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CHICAGO

BIG CITY. BIG STORIES.

JANUARY 2016



THE VOTES ARE IN!

TOP DOCTORS

355 MDs in 57 SPECIALTIES

THE REAL STORY OF SANDRA BLAND

by Bryan Smith

IS CHICAGO A TERROR TARGET?



To determine our complete list of 270 dentists for ChicagoLand Dental Profiles, we asked more than 1,300 Chicago-area dentists whom they would trust to treat their family and friends.

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SANDRA BLAND

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serious DWI charge was dismissed; she pleaded guilty to possession.

After she returned to Chicago, she accumulated a few thousand dollars in fines from two traffic stops. Then, in March 2014, she was pulled over in the western suburb of Lombard. Police charged her with a host of infractions, including speeding, disobeying a traffic signal, and failing to signal a lane change. More serious were two counts of driving under the influence. A court dismissed all the charges but one DUI count.

For the most part, the family plays down those infractions. "Think about those years, a couple of years removed from college," Sharon says. "You're still trying to figure out the essence of who you are. There's a lot of self-discovery going on. I remember my 20s. I was all over the place." But the 2014 DUI was a wake-up call. "I ripped her a new one when she got it," Sharon says. "I said, 'Sandy, sweetie, you are too smart for that. What were you thinking?' She said, 'Sharon, you're absolutely right.'"

Then, two months later, Sandra suffered a much more devastating blow: She had a miscarriage. The family rallied around her. "I asked how she was feeling," Sharon says, "and she said it was sad but that she would be OK. I remember her saying something a couple of months later that echoes an adage a lot of us in this family live by: that things happen for a reason."

Bland had not shared with the family the magnitude of her despair. According to her intake form at the Waller County Jail, she cited the miscarriage as the catalyst for a suicide attempt using pills. No family member had been aware of that attempt, but Sharon says it doesn't shock her that her sister kept a secret from her: "Nobody in a person's family knows everything. I think that she felt that I would have been hurt, and she didn't know what my response was going to be."

From the outside, though, it appeared that Bland had rebounded from the miscarriage, and within months she seemed back to her old self. In fact, in December 2014, she experienced what her family now calls a life-altering moment, one that sent her personal and professional trajectory on an upswing. She had seen the film *Selma*, and it affected her deeply—so deeply that she began contemplating ways to (continued on page 122)

Methodology

Chicago magazine commissioned an independent survey by DataJoe Research. DataJoe sent online ballots to 1,300 individual dentists and 850 practices in the greater Chicago area. Only licensed dentists practicing in the greater Chicago area were eligible to make the list. For a complete explanation of our methodology and to learn more about the peer-nominated dentists on this list, please visit chicagomagazine.com/dentalprofiles.