



ICJL 2018 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

Thomas R. Allen Cook County Circuit Judge

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

As a licensed attorney for over 40 years, I bring a broad and diverse range of experience to the bench. In my earlier years of practice I was a Cook County Public Defender and tried hundreds of criminal cases. I then garnered civil experience as a general practitioner for over 25 years. Having worked in both the public and private sector, I strive to bring a commonsense approach to the bench, coupled with respect for both the litigants and their attorneys.

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

I pride myself on being able to simplify complicated multi-party lawsuits. The case of *Old Republic v. Bank of New York*, 08CH47501, which arose from the mortgage foreclosure crisis of 2007-2008, is a good example. Four different Chancery judges handled this matter when it was eventually assigned to my calendar in December of 2015. All of the parties had deep pockets and were represented by well-heeled firms from across the country, and the claimed damages were in the neighborhood of \$500 million. At the first case management conference, I was advised by all counsel that there were 20-25 motions fully briefed (some for several years) and awaiting argument and ruling. Realizing this case had to end, I imposed a moratorium on the filing of any new motions and scheduled all pending motions for argument and ruling. Working together and with the cooperation of the parties, a trial schedule was set in three sequential stages, each estimated to be 4-6 weeks in duration. On the eve of the first trial, the parties reached a global settlement of all matters in dispute, and after many years, the case was over.

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

The civil division of the Illinois court system moves too slowly, is too costly for litigants, and often results in denying people fair and equal access to the courts. Some lawyers employ a strategy of wearing down the opposing side through endless overbroad discovery requests and incessant motion practice. The use of these types of tactics results in some aggrieved parties being priced out of our court system. Stricter judicial oversight of pretrial discovery would help alleviate this problem.

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?

Critiquing oneself is rather awkward and self-serving, but here goes:

- INTEGRITY: I take great pains as a Judge to comport myself in a manner that will leave no question with litigants and attorneys that no outside influence will ever be a part of any decision in their case.

- IMPARTIALITY: Impartiality is a cornerstone of our American jurisprudence. I feel that I recognize the need to be completely neutral and base any decision on only the law and the evidence.

- LEGAL ABILITY: I do not profess to be the smartest judge but I make it my practice to read all written submissions and research the relevant case law in each matter that comes before me.

- TEMPERAMENT: All judges are human and can lose their temper. I would give myself high marks on judicial temperament. Lawyers who appear in my courtroom are treated with professional courtesy and respect, and they in turn return the respect.