



## 2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**Eugene Doherty**  
**Chief Circuit Judge – 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit**

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

**In my 13 years on the bench, I have demonstrated the ability to resolve cases fairly, efficiently, and intelligently, and in accordance with the requirements of law.**

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

**In my early days on the bench, I immediately identified areas in which case and call structure could be improved to make things work more efficiently, and to make things easier for the increasing number of self-represented litigants. I have continued to do the same in every assignment I have had over the years.**

**Outside of the courtroom, I was the prime mover in creating a foreclosure mediation program in Winnebago County, and I remain the supervising judge of that program today. This is a win-win program; its purpose is to explore possibilities which might keep a homeowner in the home, while finding more fruitful repayment prospects for the lender.**

**As chief judge, I obtained outside funding for a thorough review of our criminal justice case processing, and I have implemented several of the measures recommended in the report issued as a result of that review.**

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

**The pandemic has forced courts to quickly implement remote technology in our proceedings. This sudden leap forward is one that we need to sustain. I would like to see our courts undertake a thorough review of our rules of procedure to ensure that we update our methods to conform to the technologies available to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

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?

**Integrity:** I believe that I have faithfully upheld the highest standards of the office. I am proud of the fact that I have a good reputation for high integrity in the bar and among my peers on the bench. I have been trained to be a mentor to both new judges and judges in need of closer attention due to an identified issue. I serve as a facilitator to help judges digest reviews of their performance. I am regularly called upon to serve as an educator in the Judicial Education Conference, and I was tapped to host a webinar on how to get through the pandemic in its early days. All of this demonstrates that I am viewed by others as trustworthy and reliable.

**Impartiality:** Deciding a case means pushing aside facts and argument that don't matter, and honing in on those which do. A judge who develops a skill in identifying the key issues, arguments, and evidence in a case will find it easier to put aside biases that might otherwise flow from the judge's life as a lawyer. I believe I have been able to do just that.

**Legal Ability:** As a law student, I excelled academically; I graduated summa cum laude from law school and was rated at the top of my class. In my initial job as a judicial law clerk, I had the opportunity to hone my academic skills in a real-world environment. As a practicing lawyer, my ability to understand and navigate the applicable legal rules was the strongest aspect of what I brought to the table for clients. As a judge, I continue to rely on my strong academic background to inform all I do. I am proud to say that, among judges standing for retention and rated in the Illinois State Bar Association / Winnebago County Bar Association's most recent poll, I was the highest rated judge in the category of legal ability (98.02%).

**Temperament:** I believe I have always had a good temperament for the courtroom. I insist on appropriate courtroom decorum, but I know that first and foremost I must model the behavior I expect from others. I confess that the pressures of being chief judge present me with a new challenge in making sure that I always present the temperament which should be expected of all judges in court, and my focus in the next year is to ensure that I continue to do so.