



2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

**Ann B. Jorgensen
Appellate Justice – 2nd District**

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

Voters should return me to the bench because of what I have accomplished as a justice of the Appellate Court. Throughout my career, I was committed to fairness, adherence to the law, and improving the courts.

As a justice since 2008, I have authored numerous Opinions, Rule 23 orders and Summary Orders and have done so thoroughly, promptly, and in accord with the law. I strive to draft decisions that are clear, concise and provide useable guidance for trial courts and litigants. While this is important, I believe judges also have an overarching duty to improve the court and achieve effective case management. As the Presiding Judge of the appellate court I set an agenda to address two issues: the introduction of electronic records and reduction of our backlog. Both were successful.

In short, voters should retain me because I am qualified to discharge the work of the court, to review cases on appeal, draft clear disposition and effectively administer the court in the years to come. I love the work of this court and am proud of what has been accomplished. Yet, challenges remain and I believe I am well prepared address future solutions.

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

Two stand out. First, as the presiding Judge of the felony division in DuPage County, I started the Drug Court. This is a court that balances prosecution with treatment and rehabilitation for addicts. I personally presided over the court for the first 5 years of its operation and saw great success in long term recovery.

The second is the the advancement of efficiency in the appellate court. During my term as the Presiding Judge, I sought permission for the first pilot program for electronic records. The success of which led to e-records becoming the official record on appeal. This has enhanced access to court records and simplified the mechanics of the appellate process. During my term I championed significant changes in our protocol for case management designed to reduce our backlog of cases. It took time, but the backlog was resolved and we continue to remain current.

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

I would change the way the court system collects and reports its data and am working toward that goal. Current data collection is piecemeal with little uniformity in how cases are counted in the 102 Illinois counties. If the court is to properly evaluate its work and allocate resources, there must be statewide, uniform and accurate data upon which such decisions are made. I was vocal in the need for better data collection; and was asked to co-chair the Illinois Supreme Court Strategic Initiative on statewide data collection. While our work is well underway, it will take time to collect, evaluate and use this new standardized data.

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: Integrity is honesty; it is who I am and how I do my job as a judge. I follow the law regardless of my personal feelings; do my job to the best of my ability and do so without unnecessary delay in every decision.

Impartiality: Impartiality is fairness and independence. I make decisions based on the facts as they are presented and the law which applies, a decision devoid of bias and prejudice. I give both sides a full opportunity to be heard, listen with an open mind and hold all to the same standard. I do all I can to ensure that every party believes that they were heard and received a fair hearing. This is what instills public trust in the courts.

Legal Ability: Legal ability is all the knowledge, skill, and experience needed to decide a case. I have the ability to recognize legal issues, understand and weigh opposing arguments, synthesize the law and render a decision that addresses the issues, with a clear and cogent application of the law to the facts in the record.

Temperament: Temperament is a judicial demeanor becoming a judge. My words and conduct convey my respect for the proceedings, the litigants, witnesses, jurors, staff and the public gallery. I require civility. I am patient and give my full attention to the parties and case before me.

While I believe that I excel in these characteristics, they are best judged in the eye of the beholder. In the most recent Illinois State Bar Association Advisory Poll I was rated by my peers and received positive ratings between 94% and 97% in these categories.