



ILLINOIS STATE  
BAR ASSOCIATION

## JUDICIAL EVALUATIONS

Candidates seeking election or retention to the Appellate Court were reviewed in a comprehensive evaluation process. This involves a detailed background investigation by members of the ISBA Judicial Evaluations Committee, followed by an in-person interview of the candidate. The Committee then decides whether to rate a candidate seeking a judicial vacancy as Qualified, Highly Qualified or Not Qualified and those seeking retention as Recommended or Not Recommended. Ratings based on evaluations are the opinion of the Illinois State Bar Association. The ratings for the appellate candidates/justices (outside of Cook county) appearing on the November 8, 2016 General Election ballot are below.

<b>3rd Judicial District, Appellate Court Judge</b>		
<i>Includes Circuits 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 21. The following counties fall under the Third Judicial District: Bureau, Fulton, Grundy, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Kankakee, Knox, LaSalle, Marshall, McDonough, Mercer, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Tazewell, Warren, Whiteside and Will.</i>		
<b>Vacancy</b>		
<i>No vacancies in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District.</i>		
<b>For Retention</b>		
	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
Vicki Holder Wright	Recommended	Justice Wright has been a judge since 1991. From 1991 to 2006, Justice Wright was an Associate Circuit Court Judge in the 14 <sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. In 2006, Justice Wright was elected to the Third District Appellate Court. Prior to becoming a judge, Justice Wright was an Assistant State's Attorney for Whiteside County for seven years. Justice Wright is considered to have good legal knowledge and is always prepared for oral argument when litigants appear before her. <b>The ISBA Committee for Judicial Evaluations Outside of Cook County recommends Justice Wright for retention.</b>

**Judicial Evaluations (cont)**

<h3 style="margin: 0;">4th Judicial District, Appellate Court Judge</h3> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Includes Circuits 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11.</i> The following counties fall under the Fourth Judicial District: Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Greene, Jersey, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Mason, McLean, Menard, Morgan, Moultrie, Piatt, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Vermillion and Woodford.</p>		
<p><b>Vacancy</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No vacancies in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.</i></p>		
<p><b>For Retention</b></p>		
	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
James Knecht	Recommended	<p>Justice Knecht has been on the 4th District Appellate Court since 1986. Justice Knecht is well-versed in the law and is regarded as having excellent legal ability and temperament. He is a conscientious and hard-working justice who is well-regarded by both plaintiffs and defendants who practice before him. Justice Knecht is also very active in the community and volunteers with several organizations. <b>The ISBA Committee for Judicial Evaluations Outside of Cook County recommends Justice Knecht for retention.</b></p>

**Judicial Evaluations (cont)**

### 5th Judicial District, Appellate Court Judge

*Includes Circuits 1, 2, 3, 4 and 20. The following counties fall under the Fifth Judicial District: Alexander, Bond, Christian, Clay, Clinton, Crawford, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, Massac, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Shelby, St. Clair, Union, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, and Williamson*

***For the vacancy of James M. Wexstten***

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
James R. "Randy" Moore	Highly Qualified	Justice Moore was appointed to the Fifth District Appellate Court in December 2014 by the Illinois Supreme Court. Prior to his appointment, he served as a circuit court judge in the First Judicial Circuit, Williamson County, where he presided over a variety of cases. He has served as a circuit court judge since 2007. Before serving as a judge, he was a solo practitioner in Carterville, Williamson County. He also served as a city attorney for Carbondale, Illinois. He received his undergraduate and law degrees from Southern Illinois University. <b>The ISBA Committee for Judicial Evaluations Outside of Cook County rates Justice Moore as highly qualified to serve as a justice of the Fifth District Appellate Court.</b>
Jo Beth Weber	Highly Qualified	Judge Weber has served as the resident circuit judge in Mount Vernon, Jefferson County, since 2012. As a judge, she founded the Jefferson County drug and youth courts, and presides over a variety of cases. She also provides oversight of the courthouse and has led efforts to modernize the courtrooms. Before becoming a judge, she served as a Deputy in the Illinois State Appellate Defender's office, Associate General Counsel at Southern Illinois University, law clerk to four different appellate justices in the Fifth District, an attorney for the Illinois State's Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor, and briefly served as an associate in a general practice law firm. Judge Weber is a native of Mount Vernon, having received her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Illinois. Judge Weber actively serves the Mount Vernon community in various roles. <b>The ISBA Committee for Judicial Evaluations Outside of Cook County rates Judge Weber as highly qualified to serve as a justice of the Fifth District Appellate Court.</b>

Judicial Evaluations (cont)

<u>5th Judicial District, Appellate Court Judge (cont)</u>		
<i>For the vacancy of Bruce D. Stewart</i>		
	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
John B. Barberis	Not Qualified	
Brad K. Bleyer	Highly Qualified	Judge Bleyer has served as the circuit judge in Williamson County since 2004. He presides primarily over the civil division, although he has served in all divisions of the circuit court. A graduate of Southern Illinois University, he came to the bench after an extensive career as a trial attorney that spanned approximately 20 years. Prior to his career as an attorney he was a teacher and coached youth sports. Judge Bleyer is a native of Williamson County and enjoys a reputation among lawyers as being an impartial and fair jurist who manages his docket efficiently. <b>The ISBA Committee for Judicial Evaluations Outside of Cook County rates Judge Bleyer as highly qualified to serve as a justice of the Fifth District Appellate Court.</b>