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Interviews with Anne McGlone Burke and Josephine Baskin Minow

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North Side, South Side, All Around the Town: Making History Interviews with Anne McGlene Burke and Josephine Baskin Minow

TIMOTHY J. GILFOYLE

Since the mid-twentieth century, Anne Burke and Jo Minow have embodied a distinctive form of civic engagement in Chicago. Their lifelong commitment to child advocacy—to use the city’s legal and political systems to protect the interests of children—make Burke and Minow heirs to a reform tradition extending back more than a century to the activism of Jane Addams, Louise de Koven Bowen, and Augusta (Mrs. Julius) Rosenwald. Minow has been active in leading child advocacy organizations, serving as president of the board of directors of the Juvenile Protective Association, a board member of the Jane Addams Juvenile Court Foundation, a member of the Citizens Committee of the Juvenile Court of Cook County, the founder of the Children’s Division of the Hospitality and Information Service in Washington, DC, and cochair of the special study on juvenile justice for the Chicago Community Trust. Burke was the first female judge on the Illinois Court of Claims, special counsel to Governor Jim Edgar for Child Welfare Services, and a justice of both the Appellate Court of Illinois and the Illinois Supreme Court. From 2002 to 2004, she was interim chair for the controversial Protection of Children and Young People of the US Roman Catholic Church. As a young woman, Anne Burke was the instrumental force in the creation of the Special Olympics half a century ago. The longtime advocate of disabled children Eunice Kennedy Shriver later wrote, “When the history of the Chicago Special Olympics is written there will have to be a special chapter to recount the contributions of Anne Burke.”
Burke and Minow were born and raised in different Chicago neighborhoods, but nevertheless shared common childhood experiences. Josephine Baskin Minow was born on November 3, 1926, the daughter of Salem N. and Bessie Sampson Baskin. She grew up in an apartment building at 429 Briar Place in the North Side neighborhood of Lakeview, just off Sheridan Road. Like many Chicago families, Minow’s parents never had a car or learned how to drive. Consequently, transit during her childhood consisted of walks, streetcars, and buses. Minow remembers the easily accessible Lake Michigan beach at the end of her street before the construction of Outer Lake Shore Drive. For elementary school, she walked to the nearby Nettelhorst School on Broadway, and for secondary school, she commuted via streetcar to Nicholas Senn High School in Edgewater.3

Both of Minow’s parents were the children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants to Chicago. She speaks of her father with considerable pride. Even though he only possessed an “eighth grade education,” Minow points out that he “ended up lecturing at the University of Chicago, and being on the State Street Council, and having his own advertising agency.” She adds that her father “was the head of the Baskin Stores and then opened the Salem N. Baskin Advertising Agency in the 333 North Michigan building.” Baskin devoted every evening to reading. “He was one of the founders of the Great Books program at the University of Chicago,” Minow adds. “He was extremely scholarly.”4

Anne Marie McGlone Burke was born on February 3, 1944, the daughter of George and Helen Van de Warker McGlone. Burke’s parents were children of Irish immigrants to Chicago and, like Minow’s, came from modest origins. “My parents, neither one of them went to high school,” Burke points out. “They were grammar school-educated only.” George McGlone worked as a bartender while his wife raised their four children.5

Burke proudly identifies as a South Side girl. “I grew up on Chicago’s South Side, and I really haven’t moved much farther north my entire life,” she claims. Like Minow, Burke reports, “I never lived in a home. I always lived in an apartment building.” Burke’s childhood experiences were defined by the streets and Catholic parish neighborhoods in which she resided. “When I was born, we lived at 47th and Ingleside, St. Ambrose Parish in Chicago,” she remembers. As a small child, Burke also lived close to Lake Michigan. “We walked straight down 47th Street, east of 47th Street Beach, which is where I learned to swim.” In retrospect, “I had a great childhood, there’s no question about it.”6
Burke’s family always stayed close to her schools and parishes. “When I was around ten, we moved to St. Rita Parish on West 63rd Street, above a hat store, across the street from the church.” When she entered high school, Burke recalls, “I just moved down the street, to a second-floor apartment at 6615 South Washtenaw Avenue, which still is there today. It’s still St. Rita Parish.” Chicago’s South Side so defined Burke’s childhood that she now admits, “I didn’t even know there was a North Side.”

High school was a formative experience for both Minow and Burke. “I loved Senn High School,” Minow effuses. “It was my world.” She chuckles that her high school yearbook described her as “unusual.” Senn indeed had a huge impact on Minow. Her writing and language talents were honed by Helen Reed, her Latin teacher. “I studied Latin for four years and I just adored her,” states Minow. “That was one of my favorite subjects.”
Minow was also influenced by Henrietta Hafemann, a teacher of history and international relations for forty years at Senn, as well as a published author. “She was a very intoxicating personality,” remembers Minow, “and very passionate about foreign affairs, and she got me involved.” Hafemann sparked Minow’s interest in international relations, an activity she continued later in life as an active and then honorary member of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, now the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, from 1977 to 2003. Minow remembers how Hafemann “was very respected in her field; she was on radio or television a couple of times.”

Burke attended Maria High School, a Roman Catholic, all-female school at 6727 South California Avenue on the eastern side of Marquette Park. She admits that “even though I was a C student, I was active in a lot of activities at school, in the plays, and all the athletic programs.” Equally influential was the Chicago Park District. “I hung out at Morrill [Elementary] playground and all the parks,” Burke explains, “and so I grew up in the park and became very active in all the activities, even beanbag throwing. Whatever it was, I was at the park.”

One teacher was particularly influential for Burke. “Sister Henrietta was concerned about me and always wanted know about what was I going to do when I graduated from high school,” Burke remembers. “I never thought about it, but when I said I love to play basketball, volleyball, twirl my baton, tap dance, swimming, and all that, she said you should be a gym teacher.” Burke believes that encouragement helped her finish high school and become a counselor and recreation leader for the Park District. In 1962, she received a five-hundred-dollar scholarship to George Williams College at 53rd Street and Drexel Avenue, which was ideal for Burke because the school educated most of the physical education teachers and social workers for the YMCAs throughout the country.
Minow also elected to stay close to home when it came time for college, matriculating at Northwestern University in Evanston. She eventually majored in English literature and was active in the Wildcat Council, an organization that promotes the university, as well as the Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority. After graduating with a BA in 1948, Minow remained active in Northwestern activities. From 1974 to 1996, she served on the Executive Committee of the Northwestern Library Council. In 1978, despite the resistance from Northwestern University President Robert Strotz, she was instrumental in founding the Women’s Board. “He didn’t want it,” Minow recounts, “And we talked him into having it, and it’s flourishing.” Minow’s contributions to Northwestern will live on, as she has arranged for the creation of a posthumous Josephine Minow Scholarship for Inner-City Students at Northwestern.

Josephine Baskin also met Newton N. Minow at Northwestern. The young man had recently returned from India after serving in the 835th Signal Service Battalion during World War II. Minow elected to attend Northwestern on the GI Bill, in part because of a special program that allowed him to combine his undergraduate and legal studies. On May 29, 1949, Baskin married Minow at the Standard Club in Chicago. Their marriage not only proved enduring, but among the most influential in the history of Chicago.
Anne Burke encountered two obstacles at George Williams College. First, “I was diagnosed with a ‘perceptual handicap,’ now known as dyslexia,” explains Burke. Then at the end of her freshman year, the college moved to suburban Downers Grove, forcing her to drop out because she did not have a car and also needed to work. But Burke was not discouraged. “When that door closed, another opened,” she explains, “and I began working full-time for the Chicago Park District.” After teaching physical education as part of her college program, she quickly passed the civil service exam and became a full-time instructor. She also volunteered for a new program. “In 1965, the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation gave $10,000 to the Chicago Park District to open their municipal facilities for people with disabilities,” remembers Burke. “There was an announcement: does anybody want to volunteer? So I raised my hand.” Rarely has such a simple act proven so influential.

Above: Ed and Anne Burke at the first international Special Olympics Games, Soldier Field, July 1968. Below: Following the event, Eunice Kennedy Shriver wrote to thank Burke for her efforts. Shriver’s handwritten postscript begins, “It was the greatest and so were you.”
Attitudes about individuals with intellectual disabilities were very different in the 1960s. “I had to go begging for kids to come to the park because most of the kids who were diagnosed with a mental disability were in institutions,” recounts Burke. “Medical doctors said put them away, they’re not going to be able to do anything, or they were kept at home in a closet and never brought out publicly.” At West Pullman Park at 123rd and Stewart Streets, Burke and her fellow Park District volunteers did something different. “We had a flourishing program with a hundred kids. We had summer day camps and skill classes, and the kids came all year around.”21 The experience was revealing. Burke realized that disabled youths could throw baseballs, run races, ice skate, and twirl batons. More importantly, it transformed their lives: “Sports competition gave them validation, encouragement, and a stronger self-image,” she says.22

In August 1967, she invited Park District leaders Dan Shannon and William McFetridge to Park Parents’ Night. “They were flabbergasted,” remembers Burke. “I remember Bill McFetridge crying; he said he never saw a disabled child before.” Burke immediately suggested a citywide track-and-field event at Soldier Field. Park District officials downtown would have ignored her, Burke admits, but “they were going to help because I was the person from Bill McFetridge and Dan Shannon, who said that this is what we needed to do.”23 With the support of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation and Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Chicago Special Olympics were held on July 20, 1968, at Soldier Field with 900 participants from twenty-five states and Canada. That single event quickly developed into a national movement and eventually the International Special Olympics.24 In 2016, Burke made a bold request to add a fifth star to the Chicago flag to represent the city’s role as the birthplace of the Special Olympics.25

In 1969, Burke helped her husband campaign for alderman of Chicago’s 14th Ward. Ed Burke won the special election, held to replace his late father, Joseph P. Burke, and is now the longest-serving alderman in the history of the city council.
After graduation from Northwestern, Jo Minow briefly worked as an assistant to the advertising director at Mandel Brothers Department Store and then taught at Francis W. Parker and Anshe Emet Day Schools. In 1952, while living in Alexandria, Virginia, during Newton Minow’s clerkship with US Supreme Court Chief Justice Frederick Vinson, she gave birth to the first of their three daughters. The young family returned to metropolitan Chicago a year later, moving into a home at 771 Vernon Avenue in Glencoe and a decade later to 375 Palos Road, also in Glencoe. Their North Shore residence was interrupted only by a two-year hiatus in Washington, DC, when Newton Minow served as chair of the Federal Communications Commission in the Cabinet of President John F. Kennedy. For nearly four decades, from 1953 to 1991, the Minows raised their family in Glencoe while remaining influential in Chicago civic life.

Jo Minow’s priority has always been her family and raising three accomplished daughters—Nell, Martha, and Mary—each of whom became authors, attorneys, and leaders in their respective professions. Minow nevertheless found the time and energy to lead a vibrant public life, much of which focused on child advocacy. From 1961 to 1963, she was the founder and coordinator of the Children’s Division of the Hospitality and Information Service (THIS) in Washington, DC. Minow recognized that public servants on the lower rungs of the diplomatic corps needed more support yet resisted outreach programs. “But they admitted their children
needed help, so I thought we would reach them that way,” she explains. “It worked very well, because we got to the kids, and through the kids we got to the parents.”

In Chicago, Minow was an active member of the Juvenile Protective Association starting in 1958 and serving as president from 1973 to 1975. She cochaired the Special Study on Juvenile Justice for the Chicago Community Trust from 1978 to 1980. Minow participated in the Citizens Committee of the Juvenile Court of Cook County from 1985 to 1996. And she cochaired the Grandparents’ Advisory Committee of the Chicago Children’s Museum in 1999. Minow admits, however, that her work from 1980 to 1983 as chairperson of Know Your Chicago—an annual lecture and tour series designed to promote civic awareness and participation—was “a watershed experience” for her. “It’s been the best organization I’ve ever worked with. I’ve never worked with a group of people like it,” she proclaims. “When they say who wants to, everybody raises their hand. And they never run out of ideas, never repeat themselves, and if they go back to the same venue, it’s from a different vantage point.”

While Anne McGlone was preparing for the first Special Olympics, she married Edward Burke, a police officer and son of a Chicago alderman. A year later, Ed Burke was elected to succeed his father on the city council; he eventually became the longest serving alderman in Chicago history. By the twenty-first century, Crain’s Chicago Business listed the Burkes as “one of Illinois’ most influential families.” Like the Minows, they will be remembered as key actors in the history of Chicago.
After they wed, the Burkes began raising a family. The couple adopted their first child in 1970, and Burke “retired” from the games. She explains, “And then we adopted another baby in 1971 and another baby in 1973.” But Anne Burke was never the stereotypical stay-at-home mom. “My husband thought that going forward in our life that I really should have my college degree,” she explains. “He said, ‘You have to go back to college.’” In 1976, Burke not only graduated from DePaul University with a degree in education, but also published a short book that reflected her experiences with the Special Olympics, titled, *Tomorrow’s Flower: Articles of Special Interest for Parents of the Mentally Retarded*. Shortly thereafter, she gave birth to their fourth child.31

Like Jo Minow, Anne Burke’s first priority was always her children: Jennifer, Edward Jr., Sarah, Emmett, and Travis. But Ed Burke continued to encourage his wife, convincing her that she could do more for children with disabilities as an attorney than she could through direct service. Anne Burke secretly took the Law School Admission Test and was admitted to Chicago-Kent College of Law. In 1983, she graduated and immediately opened a neighborhood law practice focusing on cases of child abuse, neglect, and delinquency as well as parental custody issues.32

Burke quickly moved up the ranks of the legal world. She was admitted to the Illinois bar and federal Northern District of Illinois in 1983, the US Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit in 1985, and certified for the Northern District’s trial bar in 1987. In 1987, Governor James R. Thompson selected her as the first female judge to serve on the Illinois Court of Claims, and she was reappointed by Governor Jim Edgar in 1991. In 1994, she became special counsel to the governor for Child Welfare Services. In 1995, she was appointed to the Appellate Court, First District, and was subsequently elected to that office in 1996. Upon the retirement of Justice Mary Ann McMorrow in 2006, Burke was named to the Illinois Supreme Court. She was elected to a full ten-year term in 2008 and won reelection in 2018.33

In 2002, Burke’s lifelong interest in child advocacy led to her appointment to the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People (NRB) by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) of the US Roman Catholic Church. The NRB was created to collaborate with the USCCB in developing a charter to address and prevent the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy and improve guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse.34
Burke served as interim chair from 2002 to 2004. NRB members, Burke recounts, were “relatively prominent in our neighborhoods, in our communities, and felt uniformly that we were going to do what they asked us to do with that charter.” To Burke and the NRB, that meant an investigation followed by a report.

Many American bishops, however, disagreed. In June 2003, the Catholic Conference of California refused to provide data necessary for the NRB to complete a report. “They would not help,” laments Burke. “Even though we tried to explain to them that this is for the church, and this would be a benefit that you’re doing this good work and these people are being transparent, it never occurred to them.” Burke attributes the clerical objections to “institutional protection” and church bureaucracy. Such resistance had a high cost: since 1984, American Roman Catholic dioceses have paid more than $2 billion in sexual abuse settlements, leading to the bankruptcy of several dioceses. According to Burke, the bishops “just circled the wagons around themselves early on.”

In 2004, despite the clerical opposition, the NRB released “A Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States.” Relying upon public records, empirical data, social science research, and more than fifty interviews, the NRB report addressed two primary questions: why did pedophiles gain admission to the priesthood, and how did they remain in the priesthood after allegations of abuse became known to church officials? The NRB concluded with twenty-five detailed recommendations for future action and study.
Special Olympics Illinois launched the Polar Plunge fund-raising event in 1999. Since then, more than 72,000 “plungers,” often in costume, have jumped into icy waters in the winter and raised more than $20 million. Above: Burke takes the plunge in 2006.

During her interview for the Making History Awards, Justice Burke reflected on the Special Olympics, stating, “We’re [now] in 172 countries. It’s ordinary to be special.”

Left: Burke with the original Special Olympics athletes, 2017.
The NRB’s report initially appeared to be a Pyrrhic victory. During the next decade, Burke publicly voiced complaints that the NRB recommendations were largely ignored by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, that the bishops did not want change but only “business as usual.” Today, however, Burke defends the report and the “good work” of the NRB. She argues that “first of all, now we are having a conversation about the topic.” Burke also points out that the report emphasized that sexual abuse is not just a “Catholic problem.” “The topic itself is about criminal sexual assault of a minor by anybody.” Burke invokes history. “These kinds of crimes have been going on since the beginning of mankind, and they know no borders. It could be our church, it could be the Lutheran church, Boy Scouts, schools. The good news is we had a public conversation about it. It wasn’t just the church.” Finally, the report laid the foundation for the follow-up investigation, The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950–2010 (2011), by researchers from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which provided answers to key questions about the abuse crisis.

Jo Minow’s interest in child advocacy inspired her to become a children’s author. “I love to write, and my father was primarily an advertising man, but he was a gifted writer,” she explains. “I think whatever I have I got from him.” In 2006, she teamed up with illustrator David Apatoff, who is also her son-in-law, to write Marty the Broken Hearted Artichoke. Six years later, Minow and Apatoff wrote Pineapple Pete’s Remarkable Feat. The same year, Minow and her granddaughter Mira Singer published A Light in Every Window, a story based on a real-life hate crime in which vandals in Billings, Montana, threw a brick through the window of a Jewish family that displayed the Hanukkah

Of her countless achievements, Minow says that it is her family that brings her the greatest joys. Above: The family celebrates Jo and Newt’s 50th wedding anniversary at the Chicago History Museum, 1999.

Right: Minow’s first children’s book, Marty the Broken Hearted Artichoke, closes with a lesson of acceptance: “We needn’t all have the same faces. / We’ve opened our minds / To all different kinds / Other names, other creeds, other races.”
Menorah, and other townspeople reacted by displaying menorahs in their windows as a sign of support. “It became a rare and joyful event between Christians and Jews that went on for days,” said Minow. Tolerance is the connecting theme in all three books. Minow is the first to say that one of her missions in life is, in her words, “getting people to get along.”

Minow’s writing reflects her Jewish heritage. While she attended Temple Sholom on Lake Shore Drive as a child, Minow admits she was never a devout practitioner. “My parents both came from Orthodox backgrounds, but they were ultra-reformed, and we ‘endured’ the holidays, but in a secular way,” she explains. But she also emphasizes that “they certainly were proudly Jewish, just not in a religious sense.” That upbringing defines her. “I am very firmly, strongly, and positively Jewish, and proudly so, but I’m not religious.”

Minow’s attachment to her Jewish culture was reflected in her longtime involvement with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society from 1977 to 1998, a contribution for which she received a special award in 1988.

The organization dearest to Minow’s heart, however, is the Chicago History Museum. Now a life trustee, she has served on the Museum’s board of trustees for more than thirty-five years. But her attachment to the institu-
In November 2016, the Minow family traveled to Washington, DC, to see Newt receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. During the ceremony, President Obama credited the Minows with introducing him to Michelle Robinson, his future wife, and recalled how they bumped into one another at the movies during Barack and Michelle’s first date.

Minow’s commitment to the Great Lakes region goes back to her childhood. “I used to walk after school several times a month when I was in grade school,” Minow recounts. “It was easy for me to walk through Lincoln Park from Briar Place.” Upon arrival, “I savored the treasures. I just adored it.”

During her active service as a trustee, Minow was a critical figure, serving on numerous committees, including those which selected the annual Making History Award recipients. She established the Josephine Baskin Minow Fellowship for Achievement in American History to enable recent college graduates to work at the Museum and explore career opportunities in museum education. Minow was personally responsible for raising more than $1 million from groups and individuals such as the Kresge Foundation, Arthur Rubloff, and many others. In 2015, the Museum dedicated its second-floor balcony gallery in her honor.

Burke and Minow place their families and Chicago as the center of their lives. “I’m in love with this country and with Chicago,” Minow proudly proclaims. “Twice we moved away and each time people said, ‘You’ll never come back,’ and I said, ‘Just you wait—I love Chicago.’” When asked about her most important accomplishment, Minow replies before the question is even finished: “My children.” Burke likewise attributes any success to “what I did early on. My experience in life, being a mom and a family.” She admits that, “teaching kids with disabilities and that kind of experience has been the fab-
Anne and Ed Burke visit with Barack Obama in 2017. The Burke family has been called “a Chicago political dynasty second only to the Daleys in influence and durability.”

Donna La Pietra (right) and her husband Bill Kurtis presented Justice Burke (left) with her Making History Award on June 6, 2018. Dan Rest Photography
ric of my life.” For the South Sider from Washtenaw Avenue and the North Sider from Briar Place, child advocacy represents a patriotic obligation, or in the words of Anne Burke, “to help the most vulnerable people in society.”

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ILLUSTRATIONS | Illustrations courtesy of the awardees, unless otherwise noted. 56–57, architectural photographs courtesy of the author. 59 bottom, Chicago History Museum Collection, ICHi-174249. 64, Chicago History Museum collection, ICHi-176181. 67, photographs by Museum staff, NC_186_002 and NC_145_056. 69 top and 70, Chicago History Museum event photography.

FURTHER READING | The best place to begin any examination of Josephine Baskin Minow is the memoir she coauthored with Newton N. Minow, As Our Parents Planted for Us, So Shall We Plant for Our Children (Chicago: J. B. Minow, 1999). Josephine Minow has written three children’s books: Marty the Broken Hearted Artichoke (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2006); Pineapple Pete’s Remarkable Feast (McLean, VA: Miniver Press, 2012); A Light in Every Window (McLean, VA: Miniver Press, 2012). The Newton N. Minow Papers at the Chicago History Museum include material on Josephine Baskin Minow from her years at the Nettelhorst School and materials related to board meeting minutes, news clippings, and miscellaneous correspondence for the Juvenile Protective Association, WTTW-Channel 11, and other organizations. Coverage of Anne Burke’s role in the founding of the Special Olympics appears in Lucinda Hahn, “Making History: How Anne Burke met Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Special Olympics began,” Chicago Magazine, November 30, 2009;

**ENDNOTES**


6. Burke, interview.

7. Burke, interview.

8. Minow, interview; Minow and Minow, 82 (unusual).


Burke, interview.

21 Tapp, “A Conversation with Justice Anne M. Burke.”

22 Tapp, “A Conversation with Justice Anne M. Burke.”

23 Burke, interview.


28 Minow, interview.

29 Minow, interview; Minow and Minow, 145, 172 (watershed); “Josephine Baskin Minow,” Prabook World Biographical Encyclopedia.


31 Burke, interview; “Anne M. Burke,” The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity.

32 “Anne M. Burke,” The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity.

33 “Anne M. Burke,” Wikipedia; “Anne M. Burke,” The Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity.


36 Burke, interview.


38 Burke, interview; Michael R. Merz, “Was Archimedes an Insider or an Outsider?” in Plante and McChesney, eds., Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church, eBook locations 1051, 1108 ($2 billion). For more criticism of Church bureaucracy and the “culture of clericalism,” see Merz, “Was Archimedes an Insider or an Outsider?” eBook location 1129.


47 Minow, interview; Minow and Minow, As Our Parents Planted for Us, 1–2, 79.


49 Minow, interview.


51 Minow, interview.

52 Burke, interview.