

## ICJL 2018 JUDICIAL RETENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

**Circuit Judge Brendan A. Maher  
17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, State of Illinois**

**Retention Judge  
Judicial Position**

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

During my time as a Circuit Judge, I have presided over almost every type of court call in our Circuit with the exception of juvenile abuse and juvenile delinquency. Within each of the areas of law in which I have served, I have consistently rejected “that’s the way we’ve always done it” as an explanation or excuse for inefficient practices or outdated methods. I have worked to maximize the efficient processing of cases, both by setting courtroom expectations with counsel and litigants, and by working with the Clerk’s office and other stakeholders to make the litigation process more accessible to those who choose to, or must, represent themselves.

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

During my time as a Circuit Judge, I have asked to be a member of the faculty at the bi-annual Judicial Education Conference (known as “Ed Con”) for all judges in the State of Illinois. Specifically, I have presented on the several different facets under the general topic of Judicial Ethics at the 2014, 2016 and 2018 Ed Con events. I am proud of the presentations that my co-presenters and I have created and then taught in the service of improving fellow judges’ level of awareness of the types of issues to be cognizant of both on and off the bench in order to avoid violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct.


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

Our Circuit is currently working on implementation of a series of recommendations made by the National Center for State Courts designed to improve “juror utilization” (thereby reducing costs) and general “case management” in both the civil and criminal courtrooms (with a goal of setting fewer, but more meaningful, court appearance dates). Those types of changes, if effectively implemented, can save taxpayer dollars, reduce case disposition times (from filing to termination) and permit parties and counsel the time necessary to resolve cases more quickly and efficiently and without spending unnecessary time in court for “status” updates on case progress.

Per ICJL cover letter, I have attempted to limit responses to approximately 100 words per question. I am also attaching with the e-mailed response a copy of my ISBA Bar Poll results and a “summary resume” that includes legal positions held before and during my service as a judge.

**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.**

How I rate myself in the identified categories probably not as useful or objective of an indicator as is how the attorneys who practice before me or know me as a judge have rated me (anonymously) in both 2012 and again in 2018 when I was the subject of the ISBA's Bar Poll. I am attaching the October 2018 results of the ISBA Bar Poll for my retention. In 2012, I was rated at 95% or higher on all four of the identified areas. I can say that I work hard each day to uphold the highest standards expected of members of the judiciary and that I do my best to take each case on its individual facts and to make decisions and rulings in accordance with the law as applied to the facts.

  
BRENDAN A. MAHER  
10/10/2018

Per ICJL cover letter, I have attempted to limit responses to approximately 100 words per question. I am also attaching with the e-mailed response a copy of my ISBA Bar Poll results and a "summary resume" that includes legal positions held before and during my service as a judge.

## ISBA - JUDICIAL ADVISORY POLL RESULTS

Race: Seventeenth Circuit - Circuit Judge Retention 2018

Candidate: Brendan Maher

Ballots Mailed: 690                      Ballots Returned: 204

Questions	Responses	% of Opinionated Responses
<b>Respondent's Knowledge: Do you have sufficient knowledge as to the qualifications of this candidate for this judicial office to give a fair, informed opinion as to those qualifications?(IF THE ANSWER IS "NO", DO NOT COMPLETE THE BALLOT ON THIS CANDIDATE, BUT PLEASE DO RETURN THE BALLOT.)</b>	Yes: 181 No: 21 No Opinion: 2	88.73% 10.29%
<b>1 Integrity: Adhere to the high standards of integrity and ethical conduct required of the office?</b>	Yes: 178 No: 2 No Opinion: 24	98.89% 1.11%
<b>2 Impartiality: Act and rule impartially and free of any predisposition or improper influence?</b>	Yes: 173 No: 7 No Opinion: 24	96.11% 3.89%
<b>3 Legal Ability: Have adequate legal experience, knowledge, and ability?</b>	Yes: 174 No: 6 No Opinion: 24	96.67% 3.33%
<b>4 Temperament: Exercise the judicial temperament to serve with appropriate courtesy, consideration, firmness, fairness, patience and dignity?</b>	Yes: 176 No: 4 No Opinion: 24	97.78% 2.22%
<b>5 Court Management: Diligently and promptly attend to the duties of the office and assure the steady progress of court business.</b>	Yes: 176 No: 4 No Opinion: 24	97.78% 2.22%
<b>6 Health: Have the physical, mental and emotional health, stamina and stability needed to perform judicial duties?</b>	Yes: 178 No: 1 No Opinion: 25	99.44% 0.56%
<b>7 Sensitivity to Diversity and Bias: Conduct self and deal with others appropriately to reduce or eliminate conduct or words which manifest bias based on race, gender, national origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation or socio-economic status against parties, witnesses, counsel or others?</b>	Yes: 174 No: 5 No Opinion: 25	97.21% 2.79%
<b>8 Considering the qualifications of the candidate, do you believe this candidate meets acceptable requirements for the office?</b>	Yes: 174 No: 7 No Opinion: 23	96.13% 3.87%

# **BRENDAN A. MAHER**

## **Circuit Court Judge**

Winnebago County Courthouse  
400 West State Street, Suite 215  
Rockford, Illinois 61101

---

### **PROFESSIONAL LEGAL EXPERIENCE**

08/10 - present **CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE, 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, STATE OF ILLINOIS**, Winnebago & Boone County, Illinois. Appointed to the position of Circuit Judge by the Illinois Supreme Court in August, 2010, and elected to a six year term in November 2012.

- **11/2016 to present** – Currently serving as the a full-time Felony Trial Judge in the Criminal Division in Winnebago County, Illinois.
- **05/2015 - 11/2016** – Served as a full-time Felony Traffic Judge (DUI/Major Traffic Cases) in the Criminal Division in Winnebago County, Illinois.
- **08/2014 - 05/2015** – Served as a full time Family Court Judge in the Family Division in Winnebago County as a part of the Domestic Violence Coordinated Courts initiative, handling high-conflict dissolution of marriage cases and a high-volume order of protection call.
- **08/2010 - 08/2014** – Served as the Presiding Circuit Judge of the Boone County Courthouse and as the full-time Civil Division judge in Boone County assigned to hear all non-criminal cases, including General Civil, Family, Small Claims, Eviction, Probate and Miscellaneous Remedy cases.
- **2014-2018** – Served as a faculty member for the bi-annual Illinois Judges’ Educational Conference (“EdCon”) in 2014, 2016 and 2018. Session topics at each conference covered several areas of judicial ethics.

01/09 - 08/10 **U.S. ATTORNEY’S OFFICE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**, Rockford, Illinois. Served as an Assistant United States Attorney (“AUSA”) in the Western Division of the USAO-NDIL.

- Assigned caseload consisted of approximately 75% federal criminal prosecution and 25% federal civil tort and employment defense.
- Served as co-trial counsel in three criminal jury cases resulting in guilty verdicts and successfully briefed and argued three criminal appeals in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, resulting in two published opinions.
- Received extensive training at the Department of Justice’s National Advocacy Center, including a course in Criminal Practice and a ten day practical skills course in Criminal Trial Advocacy.

08/97 - 1/09 **WILLIAMSMCCARTHY LLP**, Rockford, Illinois. Attained partnership in the litigation practice group of an 85 year old, full service Rockford law firm. Practice included general civil litigation in state and federal courts involving employment law, civil rights, tort law, insurance law and commercial contract law. Practice also included mediation and arbitration of in- and out-of-court disputes in various areas of the law.

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**Winnebago County Bar Association**, Member, 1997 - present

Board of Directors, Board Member, 2007 - 2010

Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee, Member, 2005-2009

Board of Directors, Treasurer, 2004-2005 fiscal year and 2002-2003 fiscal year

Board of Directors, Assistant Treasurer, 2003-2004 fiscal year

Young Lawyers Division, Treasurer, 2000-2001; Vice President, 2001-2002

Clambake Committee, 1999-2006; Chairman, 2006

**Illinois State Bar Association**, Member, 1997 - present

Tort Law Section Council, 2006-2008

**Illinois Judges Association**, Member, 2010 - present

**Boone County Bar Association**, Member, 2010 - present

**American Bar Association**, 1997 - 2009

Past member of Dispute Resolution, Litigation and Employment sections

**Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce**, Member, 1997 - 2009

Recognized as one of "Forty Leaders Under Forty" in June 2008 following a nomination by peers and a screening process performed by a committee of Chamber of Commerce members and board members.

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**Community Foundation of Northern Illinois**, United Cerebral Palsy Fund Committee, 2008-2013

**City of Rockford Board of Fire & Police Commissioners**, Secretary & Legal Counsel, 2006-2009

**Muldoon-Boylan-Thomas ("MBT") Alumni Association**, Alumni Council Member, 2006-2012

**Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago**, Board of Directors, 2006-2009

**Easter Seals Children's Development Center**, Board of Directors, 2002-2006; Secretary, 2004-2006

**Winnebago County Zoning Board of Appeals**, Board Member, 2000-2005; Chairman of Board, 2002-2005

**Hunger Connection Food Bank**, Board of Directors, 1998-2002; Chair of Operations Committee, 1999-2002

**YMCA Partners With Youth Campaign**, Annual Campaign Volunteer, 2000 & 2002

## EDUCATION

### **VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW, Valparaiso, Indiana.**

Juris Doctor, 1997

**CLASS RANK: 1/128 G.P.A. 3.9/4.0, *Summa Cum Laude***

Presidential Scholarship (full tuition merit scholarship)

**CLASS HONORS:** Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Appellate Advocacy, Contracts, International Finance, Admiralty.

**ACTIVITIES:** Moot Court Society 1995-97; Moot Court Board of Directors, 1996-97  
Student Bar Association, Faculty Representative 94-96  
Summer Law Program, **CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND**, 1995

### **AUGUSTANA COLLEGE, Rock Island, Illinois.**

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology & Secondary Education, 1992

**G.P.A. 3.7/4.0, *Cum Laude***

Presidential Scholarship (merit based partial scholarship)

**ACTIVITIES:** Varsity Football (4-year letterman; 1-year starter)  
Intramural Wrestling

### **BOYLAN CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, Rockford, Illinois.**

Honors Curriculum, Class of 1988

**CLASS RANK: 4/318 G.P.A. 3.8/4.0**

**ACTIVITIES:** Football, Wrestling, National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes