



**Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District
of Greater Chicago**



2022 MWRD

AFRICAN AMERICAN

HISTORY MONTH

Hazel Johnson

For more than 30 years, **Hazel Johnson** worked to clean up her corner of Chicago's southeast side. She fought for clean air and water as an ambassador of Altgeld Gardens. Her relentless advocacy made her a fixture in local news, and a "thorn in the side" of the Chicago waste industry. Her story has been told in profiles and books and kept alive among her peers in the struggle for environmental justice.

In 2016, City of Chicago officials, neighbors, friends, family and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) staff joined the People for Community Recovery (PCR) to salute Hazel, an environmental justice leader who brought reform to her Altgeld Gardens community. A portion of 130th Street near Ellis Avenue was renamed Hazel Johnson EJ Way in honor of the PCR founder who stood for peace and health for the environment and humankind. The street is directly across from the MWRD's Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, where the MWRD works to promote the health and environment surrounding the Altgeld Gardens community.



More than ten years after her death in January 2011, Johnson's contributions to environmental justice continue to resonate — at a time when the movement has reached new heights around the country and in the White House. She is truly the mother of the environmental justice movement.