



2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**James L. Roberts
Circuit Judge – 4th Circuit**

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

I have been on the bench for 14 plus years and have experience in handling cases in all areas of the law- civil, criminal, juvenile and specialty courts. I believe my reputation as a judge is that I am fair, impartial, competent, reasonable and accommodating.

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

I believe I have exhibited an ability as a judge to treat people who appear before me in an authoritative, yet understanding and compassionate manner. While I realize not everyone agrees with my decisions, I want them to leave my courtroom knowing that they were heard and their position was fairly and adequately considered.

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

Based upon the significant increase in self represented litigants over the past several years, I would like to see trained advocates/facilitators provided to assist self-represented litigants navigate the system and file sufficient pleadings in limited areas of the law (family, eviction, small claims) so that the cases could proceed more efficiently and expeditiously. Not someone to replace legal counsel or give legal advice, but to assist in preparation of documents. Similar to advocates that are available in various jurisdictions to assist in preparation of petitions and proposed Orders of Protection/Civil No Contact 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?

A. Integrity- I believe integrity is paramount in a judge. Persons who practice before me need to know that I will only hear and consider the appropriate information from appropriate sources and not consider improper extrinsic information in making my decisions. I am a person of my word and when I represent something to them, it is reliable.

B. Impartiality- I do not prejudge matters that come before me or the participants. I strive to give everyone a sufficient opportunity to be heard and to have their position considered.

C. Legal Ability- I had significant experience as an attorney in various areas of both civil and criminal practice prior to assuming the bench. Since that time I have not only completed all required continuing education, but also availed myself of additional training and education programs, including review of bar journal articles, case law and updates in areas of the law in which I am generally engaged.

D. Temperament- I have always considered myself a very even tempered person both in the practice of law and once assuming the bench. I try to treat all who come before me in the manner in which I would like to be treated, with common courtesy and respect.