ICJL 2018 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

Brien J. O'Brien
Circuit Judge – 5th Circuit

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

I should be returned to the bench because I am dedicated to my position, I am always well-prepared for court and I treat the attorneys and parties who appear before me with courtesy and respect. I recognize and appreciate the importance of allowing litigants to be heard and to be treated fairly.

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

I have served as the presiding judge of the Coles County drug court program for approximately two years. I am proud of the fact that our program was one of the first problem-solving courts to be certified by the Illinois Supreme Court. I am also proud of the work the drug court team has done in an effort to assist those struggling with addiction to become productive members of society.

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

I would like to see the court system become more user-friendly to parties who are not represented by counsel. One way to accomplish this would be to expand the number and type of form pleadings that are available through the Illinois Supreme Court website.

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?

In my opinion, I should be rated very highly in each of these areas. I recognize and appreciate the significance of the decisions that I am called upon to make every day. I also recognize the stress that comes along with being a litigant, whether the case is civil or criminal in nature. I try to be mindful of that fact when I address any litigant who appears before me. I also strive to be thoroughly prepared every time I take the bench and to follow the law to the best of my ability.