

Response to the ICJL judicial retention questionnaire

I have been a judge since December 1, 2014. My assignments have been traffic court for one year and felony court for the last 5 years. My answers are in relation to my assignments and experience in criminal court.

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

Since being elected in 2014, I have earned a reputation for being a hard worker who takes his judicial responsibilities seriously. The Kane County Bar Association and Illinois State Bar Association recommended me for retention. I apply the law evenly and fairly in all situations. For the last 5 years, I have been assigned to a felony court. I make decisions that affect people's lives on a daily basis. I do not take these decisions lightly. I listen carefully to all parties, and research all issues before rendering a decision. I understand that people who come to court are usually having the worst day of their life. I treat everyone with respect. I explain my decisions to all parties, I respect the precedent of my appellate and Supreme Court, and I follow the law. I greatly enjoy being a judge and believe I have earned the right through my hard work and dedication to be retained.

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

I am most proud of the reputation I have earned for being fair to everyone who appears in court. I have actually had defendant's (who I have found guilty and sentenced) thank me for the time and consideration I gave their case. I let people know that I care about them even though I must follow the law. I always make an effort whenever possible to let defendants know that this is not the end of the road, and that I sincerely hope that their life gets better. I also take time to speak to victims and their families and explain the court system once the case is over. Before becoming a judge, I helped set up the drug court in Kane County. Since I have become a judge, I have actively supported all treatment alternative courts. I am proud of my record the last 6 years I have been a judge. I look forward to serving the citizens of Kane County for many more years.

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

My answer to this question will be in relation to felony cases. I would like to see more discretion be given to judges at sentencing. Mandatory minimums are not always necessary nor are mandatory add-ons. I believe our judges know when to give a defendant a chance and when society needs to be protected with a lengthy prison sentence. I would like to see a change in the mandatory sentencing provisions.

I would also like to see more of an emphasis on treating mental illnesses to eliminate potential criminal activity as a necessity.

Allowing judges to be more creative on pretrial release issues (bond) to eliminate the need for incarceration. A greater emphasis on electronic home monitoring, GPS, educational and work alternatives.

4. One prominent Illinois judicial evaluation survey asks attorneys to evaluate candidates on integrity, impartiality, legal ability and temperament. Critique yourself in these 4 areas as to how you personally approach your job as a judge.

Integrity

My integrity is beyond reproach. I adhere to the judicial canons and ethics. I conduct my private and public life as if I am on the bench. I do not take shortcuts in my job and I administer justice fairly. I understand this job is a privilege and that I owe the citizens of Illinois and Kane County my very best. I have done my very best and will continue to do so.

Impartiality

I do not play favorites. I listen carefully to both sides and I give both sides a fair trial. I treat all people in front of me fairly and the same no matter their race, religion, sex, age, or sexual orientation. I try to follow the dictates of Justice Roberts who said in his confirmation hearing, not verbatim. "If the law says the big guy wins, then the big guy wins, if the law says the little guy wins then, the little guy wins." I follow the law no matter who is in front of me.

Legal Ability

The ISBA judicial advisory pole in conjunction with the Kane County Bar Association recently rated me at 94.56% in legal ability. I take pride in that rating. I read/review all advance sheets that come out every morning. In our weekly meetings between judges, I am often called upon to talk about new cases from the appellate and Supreme Court. It is my firm belief that by doing the research in chambers the decisions I make will be clear, concise, and understandable to all parties. Before a trial, I sit down and prepare for the unexpected. Although, it is impossible to anticipate all issues that arise at trial, by understanding the legal issues, knowing the jury instructions, and anticipating issues I am able to run a much smoother trial. I have an understanding of the issues before me; I read all case law given to me and research the law after reading the cases. I allow the attorneys to try their cases while at the same time maintaining control of the trial. I put myself on a schedule to review the routine court files in front of me at least 3 days in advance. That way if an issue needs research, I have time to do it. I believe by putting in the time to do this research, that the citizens of Illinois and Kane County are properly represented on the bench.

Temperament

I have an even temperament. I allow parties to make their arguments, and try the case as they wish. I do hold parties to the rules of evidence and the trial rules implemented by the 16th

judicial circuit. I am human, and I know I have made mistakes. I also learn from my mistakes and when necessary I am not ashamed to apologize. I remember what it is like to practice law in front of the court. It can be very intimidating. I try not to be intimidating. I try to be accommodating, flexible, and innovative. I often have meetings with the attorneys assigned to my courtroom to discuss how the court can run smoother, better and more efficient. I believe anyone who appears before me should be treated with respect and dignity. I firmly believe of accomplished this goal.

Submitted Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DJ Tegeler', written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Judge DJ Tegeler