SECRETARY OF STATE
RUTH JOHNSON

Ruth Johnson was elected as Michigan's 42nd secretary of state in November 2010 and serves as chief motor vehicle administrator and chief election officer for the state's nearly 10 million residents. She also maintains the state's official repository of records and certifies documents as keeper of the Great Seal and is second in line of succession to the governor.

As Secretary of State, Johnson is committed to streamlining operations, improving customer service, and safeguarding election integrity. She strongly believes that by using technology and common sense and by fostering partnerships between the private and public sectors, her team at the Department of State can cut costs and improve efficiency for the people of Michigan.

Johnson's election continues a distinguished career in public service. As a 3-term member of the Michigan House of Representatives from 1999 through 2004, she served as assistant majority whip. She also helped improve the quality of life in the state through her efforts on the Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, Education, Health Policy and Transportation Committees.

During her time as a legislator, Johnson led investigations into the misappropriation of funds at the Oakland County Intermediate School District that resulted in the conviction of a public official and restored money earmarked for kids.

Secretary Johnson has provided innovative and effective leadership at the local government level as well. From 1988 to 1998, she was a member of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, including 6 years as vice chairperson. As commissioner, she tackled such issues as putting prisoners to work and instituting countywide performance audits that provide accountability in government.

From 2005 through 2010, Johnson served as clerk/register of deeds for Oakland County, the state's second-largest county. A fiscal conservative, she cut more than $1 million in costs from the county budget and reduced her staff by 20 percent. She also successfully fought a 700 percent increase in fees proposed by the state, because she understands that government must do more for less.

Among her achievements, Johnson greatly expanded the county's online services. She launched an absentee ballot tracker, introduced online marriage license applications, made campaign donation records available over the Internet, and worked with the circuit court to enable virtually paperless court cases and the ability to search and order public court records online. Johnson also implemented reforms to fight identity theft and fraud, removed obstacles to voting by overseas military personnel, and began a program that recycles used voting machines into schools so kids can learn hands-on about voting.

As clerk/register of deeds, Johnson won 14 national awards for innovative services that provide transparency and save money. In 2004, the National Federation of Independent Businesses named her a "Guardian of Small Business," the most prestigious honor the NFIB bestows on legislators to recognize their efforts to support small business issues. Johnson has been a frequent speaker at local Optimist and Rotary Club events, and was a charter member of the Holly Area Optimists. She is a former member of the American Business Women's Association and various chambers of commerce and was chair of the Aging and Social Services Committee as a member of the Michigan Association of Counties.

A lifelong resident of northern Oakland County, Johnson has had a strong work ethic and pioneering spirit since childhood. She started working at age 13 to help her family make ends meet after her father passed away. Through her persistence and determination, she became the first girl to be a newspaper carrier for the *Pontiac Press*, now called the *Oakland Press*. More than 3 decades later, she was elected as the first woman clerk in the 176-year history of Oakland County. In 2006, she was a nominee for lieutenant governor in Michigan.

Secretary Johnson is a graduate of Waterford Township High School and has an associate's degree from Oakland Community College, a bachelor's degree from Oakland University and a master's degree from Wayne State University, with honors. She lives in Holly with her husband, Don Nanney, a small-business owner, and their daughter, Emily.

Source: http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1640_9105---,00.html