

Chicago Tribune

# METRO

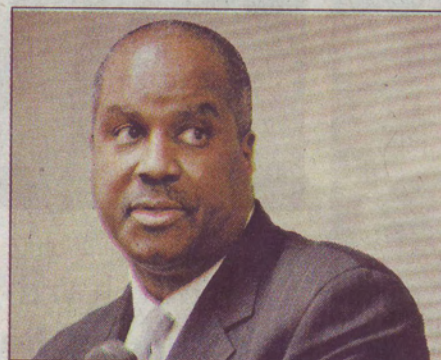
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CHICAGO



Dorothy Tillman's hat has spawned creative slogans, from her "Inside the Hat" newsletter to Pat Dowell's campaign buttons and Mell Monroe's campaign posters.



Tribune photos by Candice C. Cusic

Ald. Dorothy Tillman (left) is facing major challengers Pat Dowell and Mell Monroe in the race to represent the 3rd Ward.

## Tillman foes mount head-on challenge

By Mickey Ciokajlo  
Tribune staff reporter

### CAMPAIGN 2007

With her audacious style and flamboyant wide-brimmed hats, Ald. Dorothy Tillman (3rd) is one of the more recognizable members of the Chicago City Council.

She may be best known for pushing the issue of slave reparations and corporate ties to the slave trade, a legacy of her work in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Now, Tillman, 59, finds herself in a tough re-election battle against two ma-

major challengers. They say that while she has been talking about the struggles of African-Americans, she has been neglecting the basics in the 3rd Ward on the South Side, such as luring jobs, developing vacant lots and cleaning up the litter.

It is a common line of attack against longtime incumbents.

But Tillman also finds herself under attack from labor unions because she sided with Mayor Richard Daley, voting against an ordinance that would have

raised wages at "big-box" stores in the city.

"She's long on rhetoric and just short on results," said challenger Pat Dowell. "She's lost touch with the people who elected her."

Dowell has run against Tillman before, but now she has the backing of the Service Employees International Union,

PLEASE SEE 3RD WARD, PAGE 9

*What's Your Problem will return on Sunday.*

# 3RD WARD: Tillman calls labor snub retaliation

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which is targeting a number of incumbents who voted against the wage hike.

Tillman dismissed the snub by the unions, saying they're retaliating for her years of pushing organized labor to include more African-Americans. And she points to her accomplishments over more than two decades as alderman.

At a recent candidates' forum, she said she had brought development to the ward, but that she was also keeping an eye out for its seniors and poor residents.

"We have brought this ward from nowhere to somewhere," Tillman said. "Everybody wants it, but the 3rd Ward is not for sale."

The ward is undergoing a transformation, as high-rise public housing complexes have been torn down. Real estate val-

ues have escalated in Bronzeville, the ward's heart, and in the thin strip of territory that juts north to the booming South Loop. But it includes parts of less-affluent neighborhoods in a dog leg that stretches west, across the Dan Ryan Expressway to Englewood, Fuller Park and Back of the Yards.

Tillman became alderman in 1984, replacing Tyrone Kenner, who vacated the seat after he was convicted of extortion and fraud in federal court. The late Mayor Harold Washington appointed Tillman, an outspoken community and civil rights activist, but it took six months to win confirmation during the racially charged council wars of the time.

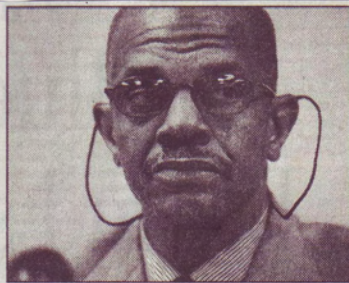
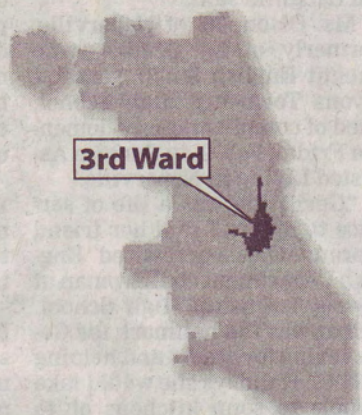
Ever since those raucous days, Tillman has been involved in controversy, whether it was pushing through a slave-reparations ordinance or waving a handgun during a spirited community meeting in the early 1990s. (She still won't discuss the gun incident.)

A native of Montgomery, Ala., Tillman moved to Chicago in 1965 as a volunteer for Martin Luther King Jr. She makes frequent references to King and Washington, Chicago's first black mayor.

In her office on South King Drive, she keeps a map of the ward that shows where new developments have been built and where others are planned. She says the ward is a much cleaner and safer place than it was in 1984. She talks earnestly about efforts to attract jobs to the ward and about the need to build housing for low-income residents.

"We laid out the whole plan for this ward with Harold Washington," Tillman said. "This is not a plan that just came in the last few years."

Although she disagrees with Mayor Richard M. Daley more frequently than many of her colleagues, she has voted with him with increasing frequency in recent years. In 1989 and 1990,



Tribune photos by Candice C. Cusic  
**Angelo James (left) and Benjamin Harris, 3rd Ward candidates.**

when Daley was newly elected, she followed his lead only 33 percent of the time, according to a study by University of Illinois at Chicago political scientist Dick Simpson.

But between May 2003 and November 2006, Tillman voted with the mayor 63 percent of the time.

Dowell and the other major candidate in the race, Mell Monroe, hope to force Tillman into a runoff, a place no incumbent wants to be.

Speaking Saturday at a union rally for aldermanic challengers, Dowell said, "Right now, the City Council is acting like a Goliath, but we're going to elect a whole bunch of Davids. We have to make this city hospitable to everyone."

Dowell had begun by paying homage to her upbringing in

New York City as the daughter of a union janitor [her late father] and a union city worker.

Later, she got the crowd of about 400 people chanting her campaign slogans, "Dump the hat, vote for Pat," and "Dorothy Tillman's got to go."

Dowell, 49, an urban planner who works for the University of Chicago, got 35 percent of the vote in 2003, the first time she ran for alderman. Tillman narrowly escaped a runoff that time by winning 52 percent of the vote in the four-candidate field.

Monroe, a corporate job recruiter, is waging an aggressive campaign of his own after volunteering for Dowell in 2003.

Dowell said she welcomes Monroe to the race, believing that two strong challengers will push Tillman's vote below 50 percent, forcing her into a run-

off.

As she talks about the election and the ward, Dowell is soft spoken, almost the antithesis of Tillman.

Monroe, 52, looks and sounds his corporate background, sharply dressed and talking tough about beating Tillman and pursuing employers for the ward.

"My job is to take out Dorothy Tillman and return the ward to the people," Monroe said.

Tillman responds by pointing to the budding Blues District at 47th Street and King Drive, with the Harold Washington Cultural Center as its anchor.

But Monroe and Dowell have attempted to turn the cultural center into a negative, highlighting the fact that it is run by Tillman's daughter, Jimalita, and that it lacks consistent programming.

Monroe said the cultural center is underutilized and Tillman has failed to build on to benefit the surrounding business district since it opened in 2004.

"One block off the thing and you're back in the '60s," Monroe said.

Also running are community activist Angelo James and long-time ward resident Benjamin Harris.

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