a political opportunity to sow seeds of doubt, but make no mistake about it: I am going to stand firm.”

Johnson announced only six nominees to

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Protesters, including Cota Truss, left, interrupt and chant “not legit” as Mayor Brandon Johnson announced his new Chicago Board of Education members on Monday at Sweet Holy Spirit Church in Chicago.

“I understand that there are individuals that wish to use this as a political opportunity to sow seeds of doubt, but make no mistake about it: I am going to stand firm.”

— Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson

Biden EPA requires Chicago to dramatically speed up its replacement of toxic lead pipes



Discarded lead pipe is removed from a home in the 10100 block of South Green Street in Chicago in May. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

By Michael Hawthorne
Chicago Tribune

Chicago must replace every toxic lead pipe connecting homes to water mains within the next two decades — an aggressive deadline imposed this week by President Joe Biden after his administration initially proposed giving city officials twice as long to complete the job.

The more stringent requirement is part of a broader package of changes in federal regulations intended to protect Americans from a metal so dangerous it is unsafe at any level of exposure.

More than 9 million homes nationwide get drinking water from a service line made of lead. Chicago has more than 400,000

of the toxic pipes, by far the most of any U.S. city. Illinois has more than any other state.

Biden, who will speak about the new regulations Tuesday in Wisconsin, promised during his 2020 campaign to accelerate service line replacements after decades of inaction from federal and state officials. One of the big infrastructure bills his administration brokered with Congress earmarked \$15 billion toward the effort. Billions more will be needed in Chicago alone.

“This is a matter of public health, a matter of environmental justice, a matter of basic human rights, and it is finally being met with the urgency it demands,”

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