

Question No. 1:

For over twenty two years I have been practicing law throughout the State of Illinois. Prior to founding my own law firm in 2008 I practiced in the area of civil litigation with Stone & Moore. At Stone & Moore, I rose to the level of equity partner. I have represented businesses and individuals, on both sides -- plaintiff and defendant -- in federal and state courtrooms throughout the entire state of Illinois including, the Appellate Court of Illinois, and the Illinois Supreme Court.

My current practice involves three distinct areas of the law.

First, I represent both women and men in family law matters involving custody, child support, property division, maintenance, orders of protection, and the drafting of pre and post-nuptial agreements.

Secondly, I provide advice and counsel to candidates, political committees and independent expenditure committees related to compliance with federal and state election laws and ballot access. I also conduct the litigation that arises in various settings from the local boards of election through the circuit court (and the Illinois Supreme Court on one occasion).

Finally, I represent employers and employees in workplace disputes and provide advice and counsel to small and medium sized businesses.

My experience has given me a unique perspective on the challenges faced by all parties in the legal system. In particular, my work on behalf of men and women involved in family law disputes has given me a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by everyday people who find themselves in court at perhaps the most difficult time of their lives. If selected to serve as a judge, I intend to prioritize the legal needs of families, and ensure they are given the same time, dignity and respect as other players in the system.

Question No. 2:

According to people that I respect, I pose the proper demeanor, temperament and compassion to be a highly effective judge. My experience representing clients in family law has trained me to excel at listening carefully to people and giving them the dignity and respect that they deserve. As such, I am able to eliminate emotion from the equation, and handle cases in a truly dispassionate and impartial manner.

With respect to impartiality, I am a firm believer that every single person gets a fair shot in court and has the same level playing field, regardless of economic or other status. For over 15 years I have served as a Mediator and a mandatory Arbitrator in Cook County. As one of three co-panelists, and often serving as chair of the panel, I hear arguments presented by both sides, weigh the facts, and then render a decision. In this capacity I have a proven track record of impartially in evaluating cases, a skill that is essential for a Circuit Court Judge. Judges must decide cases based only on the law and the facts presented. Consideration of the political and financial influence of the parties involved simply has no place in the process.

As a lifelong litigator, I have also had firsthand dealings with an area of the law that is rarely dealt with: integrity and civility inside and outside the courtroom. The conduct and behavior of a very few lawyers in our profession does a great disservice to not only the judge, but the opposing counsel and that poor behaving lawyer's very own client. I am heartened when I go before a judge who recognizes these situations and is able to "rein in" the bad actor. This is an important and little talked about function of a judge.

My knowledge of the law expands with every case, every single month and every single year. I have made mistakes in my career just like every other lawyer, but have learned from every one of them. After all of these years of practice, I am confident in my legal abilities and believe that my court victories speak for themselves.

Question No. 3:

There are many cases in which I take personal pride. When I secure a good award in a child support case for a single mom, it is incredibly gratifying to me. Other workers compensation claims that I have won for the poor injured worker have brought me similar satisfaction. But the case in which I have been most proud occurred in November/December 2014 when I led the team responsible for securing the retention victory of now Chief Justice Lloyd Karmeier. He is a man whom I have admired for his unwavering commitment to the rule of law, and it was an honor to play a small part in his continued service to the Supreme Court.

Question No. 4:

Many of the changes that are needed constitute matters of policy and, therefore, must be implemented by the legislature and executive branches of government. The judicial branch has to work with the tools it is given. But a simple change would involve technological advancement. All court records including court orders in all jurisdictions, even small, rural jurisdictions, should be easily accessible, on-line, at no charge to the public. Technology has advanced to the point where this should be relatively easy to accomplish at a reasonable cost.

Question No. 5:

There are many things wrong with the Illinois court system. From my perspective, the outrageous cost of litigation for hard working, middle class individuals is not dealt with by either the legislature or the judicial branch. To me, addressing this issue would require work from both of those branches. First, perhaps the legislature can require cases dealing with lower dollar amounts to be pushed through the system within one year. That way, insurance companies would not be able to "wait out" people by dragging the simple auto case for three to four years. Making litigation less expensive, more efficient, and more expeditious is something I feel very strongly about, and one of the priorities of my campaign. I have seen, firsthand, the devastating impact litigants suffer due to unnecessary delay and expense.

It is also incumbent about the judge to take a more active role in managing cases. In particular, judges need to recognize that civil cases vary in complexity and, therefore, a "one size fits" all case management approach is not effective. Likewise, judges need to actively monitor the discovery process to ensure that it is being used for legitimate goals as provided for in the rules of civil procedure, as opposed to being used as a tool for harassment or other improper

purposes. In addition, judges need to always make sure that their decisions are rendered in a timely manner. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Judges also need to refrain from making new law like “mini-legislators. Judges can be too deferential to lawyers that manipulate the system. I don’t support judicial activism. As the late Justice Scalia said, a judge should interpret the law, not make it.

Question No. 6:

I know that the current system does not deter frivolous litigation. While the appropriate safeguards are in place (Illinois Supreme Court Rule 137 or 219), there are lawyers that “overuse” these Rules such that the parties that are actually violative of the rules don’t stand out enough. In my opinion, judges should issue sanctions on the parties that are *bringing* frivolous sanctions motions.

Question No. 7:

Contrary to various opinions, I do not believe that the Illinois Constitution precludes legislative action involving limitation on damages. Of course, there should be distinctions based upon the type of damages awarded. Economic, non-economic, and punitive damages serve different purposes and this is currently recognized in the law. Some categories of damages are recoverable in some types of cases, but not in others. For example, punitive damages are generally unavailable in a breach of contract action. But punitive damages are, of course, available in cases where there is intentional, wanton, egregious conduct. Distinguishing between the various categories of damages, and what damages may be recoverable in each type of civil action, is appropriate and judges should be aware of these important distinctions.