



2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

James Patrick Flannery, Jr. Cook County Circuit Judge

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

The main reason voters should return me to the bench is because, respectfully, I have the qualities of a good judge. I have 32 years of experience as a judge. During that time, I have presided over traffic cases, small claims cases, misdemeanor cases, Medical Negligence, Product Liability, Felony and Death Penalty cases. In today's world of uncertainty because of covid-19, it is more important than ever that a judge have experience. I have knowledge of the law. I'm diligent. I start my call on time. I have integrity. I am not known for favoring either Plaintiff or Defendant. Finally, I am best known for my demeanor. On the bench I try to be pleasant and professional, without being officious.

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

Humbly, I am proud of some of the new policies, procedures, and programs we have brought to the Law Division. I was appointed Presiding Judge six and a half years ago. While I may have entered an order for each of these, we have a true team effort in the Law Division with input from Judges, Administrators, Law Clerks and Court Coordinators. Some of the changes follow: Establishing the Law Division Advisory Committee; Establishing the Judicial Mentoring Program for judges who are newly assigned to the Law Division; Establishing the Law Division Jury Management Series of lunchtime seminars; Placing all ten Motion Courtrooms on one floor for the convenience of attorneys; Establishing the semi-annual Law Clerk Luncheon Series; Establishing, by General Administrative Order 16-3, the Procedure for Five Judge Advanced Random Assignment for Complex Cases; Placing the eight Commercial Calendar Courtrooms on two floors, four on the 19th floor and four on the 20th floor, for the convenience of the attorneys; Establishing, by General Administrative Order 16-2, the Master Calendar System and ending the Black Line System; With the help of many Law Division Jury Section Judges, making available to other Judges, the Law Jury Bench Book, that covers various topics a jury trial judge encounters; Placing Tables on the 22nd Floor for the convenience of attorneys.

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

I would do away with fees and costs, add-ons, and mandatory assessments in all cases. Government budgets should not be balanced on the backs of citizens who use the court system. If a person is found guilty of a traffic violation, and is ordered to pay a fine, the person will be ordered to pay from \$25.00 to \$450.00 in other assessments. These assessments, for example, could go to pay for a new county court house, Police training, abused women's shelters, etc. These are all worthy causes, but should not be borne by people who go ten miles over the limit.

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?

As to how I personally approach my job as a judge as to Integrity, it is very simple and simplistic. I tell myself that if I ever embarrassed my family, my coworkers, my friends or myself by doing something improper, I would not be able to live with myself.

As to personally handling Impartiality, that is the main test of being a judge. Our job is to rule based on the evidence and the law, not on the popularity of the ruling. By being impartial, a judge proves that she is really a judge.

As to Legal Ability, personally, I would not want someone to lose a case because I did not know the law. I attend and teach at legal seminars to try to improve my Legal Ability.

As to Temperament, personally, I never wanted to be an overbearing judge before whom attorneys dread appearing. I believe I have been successful and have a good reputation for Temperament.