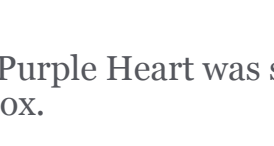




**Michael W. Frerichs**  
ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

**MARCH 2023 E-NEWSLETTER**



Treasurer's Note

**Honoring Our Soldiers**

Army Specialist Kenneth R. Wiest earned his Purple Heart inside a helicopter in the jungles of Vietnam, where he was deployed shortly after graduating from Mascoutah High School in 1968.

He completed his service and returned home, to O'Fallon, Illinois.

At some point, the Purple Heart was stowed inside a bank safe deposit box.

Some 20 years later, our country again called upon Specialist Wiest, this time sending him to the desert sands of the Gulf War.

Again, he completed his service and returned home to O'Fallon. Again, the medals and ribbons honoring his Gulf War commitment made it to that very same bank safe deposit box.

Specialist Wiest went about his business, and, like many veterans, rarely talked about his military service. He earned a decent living as a logistics/computer program analyst for the United States Department of Defense, and raised four children (a son and three daughters) before passing away on Sept. 4, 1998, at the young age of 48.

This week, nearly 25 years later, I had the distinct honor and privilege to return that Purple Heart to the Wiest children.

Our office received the medals in 2019 after the bank safe deposit box went untouched for several years. Safeguarding unclaimed property until it can be returned to its owners or heirs—no matter how long it takes—is a core function of the state treasurer's office. Other unclaimed property examples include forgotten bank accounts, unpaid life insurance benefits, and uncashed rebate checks.

Military medals are among the most difficult items to return because neither the Armed Forces nor the federal government maintain a comprehensive list of awardees. Because of these challenges, we occasionally seek the public's help in our quest to return them so they can be in the loving hands of the family, rather than the cold recesses of our vault.

A friend of Andrea Wiest Schone (Specialist Wiest's youngest daughter) saw media coverage of our Purple Heart efforts and alerted her. Andrea then reached out to our office.

"Dad was a good soldier, a loyal friend, and dedicated father," Andrea said. "My brother and sisters are grateful to have these medals that honor his legacy."

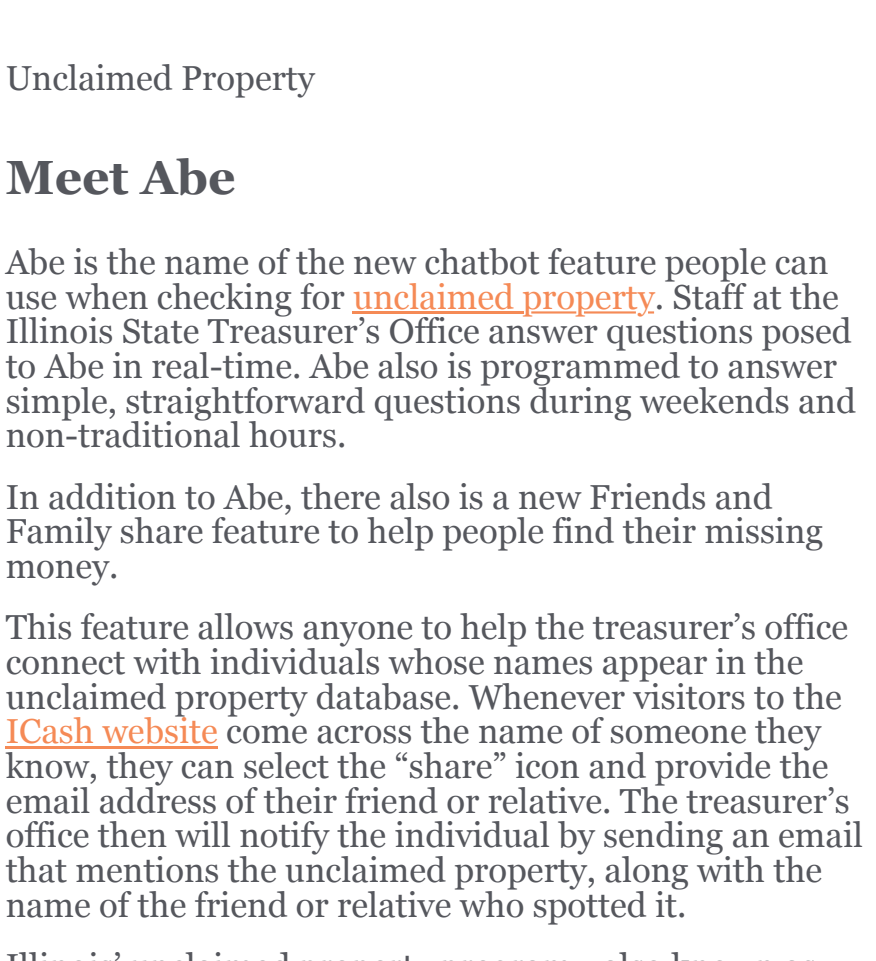
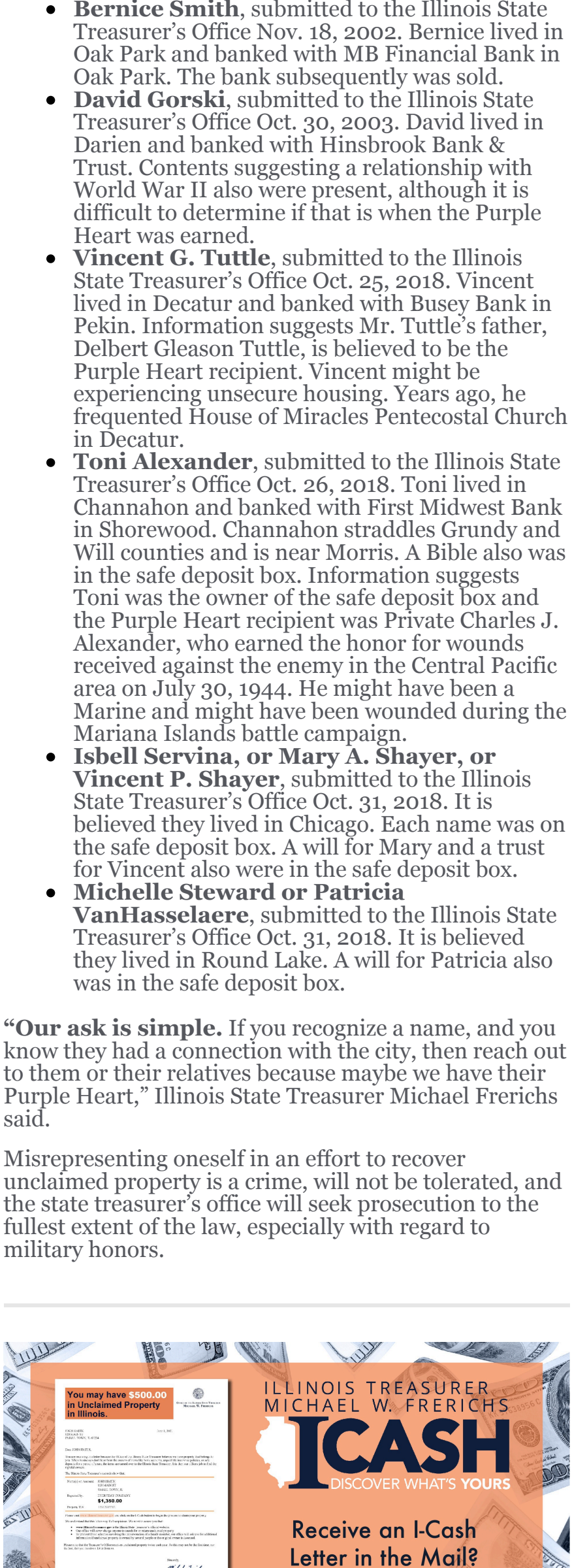
Army Specialist Wiest served his country, and it is our duty to honor this soldier no matter how many years have passed. We continue our efforts to return all unclaimed property, especially military honors. If you believe you can help, [click here](#). Returning these medals marks the eighth Purple Heart that we have reunited with the service member or his family. Of those, five were earned in Vietnam, one in Korea and two in World War II. Six served in the Army, one was a Marine, and one was in the Air Force.

All sacrificed for our freedom.

Sincerely,

**Michael W. Frerichs**

Illinois State Treasurer



Honoring Their Legacy

**Operation Purple Heart**

Operation Purple Heart has one goal: To reunite the Purple Heart with the service member or their family.

Army Specialist Kenneth R. Wiest, of O'Fallon, no longer is on this list after his Purple Heart was returned to his family.

However, there is more work to do.

The names below are the names associated with the bank safe deposit box and might not be the name of the Purple Heart awardee. The dates below correspond to when the contents of the bank safe deposit box containing the Purple Heart were turned over to the treasurer's office, not when the Purple Heart was earned or awarded:

- **Robert Cawthon**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Nov. 1, 1992, from Fifth Third Bank in Oak Park. There is conflicting information about where Robert lived. Information suggests the awardee was in the infantry.
- **Raymond Wilson**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Nov. 13, 1995. Raymond lived in Chicago and banked with Chicago Community Bank, which subsequently was sold.
- **Lawrence M. Burns**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Nov. 5, 1997. Lawrence lived in Homewood and banked with Advanced Bank in Homewood. Information also suggests a financial relationship with Homewood Federal Savings and Loan. Today, there is information to suggest Mr. Burns chooses to live in a remote area in California.
- **Linda K. Moore**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Oct. 17, 2001. Linda lived in Peoria and banked with National City Bank in Peoria, which subsequently was sold. Information suggests a relationship with John L. Moore.
- **Bernice Smith**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Nov. 18, 2002. Bernice lived in Oak Park and banked with MB Financial Bank in Oak Park. The bank subsequently was sold.
- **David Gorski**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Oct. 30, 2003. David lived in Darien and banked with Hinsbrook Bank & Trust. Contents suggesting a relationship with World War II also were present, although it is difficult to determine if that is when the Purple Heart was earned.
- **Vincent G. Tuttle**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Oct. 25, 2018. Vincent lived in Decatur and banked with Busey Bank in Pekin. Information suggests Mr. Tuttle's father, Delbert Gleason Tuttle, is believed to be the Purple Heart recipient. Vincent might be experiencing insecure housing. Years ago, he frequented House of Miracles Pentecostal Church in Decatur.
- **Toni Alexander**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Oct. 26, 2018. Toni lived in Channahon and banked with First Midwest Bank in Shorewood. Channahon straddles Grundy and Will counties and is near Morris. A Bible also was in the safe deposit box. Information suggests Toni was the owner of the safe deposit box and the Purple Heart recipient was Private Charles J. Alexander, who earned the honor for wounds received against the enemy in the Central Pacific area on July 30, 1944. He might have been a Marine and might have been wounded during the Mariana Islands battle campaign.
- **Isbell Servina, or Mary A. Shayer, or Vincent P. Shayer**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Oct. 31, 2018. It is believed they lived in Chicago. Each name was on the safe deposit box. A will for Mary and a trust for Vincent also were in the safe deposit box.
- **Michelle Steward or Patricia VanHasselaere**, submitted to the Illinois State Treasurer's Office Oct. 31, 2018. It is believed they lived in Round Lake. A will for Patricia also was in the safe deposit box.

**"Our ask is simple.** If you recognize a name, and you know they had a connection with the city, then reach out to them or their relatives because maybe we have their Purple Heart," Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs said.

Misrepresenting oneself in an effort to recover unclaimed property is a crime, will not be tolerated, and the state treasurer's office will seek prosecution to the fullest extent of the law, especially with regard to military honors.

Unclaimed Property

**Meet Abe**

Abe is the name of the new chatbot feature people can use when checking for [unclaimed property](#). Staff at the Illinois State Treasurer's Office answer questions posed to Abe in real-time. Abe also is programmed to answer simple, straightforward questions during weekends and non-traditional hours.

In addition to Abe, there also is a new Friends and Family share feature to help people find their missing money.

This feature allows anyone to help the treasurer's office connect with individuals whose names appear in the unclaimed property database. Whenever visitors to the [ICash website](#) come across the name of someone they know, they can select the "share" icon and provide the email address of their friend or relative. The treasurer's office then will notify the individual by sending an email that mentions the unclaimed property, along with the name of the friend or relative who spotted it.

Illinois' unclaimed property program—also known as ICash—is one of the state's oldest consumer protection initiatives. In Illinois, the state treasurer is tasked with safeguarding unclaimed property, such as the contents of overlooked safe deposit boxes, unpaid life insurance benefits, forgotten bank accounts and unused rebate cards. Illinois holds more than \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property.

Since 2015, Frerichs' office has returned more than \$1.6 billion in unclaimed property, a record-setting amount since the program was established in 1961.

Unclaimed property is reported to the treasurer's office twice a year, so people are encouraged to check the database every six months. An estimated one-in-four adults in Illinois who search ICash find unclaimed property, and the average claim is \$1,000.

**The state treasurer is legally required to return the property to the rightful owners no matter how long it takes.**

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Helping Our Neighbors

**Charitable Trust Grant Application Open**

The Charitable Trust grant program seeks to help small nonprofits with annual budgets of \$1 million or less. The spring 2023 grant cycle will award grants in two categories: food assistance and workforce/economic development assistance. Certain qualified grant applicants located in a depressed area (as measured by various rates, such as unemployment and poverty) will be given special attention. [Applications will be accepted through March 31.](#)

Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs' office manages the program. More than \$3.9 million has been awarded to 192 nonprofit organizations since the grant program was established in 2017. Money comes from filing fees nonprofits pay when incorporating in the state of Illinois, not personal or property tax dollars.

For this grant cycle, \$200,000 is available. Each organization can receive up to \$20,000. Previous grant recipients are eligible if the term of their grant has been complete for at least one calendar year. An independent 11-member committee that oversees the fund's management will present their recommendations for award to the Treasurer.

For more information, or to apply, [click here](#). Inquiries also can be directed to (217) 836-4590.

**Did You Know?**

Everyone should be able to retire with dignity. Illinois Secure Choice offers the opportunity to do just that.

Illinois Secure Choice is a retirement savings program that travels with the worker.

It operates through the Illinois State Treasurer's Office and is for employers who do not offer a retirement plan. It is administered by a private-sector financial services firm; funded by employee savings with no employer fees or contributions; and employee participation is voluntary.

Secure Choice is good for workers, good for employers, and good for communities. Find out more at [ilsecurechoice.com](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS	
MARCH 10	CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY WEST BELMONT BRANCH 3104 N. Narragansett Ave., Chicago 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
MARCH 13	JOLIET HOPE CENTER 511 Oak Leaf Court, Joliet 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
MARCH 14	SEN. ANN GILLESPIE I-CASH EVENT 500 N. Dunton Ave., Arlington Heights 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.
MARCH 14	SEN. ANN GILLESPIE I-CASH EVENT Palatine Library 700 North Court, Palatine 12 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
MARCH 21	REP. KATIE STUART I-CASH EVENT Edwardsville Public Library 112 S. Kansas St., Edwardsville 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
MARCH 21	PASTA-PALOOZA Krueger Park Rec Center 9100 88th Ave., Hickory Hills 12 p.m. - 3 p.m.
MARCH 22	ORIOLE PARK BRANCH LIBRARY 7454 W. Balmoral Ave., Chicago 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
MARCH 22	RESOURCE FAIR Glen Ellyn Public Library 400 Duane St., Glen Ellyn 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
MARCH 23	DOWNER PLACE SENIOR HOUSING 2007 W. Downer Place, Aurora 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

If you would like to contact the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer, please visit our [contact us](#) page.

To modify your e-mail options or opt out of receiving the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer's electronic communications, please [click here](#).

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