



ICJL 2018 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

Jo Beth Weber Second Judicial Circuit

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

I understand what an honor and privilege it is to be elected as a Circuit Judge, and I never forget that the voters elected me to this position. I take my job very seriously, and I work hard every day to make sure that I am fair and competent (by constantly educating myself) and that I interpret and apply the laws that govern us independently of any outside influences. The role of the judiciary is central to American concepts of justice and the rule of law. Being a judge is a position of public trust; hence, in everything I do, inside and outside of my office, I strive to enhance and maintain confidence in our legal system by remaining impartial, maintaining high ethical standards in my professional and personal life, treating every party with patience and respect, and by keeping myself updated on the most current laws. Additionally, I was appointed by other judges to teach Judicial Ethics to other judges at the last four education conferences.

2. What actions have you taken as a judge of which you are most proud?

I am the founder of the Jefferson County Youth Court and the Jefferson County Drug Court. I am proud of starting both of these programs because they really do change the way people think, which changes their behavior in a positive direction. In turn, recidivism rates decrease, people obtain the assistance they need, and that has a lasting impact on our participants as well as their families. Additionally, I formed the Drug Court Coalition of Jefferson County which assists with expenses for our Drug Court. In 2016, I started The Hand Up Summit which assists families with numerous services to give them "A Hand Up." Finally, since being elected, our goal was to resolve cases that had been on our dockets for too long, and we have been able to decrease our case load by over 50% due to a combination of many factors, thereby allowing cases to be resolved in a more efficient time frame.

3. Name and describe one change you would make in the Illinois court system.

I would like to be able to get social services to families (for substance abuse/mental health issues) earlier in children's lives to prevent some of the problems I see occurring on a daily basis. Childhood trauma has a direct correlation to adult criminal cases, and I believe if we could intervene earlier, we could substantially lower juvenile

delinquent cases, juvenile abuse and neglect cases and adult criminal cases.

4. One prominent Illinois judicial evaluation survey asks attorneys to evaluate candidates on Integrity, Impartiality, Legal Ability and Temperament. Critique yourself in these four areas as to how you personally approach your job as a judge?

I ran for this position and am seeking retention to ensure that all people and organizations are treated fairly and impartially when they have cases in the Second Circuit. Judges must be mindful that the decisions we make have a lasting impact on the people and organizations we serve. I have served the people in Jefferson County in various volunteer capacities my entire life. As the Presiding Judge in Jefferson County, I strive each day to be a fair and impartial judge who is even-tempered and professional, and to treat everyone equally and with respect. I have worked diligently to assist the people on my various dockets with many issues including mental health and substance abuse. I have discovered that when delivering punishment to people with such problems, individualized evaluations, treatment, and follow-up reports to the court result in substantial reductions in recidivism rates and better outcomes for families.