



For immediate release
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Carol Jo Fritts Honored with Illinois Bankers President's Award

Carol Jo Fritts, President and Chairman of the Board of First Neighborhood Bancshares, Inc. and President of First Neighbor Bank in Toledo, Ill., was honored with the 2019 Illinois Bankers President's Award. Fritts is the first woman ever to serve on the board of directors of the Illinois Bankers Association (IBA). The award ceremony was held on September 24 during the IBA's Women in Banking Conference in Springfield, Ill, and it was presented by IBA President and CEO Linda Koch. This is the inaugural year for the President's Award, which will be presented annually to an individual who has been a champion for women in the banking industry.

Fritts, who has been with the bank for almost 45 years, has been CEO since 1987 and president and CEO since 1988. She began her career as a teller and has worked in all departments of the bank. After becoming president, she led in the development of a holding company for the bank and a holding company for the bank's Employee Stock Ownership Plan.

She has been an instructor at the IBA as well as Lake Land College. She is a graduate of the Rural Partners Community and Economic Development Program, the Illinois Bankers School at Southern Illinois University, the Graduate School of Banking and the Human Resource School at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, along with numerous other classes and banking seminars. She also serves on the board of the Community Bankers Association.

The Illinois Bankers Association is a full-service trade association dedicated to creating a positive business climate that benefits the entire banking industry and the communities they serve. Founded in 1891, the IBA brings together state and national banks and savings banks of all sizes.