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JOHN R. BOEHM

Kay McCurdy takes a spin on the Ferris wheel at Navy Pier, home of the radio station she helped save, WBEZ-FM. **{ON THE AIR}**

Kay W. McCurdy ⁵³ Director, WBEZ Alliance Inc.; Partner, Lord Bissell & Brook LLP

Kay McCurdy never listened to public radio until a friend suggested she tune in to WBEZ-FM one day back in the mid-1980s. "I started listening, and I was dumbfounded by how good it was," she recalls. She wound up becoming its savior.

When the financially strapped Chicago Board of Education, which had owned WBEZ since the 1940s, decided to dump the station in

1990, Ms. McCurdy came to the rescue.

By then, Ms. McCurdy, the first female partner at Chicago law firm Lord Bis-

sell & Brook LLP, had joined WBEZ's community advisory board. A corporate lawyer who specializes in finance and mergers and acquisitions, she persuaded the school board to sell the station to WBEZ Alliance Inc., a non-profit corporation she helped form for the purpose.

Three years later, she helped secure a letter of credit and a

99-year lease for 24,000-square-feet of studio and office space at Navy Pier. Named the first female chair of WBEZ's board, she led the station as it raised funds to finance construction of its \$7.6-million studio there.

KEVIN DAVIS