



**BIOGRAPHY**  
**Karen GJ Lewis, NBCT**  
**President, Chicago Teachers Union**

Karen GJ Lewis was elected president of the 30,000 member Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) on June 11, 2010, and re-elected to a second term in May 2012 by nearly 80 percent of the CTU's rank and file.

A member of CTU since 1988, Mrs. Lewis taught high school chemistry in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for 22 years. Karen has served the CTU as a member of the House of Delegates, High School Functional Vice President and as a member of the Illinois State Certification Board. She received National Board Certification in 2002.

Mrs. Lewis is a vice president of the more than 1.7 million-member American Federation of Teachers, and in 2010, Karen was elected executive vice president to the more than 100,000 member Illinois Federation of Teachers. She works tirelessly to foster excellence in the teaching and learning experience; guard against opportunistic self-interest groups who would eradicate public education; advocate for equal quality education for all students; and protect the rights of educators throughout the state of Illinois.

Keenly aware of the need to protect member rights and to fight for an educator's voice in the decision-making process of a currently business-dominated school district, Mrs. Lewis believes that students, parents, teachers and community members are educators' natural allies. Her goals are to ensure that Chicago's youth attend quality neighborhood schools and to stand firmly against the privatization of public education.

In 2012, Mrs. Lewis successfully led a nine-day strike against the Chicago Board of Education, where in addition to winning a fair and equitable contract for her members, the board agreed to implement many CTU's recommendations to enhance the learning process. Also under Lewis' direction, the CTU published "The Schools Chicago's Students Deserve," a study which argues for education reforms within CPS.

(More)

Born in Chicago, Mrs. Lewis attended Kozminski Elementary School and Kenwood High School, until accepting early admission at Mount Holyoke College. She later transferred to Dartmouth College, where she earned the distinction of being the only African American woman in the class of 1974.

Mrs. Lewis has received numerous awards and recognitions for her relentless fight for education equity and giving Chicago's students the schools they deserve. She is a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), and was recently presented with a Doctorate of Humane Letters from the National Labor College and from her Alma Mata Mt. Holyoke College.

Mrs. Lewis resides in Chicago with her husband and is a foreign film buff, enjoys tennis, reading and travel.

###

For further information, contact Executive Assistant to the President Audrey May, at 312-329-6219, or [audreymay@ctulocal1.com](mailto:audreymay@ctulocal1.com)