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CLERK DOROTHY BROWN-AFSCME SIGN FOUR-YEAR LABOR CONTRACT; CONTINUE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

CHICAGO (August 29, 2006) – On August 28, 2006, The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 31 Regional Director Peter Schmalz, signed the 2004-2008 Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, AFSCME Council 31 and AFSCME Local 3368. Clerk Brown and Mr. Schmalz presented a common theme of greater professionalism and better compensation for the more than 1,700 union employees of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

Negotiations for the new labor agreement began in 2005. The contract governs the working conditions, pay plan and benefits of the Clerk's Office collective bargaining unit. The Clerk's Office was first unionized in 1983.

"I am very pleased that we were able to come to terms with AFSCME to ensure that employees of the Clerk's Office are treated properly and that the Clerk's Office is managed and operated effectively," said Clerk Brown. "While it was a laborious process, we were able to work with AFSCME Council 31 and AFSCME Local 3368 to improve the Clerk's Office pay plan and health benefits while building upon our efforts to create a competent and responsive work force."

Mr. Schmalz offered his appreciation to Clerk Brown and her bargaining team, thanking them for their professionalism. According to Mr. Schmalz, the 2004 -2008 contract is "the best ever negotiated with the Clerk's Office."

In addition to the improved pay plan and use of semi-automatic promotions, new features of the 2004-2008 contract include clarification of overtime rules, flex work schedules, and use of accrued time. Management and Union agreed on new rules for assigning employees to work on temporary, short-term "special projects," as needed to improve Office efficiency and strengthen its efforts to reduce employee absenteeism.

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Clerk Brown signs collective bargaining agreement.



The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court Cook (center), and Peter Schmalz (left), Regional Director of AFSCME 31, and Gail Lutz (right), Clerk of the Circuit Court Chief Human Resources Officer, are flanked by members of the Collective Bargaining Unit Team during the contract signing.