

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
COUNTY OF FORD

September 21, 2020

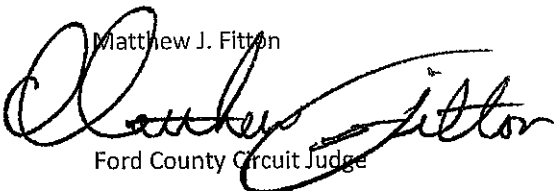
Illinois Civil Justice League

John Pastuovic,

ICJL 2020 Judicial Retention Answers

- 1) During my time as an Assistant State's Attorney, Attorney, Public Defender, State's Attorney and now a Circuit Judge I realize the importance in the lives of people a court case can represent. Whether it is a Criminal, Civil, Juvenile, traffic, or family, that case is very important to them. As a judge I realize the significance and importance each matter represents. The best way to serve the public is to fully admonish the party or parties. To do your utmost to assure they understand their rights, the nature of the matter and the options and consequences. As Judge it is the responsibility to allow them access to assistance and give all participants fairness and an equal opportunity under the Law.
- 2) I am most proud of the times when we have been able to improve the quality of someone's life to help that person better cope with and deal with the circumstances of their lives. These occurrences can occur in various types of cases, an area that resonates with me are the specialty courts, especially drug court. When the Court is involved in a person's life in a program such as drug Court, which is voluntary. That person agrees to have mental health and substance abuse professionals involved as well as community members, the States Attorney, Court Services, Law enforcement, a private attorney, and the Judge. The person is closely monitored, and an individual plan is adopted to assist the person in abstinence and recovery. When the person affected is monitored and the scenario plays out as hoped the results can be amazing. To play a part in and witness a transformation in a person's life away from substance abuse and all the trappings that come from that lifestyle is truly rewarding. First and foremost, for the person who is affected, his family and those involved and the benefit it provides for the community.
- 3) The change that first comes to mind involves social services assistance needed by the Court. In Juvenile cases, especially abuse and neglect cases, the process often can last longer than I would prefer. The intent of the law is to provided permanence for the child/children. The county in which I have the honor to preside, does not house an office of the Dept of Children and Family Services (DCFS) due to statewide budget cuts. These cuts have delayed parents and children from seeing needed services which in turn prevents the court from being as timely in the permanency goal for the children. As with cuts in all services agencies, the court sees an increase of cases and delay in bringing these cases to a conclusion.
- 4) As a Judge, all of these attributes are essential to the job. As to integrity, the litigants before the Court have the right to a Judge who will show no bias, treat those in front of him/her with respect and have patience. As to legal ability, experience is essential but the skill to research and render decisions based on facts and the particular statue of the law is equally important. Temperament is also crucial, litigants, whether an experienced attorney or self-represented litigant deserves respect and have a right to be heard. Whatever ruling a Court makes, the parties to the controversy want to believe they were heard and taken seriously. All of these skills are essential. They are skills that as a judge and as a person I strive to improve on daily ant to exhibit daily both in the courtroom and in everyday life.

Matthew J. Fitton



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## Illinois Civil Justice League

### **ICJL 2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire**

1. State the main reason why voters should return you to the bench.
2. What actions have you taken as a judge of which you are most proud?
3. Name and describe one change you would make in the Illinois court system.
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?

Please e-mail your responses to the Judicial Candidate Questionnaire to **[questionnaire@icjl.org](mailto:questionnaire@icjl.org)**.

**Please return by the September 30, 2020 deadline!**