



2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

John Curry Cook County Circuit Judge

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

The voters should consider returning me to the bench because I have faithfully fulfilled my duties and obligations as a judge throughout my service, having heard and decided cases with impartiality, openness, fairness, intelligence, and diligence, as well as faithful application of the law. I would say that this has been acknowledged due to the fact that I have been found qualified and recommended to be retained as a judge by thirteen of thirteen bar associations who have carefully evaluated my performance, including the Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association. I have pledged to continue to serve as a judge in the same spirit, with the commitment to achieving excellence in the performance of my duties, should I be retained.

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

A. I have worked to ensure that self represented litigants have a fair opportunity to be heard in their cases. In one, I presided over a case where a Vietnam veteran needed assistance in getting new housing and obtaining mental health treatment. My management of the case enabled him to get both, without any interference with the rights of other parties.

B. In my three years presiding in the mortgage foreclosure court, I worked to resolve and dispose of old cases, some as old as twelve years. I succeeded in having many cases over five years old completed, including the twelve year old case mentioned. In other courts, I have been equally conscientious about moving cases and bringing them to a conclusion without inordinate delay.

C. I am proud of my rulings in cases which applied law as set forth in the case of 1010 Lake Shore Ass'n v. Deutsche Bank Nat'l Trust Co., 2015 L 118372. This ruling gave direction on how to handle disputes over condominium fees between condo associations and parties who purchased condo properties in foreclosure. I entered rulings in three cases affected by this new ruling on the law in 2016.

D. I am proud of my decision in the case of JP Morgan Chase Bank v Chicago Title Land Trust Co., 17 CH 4276, 2018 Ill.Cir.LEXIS 232. In that case, I found that personal service on a person with a serious mental health condition by posting a summons at the property did not

conform to due process of law. (The person was later properly served with summons.)

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

In Cook County, I would reform the electronic filing system used in our circuit court to conform with the type of system used in the federal courts. In the federal court system, all parties who have formally appeared are linked into the case's electronic file. As a result, every party has notice of, a copy of, and instant access to any filing of any type by any party in the case. The Cook County system does not have that dynamic capability; in fact, when a party electronically files a motion, the party must separately serve a copy on the other parties. The system does not generate any automatic notice of motions or hearings. If the system were changed as recommended here, there would be fewer case continuances, fewer instances of non-appearance by an interested party at hearings, and speedier resolution of cases.

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?

A. Integrity. I believe that I am a person of character, honest and unbiased. I aspire to maintaining my integrity by always, on and off the bench, conducting myself with dignity, honesty, respectfulness, and good character. Each day at work, I give some thought to how I am adhering to these values and how I can excel in doing so. I will continue to conduct myself this way should I be retained.

B. Impartiality. I avoid affiliations and associations with people, groups, or events which would permit an inference that I have a certain bias or inclination as a judge. In the courtroom, I make it clear that each party will have a fair opportunity to present their case, and I give each party reasonable time and opportunity to do so. I work to prevent a party from "railroading" another party or proceeding in an overbearing manner. I will continue this practice.

C. Legal Ability. I believe that my experience, training, and education (B.A. from Northwestern University, J.D. from Vanderbilt University, five years government law experience, 31 years private practice experience as a civil litigator) show that I have the requisite legal knowledge and ability to preside as a judge in Cook County. I conscientiously attend continuing education programs in order to stay knowledgeable and current in the areas of law that prevail in my court, above and beyond the minimum requirements imposed on the judiciary. I also regularly engage in professional reading to stay current on the law. I will continue to do this if retained.

D. Temperament. I work to be calm, patient, deliberate, and temperate when handling my cases and dealing with court staff and others. Every day I think about how I act and present myself. In finding me qualified to be retained, the Chicago Council of Lawyers

stated that it has been reported that I preside with a "calm demeanor" in court. I will continue to approach my duties and conduct myself in this fashion if retained.