

GOLDEN TORCH AWARD

**Ngoan Le, Special Assistant to the Mayor on Homelessness,
Chicago Department of Human Services**
Chicago, Illinois (Midwest)

GOVERNMENT



Ms. Ngoan Le is currently serving as the Special Assistant to Mayor Daley on Homelessness. In this position she coordinates the City Inter-Agency Task Force on Homelessness comprised of 15 city agencies. She also co-chairs the Chicago Continuum of Care, a consortium of over 200 public and private homeless stakeholders.

Ms. Le spent over ten years working for the State of Illinois before working for the City of Chicago. She served as the Assistant to the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Deputy Administrator for the Division of Planning and Community Services of the Illinois Department of Public Aid and Special Assistant to the Governor for Asian American Affairs.

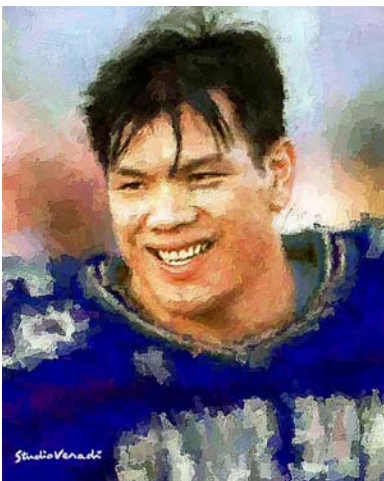
Ms. Le served for nine years as the first Executive Director of the Vietnamese Association of Illinois. She built this all volunteer organization into a nationally-known community based comprehensive social service agency providing assistance to newly arrived refugees from Southeast Asia.

Ms. Le was appointed by President Clinton in May of 2000 as one of the fifteen community leaders to serve on the President's Advisory Commission for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. She was the only Vietnamese American included in President Clinton's official delegation to visit Vietnam in November 2000.

Vietnamese American National Gala

Dat Nguyen, #59 Linebacker, Dallas Cowboys
Dallas, Texas (Southwest)

SPORTS



Mr. Dat Nguyen has been overcoming long odds his entire life. The son of Vietnamese immigrants, Nguyen has battled the perception that he was too small to play football for as long as he has been involved in the game.

He began proving critics wrong at an early age, and he proceeded to leave Texas A&M as the Aggies career record holder with 51 consecutive starts, 517 career tackles and a 10.7 tackles-per-game average. Despite such an illustrious collegiate career, the "undersized" criticism was still heard from NFL personnel.

The Cowboys went ahead and drafted the most productive linebacker in Texas A&M history in the third round (85th overall) of the 1999 NFL Draft. Mr. Nguyen made an impact with the Cowboys from the very beginning, leading the team in special teams stops as a rookie and becoming Dallas' starting middle linebacker in his second professional season.

In 2001, he completed his first full season as a starting NFL middle linebacker and silenced the critics by recording the second highest single-season tackle total in Cowboys history.

Mr. Nguyen and wife Becky added a daughter, Aubrey Mai to their family on June 26, 2003.