



Illinois Civil Justice League

**Candidate: Fred M. Morelli**

**16<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, Grometer Vacancy**

1. State the qualifications and experiences that make you qualified to serve on the bench in Illinois.

**I am 68 years old and have been a lawyer for 43 years. I am running on a platform of experience and hard work. When I say experience, I mean not only legal experience, but life experience. I have been an Assistant States Attorney, Head Public Defender, an Associate Judge for 5 years ( 1976 to 1981, when appointed I was the youngest judge in the state. In 1980 I received a 98% approval rating in the bar association poll ) and in private practice, running my own office, since 1981. I was appointed Associate Judge to fill a vacancy. When it came time to reapply, I realized there were other things I wanted to do as a lawyer. First, I wanted to do trials in federal and state court. Now, I have practiced law in Federal court, literally from California to New York and Texas to Wisconsin. I have tried cases in virtually all the northern counties in Illinois. Second, I wanted to argue appeals. Now, I have argued in the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit in Chicago, The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit in San Francisco , the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit in Denver, and I have briefed cases in the U.S. Supreme court and actually have a published opinion, although my case was not argued. Additionally, I have argued appeals in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> districts in Illinois and the Illinois Supreme court on 6 occasions. I can take the best of these courtrooms and judges and incorporate that into my courtroom. I have done more than 200 jury trials and thousands of bench trials. Though most of my practice is now criminal I have done civil and criminal jury trials in both state and federal court. My legal experience includes almost any type of case and forum anyone can think of. My client base was and is my former public defender clients, their children and now grand children. For 43 years I have represented difficult clients with difficult problems. I have an ability to get along and an ability to find solutions.**

**I have worked hard my entire life. My law career including when I was a judge is characterized by hard work. I could elaborate but space limitations do not permit.**

**My life experiences are varied, some bad some good, some I would repeat some I would rather not. I have learned valuable lessons from these experiences and believe I have an ability to consider issues from the other person's perspective. These abilities come from life experiences as well as my legal experience.**

**I apologize that this is so long, but it is difficult to condense 43 (68) years into 100 words.**

2. 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 they make you qualified to serve on the bench.

**I believe my integrity is excellent. I believe I have a sense of fair play and what is right and what is wrong. I do not claim to be perfect nor do I claim to have never made a mistake. I have learned from my experiences and they help me to better understand others. I think the 98% approval rating given to me when I was on the bench from 1976 to 1981 speaks for itself.**

3. Describe the case in which you are most proud of your work as a lawyer.

**I am presently involved in a pro bono case before the Illinois Commerce Commission representing a group of homeowners, who live in the unincorporated village of Dayton along the banks of the Fox River in La Salle County. The case involves a proposal to erect a 138,000 volt power line along 9 miles of the West Bank of the Fox River, clear cutting 150 feet of trees from the west bank in. The power line would go through the back yards of many and over the roofs of some. When I got involved, the I.C.C. decision had been made and the time to seek judicial review had passed. We were able to get the I.C.C. to reopen on their own motion (the only remaining avenue, and virtually unheard of) and the case is still in process. The lawyer representing some developers who owned property along another route had been paid \$240,000.00 for his work. The I.C.C. case number is 06 0706.**

4. Name one change you would make in the Illinois court system.

**I would require that judicial candidates be of a minimum age and have a set minimum amount of court or litigation experience.**

5. Are there civil litigation reforms that you would like to see enacted to remedy particular problems that you have detected, either as a practicing lawyer or as a sitting judge? Are there reforms that would benefit the civil justice system? What needs to be changed? Should the enactment of any such changes be the province of the legislature, the Supreme Court or by Constitutional amendment?

**Court reforms can be made by the legislature, the Supreme Court, and by Constitutional amendment. I would like to see the system streamlined and delays minimized, though I realize this must be done with caution. I do not advocate heavy-handed judges or inflexible rules. Lawyer's time waiting in court, particularly when the client is being billed, should be minimized. This too requires the exercise of sound judicial discretion. Of course, judges must start on time and render decisions in a timely manner. Judges must remain aware that they work for the people and treat the parties with respect.**

6. Do you believe that our judicial system adequately deters and penalizes frivolous litigation? If not, what reforms would you like to see?

**I believe Supreme Court rule 137 adequately addresses the issue of frivolous lawsuits and pleadings. The problem is judge's reluctance to**

**impose those sanctions. Once again this requires the exercise of sound judicial discretion, without being heavy handed or oppressive.**

7. Do you believe the Illinois Constitution precludes legislative establishment of limitations on civil damages? Are there or should there be distinctions among economic, non-economic and punitive damages?

**At this time I decline to answer that question as it is pending before the Illinois Supreme Court.**