

Response to Illinois Civil Justice League Questionnaire:

1. State the main reason why voters should return you to the bench.

I have the experience, temperament, background and ability that make me qualified to continue as a Circuit Judge. I treat everyone who appears before me with courtesy and respect. I understand that as a public servant I work for the Public. I have the respect of the legal community and the community members at large who know me and my work.

I have been a Judge in DuPage County for a little more than sixteen years. I was appointed an Associate Judge in March 1992. In August 1995 I was appointed to fill a Circuit Court vacancy. I was elected to my current six-year term in 1996 and retained in 2002.

Prior to becoming a Judge, I worked as a prosecutor for about six and a half years. While in the DuPage County State's Attorney's office, I received a Special commendation for Prosecutorial Excellence in 1978 and was named the DuPage County Assistant State's Attorney of the Year in 1979. I left the State's Attorney's Office in 1980 to enter the private practice of law in Wheaton. In private practice, I was often appointed a Guardian Ad Litem in Juvenile and Divorce matters by various Judges. I developed a strong interest in Children and Family issues based on my work as a Guardian Ad Litem. The primary focus of my judicial career has been on helping children and families.

In 1994, I received an award from the DuPage County Children's Center for "Outstanding Service" to the children of DuPage County. In 1999, I was honored as the "Community Partner of the Year" by the DuPage County Family Shelter Service for my work in the area of Domestic Violence. In 2001, the DuPage County Prevention Partnership honored me as a "Pioneer in Prevention".

As Presiding Judge of the Domestic Relations Division, I totally revamped the system for handling child custody cases in DuPage County. I required all families who had minor children to attend a parent education program at the beginning of their court cases. Though the Parent Education program had been in existence for a number of years, attendance had not been required previously until the end of the court process. Families that continued to have disagreements after attending the parent education program were required to participate in court ordered mediation to try to resolve their differences in a non-adversarial setting. Families, who were still unable to reach an agreement after mediation, were required to meet with a licensed clinical psychologist who makes specific recommendations to assist the trial courts in custody and visitation disputes. This restructuring helped reduce the number of contested custody cases and the attendant negative impact of litigation on children and their families.

I set up an arbitration program where attorneys and clients who had disagreements about fees in divorce cases could have their matter heard quickly by a panel of arbitrators which included private citizens who were not lawyers. I helped set up

a program for the unmarried population that provided, at no cost, mediation services for visitation disputes and supervision for visitation. I also worked with others to find a safe place for supervised visitation.

I have been selected by the Illinois Supreme Court to serve as Co-Chair of the Special Supreme Court Committee on Child Custody which was set up to review the way that Child Custody matters are handled throughout the State of Illinois in divorce, juvenile, adoption and guardianship proceedings. The Committee has drafted and the Illinois Supreme Court has implemented Supreme Court Rules that changed the way all Child Custody cases are handled in Illinois. Many of the Rules codify changes that I made in DuPage County when I was the Presiding Judge of the Domestic relations Division.

I have been selected by the Illinois Supreme Court to serve on its Education Committee which plans Judicial Education programs for all Judges in Illinois. I personally teach Family Law at the Annual New Judge School that all Judges must attend in their first year on the bench. I have personally taught Judges and Lawyers in many areas of law.

I have consistently been rated at or near the top of all judges in DuPage County in the Illinois State Bar Association and the DuPage County Bar Association joint judicial polls. On two occasions, I was the highest rated judge in that poll.

In my current assignment, I have handled cases ranging from Possession of Controlled Substance to Death Penalty Murder. I treat everyone who appears before me with courtesy and respect. I have tried well over one hundred Bench trials and over seventy Jury trials. I have received many letters of thanks from victims and defendants for my handling of their cases. I have tried to craft appropriate sentences for each defendant who appears before me; ranging from drug treatment to sentences of incarceration.

Finally, I take my responsibilities as a Judge seriously. I understand that there is more to being a judge than just sitting on the bench. I have been active in the community in many areas and I speak to many Community groups. I am grateful to have the job of Circuit Judge in the 18th Judicial Circuit Court. I recognize that I am a public servant. I believe that the taxpayers of Illinois and the people who appear before me are my employers. They do not work for me; it is my responsibility to work for them. I think and hope that I have done a good job as a Circuit Court Judge in DuPage County.

2. What action have you taken as a judge that you are most proud of?

As part of my work as Presiding Judge of the Domestic Relations Division, I helped set up the first operating Family Court in the State of Illinois. Families with a divorce case and a juvenile case or a domestic violence case pending have their cases sent to one courtroom where all matters are heard by one judge. This saved time and money for the families and helped direct needed resources to families quicker. In the

past, there were often conflicting orders issued by different Judges involving the same families. The Court system was able to better coordinate ways to help these children and families.

I am also proud of the work that I have done as Co-Chair of the Special Supreme Court Committee on Child Custody. The changes in procedure we recommended, particularly in Divorce Cases, will help children and families resolve the difficult issues they face faster, with better outcomes and at less emotional and financial cost. Divorce will never be an easy process; what we have done does make it a better process.

Finally, I recently received a letter of thanks from a defendant that I had ordered into drug treatment. He was a non-violent offender with a serious drug addiction. He has now turned his life around; gotten a job he enjoys and is drug and alcohol free. He wrote to thank me for giving him a chance. I have received many such letters. I am proud of the positive difference I have made in his life and the lives of others.

3. Do you think voters would be better informed about judicial candidates if judicial elections were held in the Spring, rather than in November? (Wisconsin does this.)

I do not know. On the one hand, with fewer races to review, voters may be able to better research Judicial Candidates. On the other hand, the turnout in municipal elections in the spring is lower than the turnout in November. Judges can have great impact on people's lives; from who gets the children in divorce, who goes to jail, to who is or is not civilly responsible for injuries. Better educated voters should lead to better judges. How to accomplish this is problematic.

4. Name one change you would make in the Illinois Court system.

Cases should be resolved faster. In all areas of the law, final resolutions of cases take too long. Most often, this is a function of lack of resources – not enough Judges. Generally, in DuPage County when cases are set for trial they get resolved. There is often a backlog in setting cases for trial because, often, the parties say that cases are going to go to trial and they do not. Judges can only schedule so many cases for trial on any given day because of space and time limitations. The reality is that only about 10% of cases really go to trial.