



2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**John J. Kinsella
Circuit Judge – 18th Circuit**

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

The primary reason I believe voters should return me to the bench is because I have 40 years of experience in the criminal justice system in DuPage County. I served for 23 years in the DuPage County States Attorneys Office, rising to the position of First Assistant States Attorney. For the past 17 years I have served as a Judge in the 18th Judicial Circuit, including the last 12 years as a Circuit Court Judge assigned to hearing Criminal Felony cases. In the most recent ISBA judicial evaluation I received the highest recommendation rating, 94%, among the nine judges or candidates evaluated.

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

As a Judge I am most proud of how I treat everyone who appears in my courtroom. I sincerely try to treat every lawyer and litigant with respect. I want any party who appears before me to leave feeling that they were treated fairly, regardless of the outcome.

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

The one change I would make in the Illinois court system is to completely revamp and fundamentally change how we deal with mental illness and drug addiction in the criminal justice system. While dwindling resources continue to be a huge problem, we must recognize that more and more people are suffering from the ravages of mental illness and drug abuse. What we are doing is not working. We must find a more successful restorative approach to these issues.

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 have always tried to self-evaluate my work and seek input from others whose opinions I value. I was generally pleased with my recent ISBA evaluation. While everyone would like to be liked and praised by every person who appears before you, it is not going to happen. In the ISBA poll I received a 94% for meets requirements of the office, 96% for integrity, 86% for impartiality, 97 % for legal ability and 91% for temperament. I will continue to strive for

unanimous approval, while understanding that it will likely not be realized.