



## 2020 Judicial Retention Questionnaire

### Debra B. Walker Cook County Circuit Judge

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

**All of the bar associations who have reviewed my credentials have found me to be Qualified or Recommended for Retention this year. I bring a wealth of legal and accounting experience to my role as a judge. Plus, I now have nearly 12 years of judicial experience. I consistently receive positive feedback from my presiding judge and the lawyers who appear before me. I am diligent, unbiased, respectful and treat all lawyers and litigants with civility.**

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

**I continue my work in the Domestic Relations Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County, where I help dysfunctional families every day. I am proud of the well-reasoned custody judgments I have rendered, taking into consideration all of the facts and applying the law to the facts in each case, as well as taking into consideration my own life experiences. I was raised in an intact, loving farm family and am currently raising well-adjusted teenagers of my own.**

**I am also proud of my ability to use my CPA background and business acumen to assist lawyers and litigants in resolving their property division disputes.**

**Last year, my presiding judge tapped me to be a team lead, so I now supervise, train and advise a team of 5 judges.**

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

**In Cook County, our court system does not always serve the public in the best possible manner because our elected officials rarely work seamlessly. The office of the chief judge, the sheriff and the clerk of court are often not rowing in the same direction. They are each in their own silo. If I could wave my magic wand, this is what I would like to improve as quickly as possible. These problems have been magnified in recent months as we had to pivot to all remote operations due to the pandemic.**

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 is critical. I am immediate past chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and frequently serve as a speaker or facilitator on topics such as civility, professionalism, reputation and ethics. These are the hallmarks of integrity. I not only talk the talk, but walk the walk! My integrity is beyond reproach.**

**Impartiality means being completely unbiased. I did not practice law in the Domestic Relations Division so I have no pre-existing ideas about any of the lawyers who appear before me. I was not raised in Cook County, so I have no familial connections here. When I initially ran in 2008, I was not slated by the Cook County Democratic Party, so I am also completely politically independent.**

**Legal ability is essential for any judge. Because Domestic Relations touches on every area of the law, I am continually learning. I came to the bench with 21 years of experience as a litigator. I have an excellent legal education from the University of Illinois. I keep abreast of changes in the law through my reading and attendance at division meetings and via my ISBA membership. I engage in legal writing and teaching for numerous legal organizations and for the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts.**

**Temperament is also critical. I am patient and kind at all times with lawyers, litigants, and court staff. My job is to serve the public. I need to ensure that self-represented litigants are fairly heard and feel heard. I set a respectful tone in my courtroom at all times. Based on feedback from my staff and from lawyers, I believe that I have an even-keeled temperament and excellent judicial demeanor.**