



Illinois Civil Justice League

2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**John B. "Ben" Roe
Circuit Judge – 15th Circuit**

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

The main reason why voters should return me to the bench is that I am fully invested in making a difference inside and outside the courtroom. My primary court calls are felony court, juvenile court, and drug court (problem solving courts). Due to those assignments, I have the opportunity to directly impact the community I serve every day. I strive to give each and every case the utmost attention no matter the circumstances. Every person that comes in contact with the court system deserves to be treated fairly and justly and with dignity. I believe my job as a judge involves compassion and accountability and I keep that in mind every time I enter the courtroom.

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

I am the most proud of my my work with juvenile court and problem solving courts. I am proud of our problem solving court team as a whole. We have seen lives on the brink of devastation transform into lives full of prosperity. Problem solving courts and juvenile court is a team effort and I cherish the opportunity to preside over those court calls. As a result of our success, I have been given the opportunity to serve on many county, state, and national committees and commissions to assist in improving the juvenile court system and expand the problem solving court model.

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

The change that I would like to make is already in motion. That being the court system moving more toward an evidence-based model for judicial decision-making. We are expected to have the expertise to make the best decisions possible. That is only possible if we as judges are well educated about significant childhood trauma, addiction, mental health, adolescent brain development, and similar issues that can be root of the behavior of the youth and adults that enter our courtroom and the criminal justice system. In addition, we must be cognizant of our own implicit bias and recognize how that can impact our decision-making. In conclusion, the entire court system (prosecutors, defense attorneys, circuit clerks, probation) must embrace the same concepts in order for the system to operate effectively as a whole. I hope that as a court system we continue to evaluate, implement, and expand on this model moving forth.

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 believe that Integrity is something that must be kept in mind all day every day. I know people are always watching me and I keep that in mind on and off the bench. A judge without integrity cannot be successful. I score myself high in that area.

Impartiality is something I always think about inside and outside the courtroom. I think about the perceptions that everyone in the courtroom may have with every action and word I say. I know if someone feels they are being treated unfairly because of something out of their control, people will not trust and respect my court. I score myself high in that area.

I believe legal ability is always evolving, especially within the courts I preside. I am constantly keeping up with the changes within the law and because of my involvement on statewide juvenile committees and commissions, I have contributed to some of the law changes. I score myself high in this area.

I have a mild-mannered temperament. Although the courts I preside over can become highly emotional at times, I rarely ever change my temperament. When I do, it is usually to appropriately respond to an escalating situation. I score myself high in this area.