

I was born and raised in Westchester in 1977 in the home where my father grew up in. My grandparents were original owners of the house on Manchester Avenue after moving from Cicero. My father Charles Steker was a lineman with AT&T in Bellwood. My mother Nancy Steker, originally from Bellwood, was a long time Catholic school teacher at Divine Infant in Westchester prior to its closure. I attended Divine Infant Jesus for grammar school and then Nazareth Academy in La Grange Park for high school. In 1997 I stepped foot in Triton College for the first time. I was actively testing to be a career firefighter and Triton's Fire Science program was one of the most prestigious programs of its type in the suburbs. The classes in the program helped form the foundation for my career. In 1999 I obtained my A.A.S in Fire Science from Triton and was hired full-time as a Firefighter/EMT with the Village of Franklin Park. I then went on to obtain my B.S in Fire Service Management through Southern Illinois University's satellite program held at Triton in 2004. I completed my formal education at Lewis University where I obtained my M.S. in Public Safety Administration in 2014. Triton College has been the foundation for many men and women I encounter in the fire service. I have been fortunate enough to have been part of the adjunct faculty staff at Triton College since 2012. I teach in the same fire science program I sat in some twenty-seven years ago. I am proud to give back to a school that has given me such a great foundation. I am now in my twenty-sixth year at the Franklin Park Fire Department continuing to serve with several Triton alum. I rose to the rank of Lieutenant in 2003 and in 2023 I was promoted to Battalion Chief and am currently second-in-command of our 43 member department.

Public service is not just a job for me it's a passion. I am committed to the community in which I serve (Franklin Park) as well as the Village I call home (Westchester). I began getting involved in local community service when I was appointed to the Westchester Zoning Board of Appeals in 2002. I then ran for office as a write-in-candidate for the Westchester Library Board. I won my first election and served on the Library Board from 2003-2007. I was Vice-President of the Board from 2005-2007. Concurrently I was appointed by Village President Gattuso at the time to the Fire and Police Commission where I served from 2005-2009. In 2009 I ran for Village Trustee for the Village of Westchester and was successfully elected. I am now in my fourth term as a Village Trustee. From 2022 to 2024 I was the Acting Village President due to the untimely death of the Village President at the time. Through my work in Westchester and Franklin Park I have had the opportunity to work with several outstanding charitable organizations. The Franklin Park Firefighter's work with St. Baldrick's has raised millions of dollars over the past twenty plus years and is one of my favorite causes to volunteer with. Additionally, I have been happy to support and volunteer with Toys For Tots, Shop with a Cop, the BEDS program, Christmas in Proviso, and the Westchester Food Pantry.

I have been fortunate to have been appointed by two Governor's and retained by a third to serve on the State of Illinois Fire Advisory Commission. The Commission advises the State Fire Marshal on fire protection, investigations, prevention, and other duties. In 2016 I was recognized by the International Association of Arson Investigators and received the Distinguished Service Award. I have been recognized several times by Loyola Hospital for pre-hospital care in emergency medical incidents over my career in the fire service. The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal Medal of Honor Committee recognized me with a certificate of recognition for multiple rescues made at a high-rise fire in Franklin Park.

My greatest accomplishment though is my family. I married my dream girl Kathryn Knack in 2012. Kathryn grew up in nearby Forest Park and attended Immaculate Heart of Mary High School. In 2017 we introduced to the world our daughter Teagan. Ten short months later we were blessed with the birth of our second daughter, Adelyn. Kathryn teaches second grade at St. Francis Xavier in La Grange. Both our daughters also attend St. Francis Xavier. Teagan is in third grade and Adelyn is in second. I am a proud cheer dad and dance dad these days.

As you can see my whole life has been spent locally in the Triton District. It is where I was raised and where I choose to raise my family. Triton College has been a huge part of starting my career but also now providing me the forum to give back. I enjoy taking my family to support my student's athletic programs such as softball, baseball, and basketball. My girls also are big fans of the Cernan Center and the Taylor Swift program. I am forever grateful for Triton College and am honored to be nominated.