



2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

Adrienne Wakat Albrecht Circuit Judge – 21st Circuit

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

As a judge for the past fourteen years, I've done my best to work diligently to provide the persons whose cases the voters have entrusted to me with diligent, knowledgeable, respectful and fair consideration. When presiding over family law cases, I made every effort to focus the parties' attention on the long term needs of their children. When presiding over complex civil cases, I've done my best to provide the parties with a fair forum. My focus on each case has been to provide consistency, fairness and respect. The lawyers appearing before me understand that I will conduct my own legal research in an effort to make a correct ruling on the law without regard to my personal beliefs. My goal has always been to give each party an opportunity to be heard without preconceived bias toward the outcome. I've insisted on advance preparation in order to give the jurors a seamless presentation of the case, understanding the full value of their time and sacrifice.

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

In family court, I focused my efforts on getting the parties to understand that their time in family court was but one event in their lives. I spent a great deal of time reminding them that they had to leave the courtroom and continue to co-parent their children for the rest of their lives. I made it clear that behavior that was threatening and demeaning to the other parent caused irreparable harm to the child. Occasionally, I was able to put in motion a process that repaired relationships between children and their parents. In complex civil cases, my greatest source of pride has been presiding over a jury trial resulting in both parties walking away believing that the process was fair and even handed.

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

Right now, the Illinois court records are administered by 102 Circuit Clerks in 102 counties. That was efficient and appropriate when work was conducted on paper with ledgers recording each case and individuals needing to physically visit the courthouse in order to view them. Today, our entire society has converted to electronic record keeping. That causes huge inefficiencies and discrepancies in funding in this state. There are multiple case management systems attempting to interface with the electronic filing system adopted by

the Supreme Court. Each time there is a change to the electronic filing system, the local systems must make changes. It makes it difficult to automate forms and for self represented litigants to navigate. Many counties lack the technical resources and personnel to manage it. We would be much more efficient and cost effective were we to consolidate those duties in my opinion.

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?

My goal has always been to comport myself in a way that demonstrates these qualities. Part of the reason I asked for the complex civil case call is that I relish handling a variety of complicated legal issues that require the acquisition of legal knowledge. For many years, I got up at 4:00 AM and wrote summaries of every published Illinois Supreme and Appellate Court opinion and sent it off to other lawyers. This is an endlessly fascinating field and I consider it my privilege to immerse myself in it. I've been cognizant of ethical constraints and pride myself on having graduated from a litigant to jurist with truly no investment, personal or emotional, in the outcome. In every case, I treat the lawyers and the parties with respect. There is very little drama in my courtroom; yet I have no difficulty maintaining control over the proceedings.