



Illinois Civil Justice League

**Candidate: Michaela Nolan Ryan**

**Cook County Circuit Court, McCarthy Vacancy**

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

**I have practiced law for over 18 years in a variety of legal areas including traffic, real estate transactions and tax appeals, insurance, personal injury, assault and mediation. Much of my experience has been in the private sector, representing individuals and small companies. I have handled cases before administrative agencies and courts in Cook and Lake Counties.**

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 have always taken a fair and objective approach to conflicts in both personal and professional matters. I believe this independence demonstrates my integrity and impartiality. Moreover, the fact that my campaign does not solicit contributions from individuals or entities reinforces my integrity and impartiality as a candidate for judge. My legal ability is worthy, as evidenced by over 18 years practicing law in a variety of areas. At all times, I have been in good standing with the Illinois Supreme Court and the ARDC. Finally, I have a calm temperament, which is necessary for a judge in managing a courtroom and inspiring confidence in the litigants that appear before the Cook County Circuit Court.**

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

**I assumed the handling of the defense of a class action case against a racetrack. As the trial date approached and I prepared for mediation, my research uncovered additional parties that were responsible for sharing in any settlement or liability that resulted. Through my persistence, I located an additional insurer which ultimately contributed to the settlement, costing my client less in settlement funds.**

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

**Since it is essential that judges maintain their integrity and impartiality, I believe that prohibiting outside campaign contributions, limiting what a candidate can spend personally, and, if possible, eliminating political affiliations from the election of judges in Illinois would improve the public's confidence in the Illinois court system. Outside campaign contributions and**

**the political nature of judicial elections may give the public the appearance of impropriety on the part of the judiciary.**

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?

**Reforms should be enacted in areas, such as discovery, where attorneys can take advantage of the rules in order to cause cases to drag on and thereby cost the opponent more time and money. Such reforms would result in quicker resolution of cases and ease the overcrowded court docket. The Illinois Supreme Court would be best suited to create and enact these reforms.**

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

**I do not believe that our judicial system adequately deters frivolous litigation. A reform that would likely discourage frivolous litigation is the "loser pays" approach where plaintiffs would have to pay the defendant's attorneys fees and costs if they lose the case.**

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?

**The Illinois Supreme Court is currently considering whether legislative establishment of limitations on civil damages is unconstitutional. Illinois law distinguishes among economic, non-economic and punitive damages. Economic damages are easily ascertainable, non-economic damages are awarded for things that are intangible, and punitive damages are awarded for punishment purposes.**