



## ICJL 2018 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**Kimberly G. Koester  
Circuit Judge – 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit**

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

**I believe that my experience and record on the bench is the main reason that the voters should return me to the bench. In December it will be 12 years that I will have served as a circuit judge in the Fourth Judicial Circuit. In those 12 years I have accomplished many things for the voters and residents in the Fourth Judicial Circuit both in and out of the courtroom. I feel that my rulings have been based on good solid evidence and grounds. I am also very aware that these judgments can and do significantly affect people's lives. In addition to legal rulings, I have had to make several administrative decisions in my position as Resident Circuit Judge and now as Chief Judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit. All of these decisions were made with careful thought and I stand behind all decisions.**

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

**I was appointed by a unanimous vote of my colleagues in the Fourth Judicial Circuit to serve as their Chief Judge. This has been a great honor and privilege for me. I have now been in this position for a year and feel that I have handled the administrative issues of the Fourth Judicial Circuit competently and with dignity. I am also the first female judge ever to serve in this capacity which is a distinction of which I am most proud. In addition to serving in the capacity of the Chief Judge, I am also very proud of the CASA program which I was asked to start in Effingham County by then Chief Judge Gene Schwarm. I, along with an organizational board, began this program within one year and today that program is flourishing and serving the children of Effingham County. Additionally, I have served on the Organizational Board of the CRISIS Nursery in Effingham County which is a nursery that provides child care to individuals who are in need of emergency care. This program has been in existence for approximately two years in Effingham County and in 2018 alone, they have served 186 admissions and 1,180 hours of crisis care to date. These three actions are what I truly am the most proud of.**

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

**A change that I believe that is necessary is the length of time that cases take to work their way through our system. As a judge, it is my responsibility to ensure that the litigants receive swift justice. This will require a change in attitude for the courts. The Courts will need**

**to force the participants to move much quicker in resolving cases or in preparing for trial. Attorneys will also need to work faster and more diligently on their cases in order to avoid lengthy continuances. I believe that local administrative rules regarding deadlines for discovery and continuances should be strictly enforced.**

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?

**This is a difficult question. I will approach this as to how I believe that others see me in regards to these areas. Integrity is something that I truly believe that I possess. Although I am far from a perfect person, I was raised with parents and family who I admired and who all possessed great integrity. I have tried to carry that into my adult life and live with strong morals and religious convictions. Impartiality is a definite must for judges. We see all different types of people and cases every day but in order for justice to be served, we must judge all cases equally and without prejudice. I believe that I do that. I try to look at every person involved in a case from their perspective and their station in life in reaching decisions. To date, I feel as if I have been able to be very impartial in dealing with cases in the courtroom. Legal ability is paramount for a judge. In order to handle all types of cases, a judge must be well versed in the law that he or she is dealing with. My legal background is very diverse and I feel as if I am able to handle or research with ease every situation that is presented to me. I am also proud that in my years as a judge, most appeals of my rulings have been affirmed and I have very rarely been overturned. Finally, the temperament of a judge sets the tone for the courtroom. It can put the litigants and the courtroom personnel at ease and make the entire situation bearable for all. I strive to treat all persons with respect. I try to make the process clear to the litigants and I am willing to answer questions as they are presented. The litigants who appear in front of me are from all parts of society. Yet they all receive the same type of treatment from the bench. I do believe in the dignity of the courtroom though and do not hesitate to use a stern tone if the situation warrants it. It is a delicate balance, but one that I believe I have handled well.**