



ICJL 2012 Judicial Candidate Questionnaire
Karin Elizabeth Swanson

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

I have been a prosecutor for the last 16 years and have had the pleasure to try cases in front of many different judges throughout the state. I began my career at the Attorney General's office and while there, I successfully committed the first person in the state of Illinois under the sexually violent person act. I also prosecuted the first possession of GHB, a date rape drug. I was part of the investigation with a Northern Illinois Police Task Force and saw it through to a successful conviction after a jury trial. I have tried over 60 jury trials, and hundreds of bench trials ranging from retail thefts to Murders. In my current capacity as a first chair, I am responsible for supervising my partners and managing a call of close to 300 cases. I am responsible for every case that comes through our courtroom, from discovery, motions, trials and pleas. In the last year alone, I have successfully prosecuted five murder cases and a predatory criminal sexual assault where a stepfather sexually abused his daughters for over five years

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.

Over the last 16 years, I have earned a reputation as someone who is extremely fair, honest, hardworking and ethical. Whether in the role of prosecutor or in life as a friend, neighbor or mom, I am honest and treat people the way I would like to be treated. The job of a prosecutor, or that of a judge, should not be about power or politics but about doing the right thing. I am that person. I have the experience, the temperament, and the passion to be an exceptional judge. No matter what the challenge, I will always do the right thing.

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

The case I am most proud of as a lawyer is a murder trial I tried this year. The victim, was an 88 year old father and grandfather, Jacint Calderazzo, who was with his daughter, Carm, on the way to pick up his fiancé from Midway airport. They stopped at a Walgreen's on Cicero Avenue to pick up gum so Jacint could kiss his bride-to-be. As Carm ran into the store, Jacint got out of the car to put some magazines from the backseat into the trunk. The defendant, Kenneth Starr, saw the running car and decided to take it. When Jacint tried to stop him, the defendant rammed the car into him and then ran him over. While I wish I had met them in a different way, I was blessed to have met Jacint's loving, wonderful family over the course of this case. Their generosity of spirit affected everyone who came in contact with them, including the police, state's attorney's and witnesses. It was a collaborative

effort of hard work between the police and my trial partner and I, and I am very proud to have been a part of it.

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

One change that I would make in the Illinois Court system is to increase penalties for persons who commit violent offenses, especially against persons who cannot protect themselves, for example children and the elderly. I would also like to see an increase in diversionary programs for non-violent offenders. I have seen the benefits of the Cook County Boot Camp, an in custody, military style boot camp that stresses discipline, respect and education, and how it can turn non-violent offenders' lives around and the recidivism rate significantly decreases. I have similarly seen very positive effects of in custody drug treatment programs to help people escape their drug addictions.

Or, you may e-mail to: **cconnerty@icjl.org**.