

LORI LIGHTFOOT

b. August 4, 1962

MAYOR OF CHICAGO

**She is Chicago's
first openly
LGBTQ and first black
female mayor.**

*“Breaking the back of the Chicago machine,
it’s quite monumental.”*

Lori Lightfoot won a historic landslide victory in Chicago’s 2019 election to become the city’s first openly gay and first black female mayor. It is her first elective office.

Lightfoot grew up in a struggling working-class family in southern Ohio. Her father, who suffered hearing loss, often juggled three jobs. Lightfoot credits her family’s difficulties and her mother’s fierce strength with her own determination to succeed. Her mother insisted that Lightfoot pursue education, strive for excellence and “take on hard fights,” regardless of the consequences.

Lightfoot earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan, paying for her own education through loans and work-study jobs. She attended the University of Chicago law school on a full scholarship. After graduation, she spent six years working in private practice.

Lightfoot entered public service as assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, prosecuting defendants accused of drug crimes, bankruptcy fraud and public corruption. Thereafter, she was appointed chief administrator of the Chicago Police Department Office of Professional Standards, which investigates alleged cases of police misconduct, including shootings of civilians.

After Lightfoot served as top administrator in the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, Mayor Richard Daley hired her as deputy chief of the Chicago Department of Procurement Services. There, Lightfoot made waves, targeting powerful wheeler-dealers and a top Daley fundraiser.

Mayor Daley’s successor, Rahm Emanuel, appointed Lightfoot president of the Chicago Police Board, which decides disciplinary cases. Under Lightfoot’s leadership, the board changed course, terminating police officers in 72% of misconduct cases. As chair of a special Police Accountability Task Force, Lightfoot filed a report critical of the police department’s practices. She pushed Mayor Emanuel to more aggressively pursue police reform.

In May 2018, Lightfoot announced her candidacy for mayor of Chicago. She ran on a platform of outsider politics and progressive change, promising to reverse decades of political corruption and bring opportunity to neglected neighborhoods. In April 2019 Lightfoot defeated her opponent with over 74% of the popular vote, winning a majority among white, black and Latinx voters. Her victory made Chicago the largest city in U.S. history with an openly LGBTQ mayor and the largest city led by a woman.

Lightfoot and her spouse, Amy Eshleman, have a daughter.

