

**ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL EVALUATIONS – COOK COUNTY

2022 PRIMARY ELECTION

Candidates Seeking to Fill Judicial Vacancies

Illinois Appellate Court – First District – Hall Vacancy
--

Debra B. Walker – Highly Qualified

Debra Walker has been licensed since 1987. After a career in private practice with different litigation firms, she was elected to the Circuit Court in 2008. Since 2009 she has been assigned to Domestic Relations Division. She is a past president of the Illinois Judges Association, the Illinois Bar Foundation and the Women’s Bar Association and served as a section chair for the Illinois State Bar Association. She served as Chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism for six years. In 2019 she was given the Distinguished Alumna Award by the University of Illinois College of Law. She has been a speaker at several law schools and written on legal topics.

Lawyers contacted spoke highly of her as being a true student of the law, describing her as exceptional, sensitive, patient, and beyond reproach.

The Committee finds that Debra Walker is **highly qualified** for election to the Illinois Appellate Court.

Russell “Russ” Hartigan – Qualified

Russell W. Hartigan was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1976. He was appointed to the Circuit Court in 2010 and then elected in 2012. His assignments included First Municipal and the Fifth District (Bridgeview). In 2017 he resigned from the bench upon being elected president of the Illinois State Bar Association, and is a partner with Goldstine Skrodzki Russian Nemec and Hoff. From 1976 until his appointment in 2010 he concentrated on civil litigation for several different firms, as a partner and owner, the last one being Hartigan and O’Connor. Before becoming president, he had served the ISBA in many different positions. He is a past president of the West Suburban Bar Association and is active with other legal groups. He has also served as trustee for several western suburbs. He teaches at The John Marshall Law School, speaks statewide on legal topics and writes articles. In June 2019 he received an award for dedicated service from the Illinois Bar Foundation.

Attorneys have a high regard for his legal knowledge, preparedness, and his approachable demeanor. They report that as a judge he was patient and fair with pro se litigants. He has extensive civil jury trial experience and has handled some appeals.

The Committee finds Mr. Russell W. Hartigan **qualified** for election to the Illinois Appellate Court.

Dominique C. Ross – Not Qualified

Dominique C. Ross has been licensed since 1995. She was elected to the Circuit Court in 2008 and retained in 2014 and 2020. She is currently assigned to Domestic Relations, where she has spent the bulk of her judicial career. Prior to taking then bench, she was in private practice with a focus on family law, and also handled other civil matters, and criminal misdemeanor cases, while serving as an arbitrator and contract attorney with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. She is a former president of the Illinois Judicial Council and a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Professional Responsibility. She has been a speaker on legal issues.

Attorneys reported that while she is respectful with adequate legal knowledge, there were concerns over her insufficient judicial experience, especially in the handling of complex cases, courtroom demeanor at times, and diligence.

The Committee finds Dominique C. Ross **not qualified** for election to the Illinois Appellate Court.

Illinois Appellate Court – First District – Harris Vacancy
--

Raymond W. Mitchell – Highly Qualified

Raymond Mitchell was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1993. After rising to partner at Winston and Strawn, handling appeals, he was appointed to the Circuit Court in 2008 and elected in 2010. Since 2017 he has been assigned to the Chancery Division; prior to that, he was assigned to the Law Division from 2011 until 2017 after started in the Traffic Division.

He has taught as an adjunct professor, written on legal topics and been a committee member with the American Bar Association. Lawyers report that he has a thorough understanding of the legal process with excellent legal knowledge, and his written opinions are thorough and well-researched. He is known as a hard worker who is fair and patient.

The Committee finds Raymond W. Mitchell **highly qualified** for election to the Appellate Court.

Devlin Joseph Schoop – Not Qualified

Devlin Schoop has been licensed since 1997. After starting as a law clerk to Hon. Blanche Manning, he worked at Harrold Allen & Dixon handling commercial litigation until 2003 when he joined Laner Muchin, becoming a partner in 2008, focusing on employment litigation. In 2015 he was appointed to the Circuit Court where he served in Traffic Court and Child Protection until his term ended in December 2016. He then joined the City of Chicago Law Department, handling police misconduct cases, until 2019 when he joined Henderson Parks d/b/a The Cochran Firm as a partner where he chairs the firm’s civil rights practice group. He has been active in bar associations and has sat on committees for the Chicago Bar Association and the Cook County Bar Association. He also served on the CBA’s Board of Managers for two years and has written on legal topics. He is active with many community groups and has received several awards for his professional and pro bono accomplishments from the Cook County Bar Association, the University of Illinois, and the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and Federal Bar Association.

He has substantial civil jury and bench trial experience, including in very complex cases. Attorneys praised his legal knowledge, his writing skills, his fairness and integrity, and his varied background. Concerns were raised that the depth and breadth of his short judicial experience are insufficient for the Appellate Court.

The Committee finds Devlin Joseph Schoop **not qualified** for election to the Illinois Appellate Court.

John H. Ehrlich – Not Qualified

John Ehrlich was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1988. He worked for the City of Chicago Law Department, rising to become Deputy Corporation Counsel, until 2012 when he was elected to the Circuit Court. He was subsequently retained in 2018. Since 2014 he has been assigned to the Law Division – Motions Section after prior assignments in the Chancery Division, Foreclosure Section and Traffic. He is a member of various bar associations and has been a speaker and panelist on legal issues.

Attorneys reported that he is knowledgeable on the law, although concerns were raised by some that at times, he did not apply the law well. All reported him to be a hard worker, fair, patient, and well prepared, with well-reasoned opinions.

Concerns were raised, however, about his impartiality at times, the number of reversed decisions by the Appellate Court, and his lack of introspection during the interview about those decisions.

The Committee finds John Ehrlich **not qualified** for election to the Illinois Appellate Court.

Circuit Court - Cook County – Brennan Vacancy

Ubi O. O’Neal – Not Recommended

Mr. Ubi O’Neal declined to participate in the judicial evaluation process. Pursuant to ISBA guidelines, Mr. Ubi O’Neal is found to be **not recommended** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Howard B. Brookins, Jr. - Qualified

Howard B. Brookins, Jr. was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1988. After spending two years as an assistant public defender and an assistant state’s attorney, he formed Brookins and Wilson. Since 2008 he has been a sole practitioner, handling mainly criminal defense. He has represented the 21st Ward in the Chicago City Council since 2003, and currently chairs the Committee on Transportation and the Public Way. He is a member of several bar associations. The vast majority of attorneys contacted during the investigation relayed that he is knowledgeable and thorough with good legal knowledge and a reputation for fairness. He has jury trial experience, both criminal and civil, and many bench trials, mostly criminal.

The Committee finds Howard B. Brooks, Jr. **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Lisa Michelle Taylor – Qualified

Lisa Taylor has been licensed since 2001. In 2017 she joined Schwartz Gilligan where she focuses on general tort defense and insurance coverage litigation, with some probate practice. Prior to joining her current firm, she had worked at various other firms with civil defense practices. She is a member of several bar associations, has been a speaker on legal topics, mentored law students, and served on the City of Chicago’s Board of Ethics from 2009 until 2012.

In 2014 she was given the Cook County Special Advocate Volunteer Spirit Award. She has litigation experience in civil jury and bench trials. Attorneys praised her legal ability, thoroughness, professionalism, and work ethic.

The Committee finds Lisa Michelle Taylor **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court – Cook County – Callahan vacancy
--

Mary Bernadette McMahon - Qualified

Mary Bernadette McMahon has been licensed since 2005. She is a career prosecutor currently serving as Supervisor of the Second Municipal District (Skokie), after previously serving as Deputy Supervisor of the Third Municipal District (Rolling Meadows), Felony Trial, and other units. She is a member of various bar associations and is on the Misericordia Women’s Board. She is reported to have considerable legal knowledge and ability, and to be prepared and ready.

She has a substantial number of criminal jury trials, including in complex matters. While a few attorneys contacted felt she could be inflexible at time, the majority described her as professional and above-board.

The Committee finds Mary Bernadette McMahon **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Suzanne Therese McEneely - Qualified

Suzanne Therese McEneely has been licensed since 2001. After spending a year with a private insurance defense firm, she joined the Public Defender’s Office. She currently handles felony cases in the Second District (Skokie), including specialty and diversion courtrooms after previous assignments in Child Protection, Traffic, Domestic Violence, and First Municipal. She is a member of some bar associations and volunteers at her parish.

She has criminal jury and bench trial experience, and her work is respected by other attorneys. Comments received during the investigation were overwhelmingly positive as to her legal knowledge, diligence, ability to handle complex matters, sensitivity to diversity, and her temperament.

The Committee finds Suzanne Therese McEneely **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Tracie Porter - Qualified

Tracie Porter has been licensed since 1994. She currently practices with Tracie Porter PC handling residential and commercial real estate matters, and probate, corporate and securities matters. At various times she has worked with law firms and had her own practice and spent the first four years of her legal career with the U.S. Department of Labor as a Labor Litigation attorney. She has taught and lectured at various law schools and has been a committee member with various bar associations. She is Chairman of the Board and a Founder of the Alexander Family Foundation.

She has experience in both state and federal courts, and reports having tried several civil jury trials, as well as bench trials and motions. Lawyers contacted described her as possessing exceptional legal knowledge and ability, with integrity that is beyond reproach. They say she is professional, diligent, organized, and prepared, with an excellent temperament.

The Committee finds Tracie Porter **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court – Cook County – Cannon vacancy
--

Monica G. Somerville – Not Qualified

Monica Somerville has been licensed since 1990. She has been employed by the City of Chicago since 2013 in various positions; in 2021 she was appointed Deputy Director of Citation Administration. Prior to joining the City she had worked for the United States Postal Service in its Law Department; as an Administrative Law Judge for the Illinois Department of Employment Security; as Litigation Counsel for the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission; and as an assistant corporation counsel. She is a member of various bar associations and has been active as committee member/chair and speaker, including with mentoring through the Chicago Bar Association.

She does have some jury trial experience, though none since 2000. Attorneys reported that she is competent, professional and diligent. Concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of her overall legal experience and the lack of recent trial experience.

The Committee finds Monica Somerville **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Mable Taylor – Not Qualified

Mable Taylor has been admitted to the Illinois bar since 1994. She has a general practice in a wide variety of areas with the Law Office of Mable Taylor. She has also been an arbitrator for Cook County for twenty-five years. She is a member of various bar associations, has taught at the college level, has done pro bono work and has been active with various west side community organizations.

While attorneys praised her commitment to minority women's rights, they were split on her legal ability; some stated she had good legal knowledge, while others reported that she would zealously advocate positions that were legally incorrect and did not follow the law or proper court procedures. In addition, concerns were raised that while she reported having bench trial experience, most were from earlier in her career; she reported very limited jury trial experience, again none recently. Concerns about her diligence, as evidenced by numerous errors and omissions in her questionnaire and inadequately addressing those omissions in the interview.

The Committee finds Mable Taylor **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Diana López - Qualified

Diana López has been licensed since 2001. She was selected as an associate judge in 2021 and is currently assigned to the Traffic Division. Prior to her appointment, she had practiced with Lopez Law Group and other firms, handling mainly domestic and family law matters. She also served for three years as an assistant state's attorney before entering private practice. She has taught as an adjunct professor at DePaul and served as Vice-Chair of the Schiller DuCanto and Fleck Family Law Center there as well. She is a board members of Greenlight Family Services and has served on bar association committees.

She is considered to have excellent legal knowledge, and to be organized, knowledgeable, and balanced. Before being appointed to the bench, she had tried a considerable number of civil bench trials.

The Committee find Diana López **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court – Cook County – Hyman vacancy

Thomas E. Nowinski - Qualified

Thomas E. Nowinski has been licensed since 2004. Since December 2020 he has been Chief of Staff to the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Prior to that, he held various other government positions, including as Labor Counsel to the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, Legal Counsel to the Assessor, Deputy Director of Labor Relations for the Cook County Board; he also served as an assistant state's attorney for several years, and was Deputy Supervisor of Torts and Federal Civil Rights Litigation Unit of the Civil Actions Bureau. He is currently the Treasurer of the Advocates Society and a committee member.

The Committee finds Thomas E. Nowinski **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Carmen Migdalia Quinones – Not Qualified

Carmen Quinones was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1989. She is a solo practitioner with a focus on domestic relations and family law. She has worked as a child representative in domestic relations matters. She is a member of several bar associations and is involved with the Chicago Bar Association mentoring program. She has received several awards for her pro bono work and work as a child representative, included from the Cook County Legal Assistance Foundation, the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services and the Chicago Bar Association.

While attorneys report that she is a well-respected child representative who knows domestic relations law and has experience in pre-trial litigation, concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of her experience and her lack of jury or bench trial experience.

The Committee finds Carmen Quinones **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Elizabeth “Beth” Ryan – Qualified

Elizabeth “Beth” Ryan has been licensed since 2004. Since 2011 she has been a solo practitioner handling mainly personal injury matters. Earlier in her career, she spent two years as a law clerk in Chancery followed by three years in a law firm. She is a member of various bar associations and has been a guest lecturer at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law.

Ms. Ryan reports that she has tried eight civil jury trials. She received overall positive comments for her legal knowledge and ability; a few questioned the extent of her experience in complex matters. She is considered to be very professional, diligent and punctual, with a good temperament and high ethical standards.

The Committee finds Elizabeth Ryan **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Yolanda Harris Sayre – Not Qualified

Yolanda Harris Sayre has been licensed in Illinois since 1995. She currently serves as Legal Counsel for the Illinois State Police. Prior to taking that position, since 1997 she was employed by the Chicago Police Department as a trainer of Community Policing and Diversity and as an attorney assigned to the Office of Constitutional Policing and Reform. Before that, she had worked in a general law practice focusing on civil matters. She has also worked as a Hearing Officer for the Secretary of State and for the Chicago and Cook County Boards of Election. She is an executive board member of the Illinois Association of Administrative Law Judges, is a member of several bar associations, and has served on committees, been a speaker on legal topics, and done some pro bono work.

While most attorneys consider her to be impartial with an excellent temperament and good legal knowledge, concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of her overall legal experience and her very limited jury trial experience.

The Committee finds Yolanda Harris Sayre **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Wende Williams – Not Recommended

Wende Williams (FKA: Wendelin DeLoach) declined to participate in the judicial evaluation process. Pursuant to ISBA guidelines Wende Williams is found to be **not recommended** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Rena Marie Van Tine – Highly Qualified

Rena Marie Van Tine was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1986. She was appointed to the Circuit Court in February 2021 after serving as an associate judge since 2001. She is currently assigned to the Law Division – Trial Section, after a previous assignment in Child Protection.

Prior to ascending to the bench, she had served as an assistant state’s attorney and as Special Counsel to the State Comptroller. She is a past president of the Asian American Bar Association and on the Board of the Women’s Bar Association of Illinois and has been active with other bar associations. In 2021 she received the Mary Heftel Hooton award from the WBAI and in 2019 received the Sandra Otaka Leadership Award from the AABA. She also teaches at judicial conferences. Lawyers report that she knows the law and how to apply it, and issues thoughtful rulings. She is considered to be fair and impartial, with high character.

The Committee finds Rena Marie Van Tine **highly qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court – Lynch vacancy

Paul Joyce – Qualified

Paul Joyce has been licensed since 1991. Aside from seven years with a private firm when first licensed, he is a career prosecutor currently assigned to the Second District (Skokie) as a First Chair. Prior assignments include Felony Trial, Felony Review and Juvenile Justice.

He has substantial criminal trial experience, handling thirty jury trials and many bench trials and motions. Attorneys consider him to be very knowledgeable and sharp, always ready to research when necessary. He is said to be fair, impartial and professional.

The Committee finds Paul Joyce **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Deidre Baumann – Not Qualified

Deidre Baumann has been licensed since 1992. After first working for a law firm, in 1996 she opened her own firm, Baumann and Shuldiner, handling civil litigation in state and federal court. She is active with various bar associations and is currently president of the Suburban Bar Coalition and on the board of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago. Previously, she served as president of the Decalogue Society and the North Suburban Bar Association as well as on the executive board of the Women’s Bar Association of Illinois. She serves on several committees for the Illinois State Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association.

While attorneys report that she is professional with good writing skills, concerns were raised over a lack of punctuality and diligence at times.

The Committee finds Deidre Baumann **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Michael Weaver – Qualified

Michael Weaver has been licensed since 2006. He has been with McDermott Will handling commercial litigation since 2007, as a partner since 2013, and is currently the Pro Bono Litigation Partner. Prior to joining the firm, he spent a year in American Samoa as a law clerk. He is a former Board president of the Family Defense Center NAAA Ascent Justice. Has been a speaker on legal topics and is a member of various bar associations. He was named to the inaugural list of Crain’s Chicago Business Notable LGBTQ Executives in 2018.

He has both civil and criminal jury and bench experience, has handled appeals, and litigated other motions and restraining orders in both federal and state courts. He is regarded by fellow attorneys as possessing exceptions legal skills, and being very inclusive and even keeled, with high integrity.

The Committee finds Michael Weaver **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court – Cook County – McGury vacancy
--

Chelsey R. Robinson – Not Qualified

Chelsey R. Robinson has been licensed since 1996. She is a founding partner of Owens & Robinson, a general practice handling both criminal and civil matters. She is also a legal consultant to the Judge Mathis television program. She is a member of some bar associations, a volunteer at the Juvenile Detention Center and is active with other community organizations. She has limited jury and bench trial activities and limited experience with complex matters.

While she is considered to be ethical and honest, attorneys gave mixed comments as to the depth and breadth of her overall legal experience.

The Committee finds Chelsey R. Robinson **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Ruth Isabel Gudino – Qualified

Ruth Isabel Gudino was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1995. In 2021 she was appointed to the circuit court and is currently assigned to the Traffic Division. Prior to her appointment, she was the Supervisor of the Criminal Prosecutions Bureau for the State’s Attorney’s Office in the Fourth District (Maywood), where she had also been Deputy Supervisor. She had been with the SAO since 2001; prior to that she worked for the Cook County Public Guardian and the United Auto Workers Legal Services Plan, as well as another stint as an assistant state’s attorney.

She has taught law classes, and is a member of various bar associations, having served on committees with several of them. She has substantial criminal jury and bench experience. Attorneys report that she is an excellent attorney with good litigation skills, professional, and a hard worker.

The committee finds Ruth Isabel Gudino **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jacqueline Marie Griffin – Qualified

Jacqueline Marie Griffin was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2005. She is a career assistant state’s attorney, currently assigned to the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Unit after previous assignments in Juvenile Justice and Child Support. She has lectured students through the Lawyers in the Classroom program.

She has jury and bench trial experience and has handled complex matters. Attorneys report that she is diligent, punctual, respectful, and has good character and integrity.

The Committee finds Jacqueline Marie Griffin **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Araceli Reyes De La Cruz – Qualified

Araceli Reyes De La Cruz was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2001. In January 2022 she was appointed to the circuit court where she is currently assigned to Traffic Court. Prior to her appointment, since 2016 she has been the General Counsel/Chief Administrative Officer for Acero Schools handling policy and labor relations and coordinating with outside counsel on litigation. Prior to this, she has been Chief of General Prosecutions for the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation from 2014 to 2016; Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief Safety and Security Officer for the Chicago Transit Authority from 2009 to 2014; and an assistant state’s attorney from 2001 to 2009. She is a member of various bar associations, has spoken on legal topics and is on the executive board of Casa Central.

She has some jury, bench and quasi-trial experience. Attorneys praised her legal knowledge and ability, her diligence and her even keeled temperament.

The Committee Araceli Reyes De La Cruz **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Dan Balanoff – Not Qualified

Dan Balanoff has been licensed since 2007. He is a practitioner with Balanoff and Associates, a general practice focusing on estate planning, probate, real estate, bankruptcy, and personal injury. He is a member of the Decalogue Society and was a member of the Lincoln Park High School Local School Council from 2010 to 2012.

While attorneys reported that he is professional, diligent, prepared, and knowledgeable in his practice areas, he has no jury trial and very limited bench trial experience. Concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of his overall legal experience as well.

The Committee finds Dan Balanoff **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Claudia Silva-Hernandez – Not Recommended

Claudia Silva-Hernandez declined to participate in the judicial evaluation process. Pursuant to ISBA guidelines, Ms. Claudia Silva-Hernandez is found to be **not recommended** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Thomas More Donnelly – Highly Qualified

Thomas More Donnelly has been licensed since 1986. He was appointed to the circuit court in 2021 after serving as an associate judge since 2003; he also served a brief time as an appointed circuit court judge in 2000. He has been assigned to the Law Division – Jury Section since 2017. His prior assignment include First Municipal, Civil Jury Trials, Misdemeanor Jury Call, and Supplementary Proceedings and Miscellaneous Remedies; Domestic Violence; and Traffic Division. Prior to becoming a judge, he had been an assistant public defender and a law clerk at the appellate level for the Hon. Mary Ann McMorrow. He has served on the Illinois Judicial Ethics Committee for thirty years, taught trial advocacy, written and taught classes on legal ethics. He currently serves on the faculty of the National Judicial College. In 2018 he received the Harold Sullivan Award from the Illinois Judges Association, and in 2019 was given the Impact Award from the Center for Disability and Elder Law. He is a past president of the Catholic Lawyers Guild and has served as a Board member of the Illinois Judges Association.

Attorneys contacted reported that he knows the law, is thorough, and has a great grasp of evidentiary issues and that his written opinions are excellent. He has a reputation as a person of great integrity who listens, is always prepared, and treats all with respect.

The Committee finds Thomas More Donnelly **highly qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Meridth Vanae Hammer – Not Recommended

Meridth Vanae Hammer declined to participate in the judicial evaluation process. Pursuant to ISBA guidelines, Ms. Meridth Vanae Hammer is found to be **not recommended** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

John W. Wilson – Highly Qualified

John W. Wilson has been licensed since 1996. He was appointed to the circuit court in July 2021 and is currently assigned to the Municipal Division at the Maywood Courthouse. At the time of his appointment, he was acting Chief of the Sixth District (Markham Courthouse) for the Cook County Public Defender. As a career public defender, prior to his role as acting chief, he had been a member of the

Homicide Task Force and homicide and felony supervisor at the Markham Courthouse. He has been a speaker on legal topics and an adjunct professor of law as well as a member of the Cook County Judicial Advisory Council.

He has extensive trial experience in criminal matters, including jury and complex cases. Lawyers interviewed expressed that he has a stellar reputation for his legal knowledge and ability and possesses impressive legal skills, while also being diligent with high integrity.

The Committee finds John W. Wilson **highly qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Maria M. Barlow – Not Recommended

Maria M. Barlow declined to participate in the judicial evaluation process. Pursuant to ISBA guidelines, Ms. Maria Barlow is found to be **not recommended** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 4 th Subcircuit – Gavin vacancy
--

Amanda Moira Pillsbury – Not Qualified

Amanda Moira Pillsbury has been licensed to practice in Illinois since 2004. She is a career assistant state's attorney currently assigned to the Fifth District (Bridgeview). She has some community and parish activities. She has some jury trial experience.

Some attorneys reported that she is knowledgeable and a good litigator, while others questioned the extent of her involvement in complex matters and the depth of her experience. Opinions on her diligence and temperament were also divided between positive and negative.

The Committee finds Amanda Moira Pillsbury **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Nick Kantas – Qualified

Nick Kantas was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2004. He is a career assistant state's attorney who is currently a supervisor in the Juvenile Justice Division. Previous assignments include Child Support and Felony Trial. He is a commissioner on the Lyons Township Mental Health Commission and served as a trustee for Lyons township School Treasurer's Office and is a member of several bar associations. He has been a speaker at internal seminars.

He has substantial jury and bench trial experience. Attorneys praised his legal knowledge, fairness, work ethic, and demeanor.

The Committee finds Nick Kantas **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Chloe Georgianna Pedersen - Qualified

Chloe Pedersen has been licensed since 2007. She is an equity partner at Fletcher & Sippel, after joining them as an associate in 2014, where she leads the labor and employment practice group. Prior to joining her current firm, she spent two years as Chief Legal and Labor counsel to the Cook County Recorder of Deeds and worked as an assistant attorney general in the Government Representation Division – General Law Bureau. In 2009 she was a contract attorney as Assistant General Counsel to the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives. From 2007 to 2010 she was an associate attorney with Querrey & Harrow with a civil and government litigation practice. She has been active on committees with several bar associations and is currently a member of the Board of Governors of the Illinois State Bar Association; she also served on the Board of the Women’s Bar Association. She is a past commissioner for the Proviso Township Mental Health Commission and is currently a member of the Riverside Community Caucus. She has been a speaker on legal issues.

She has litigation experience in state and federal courts. Attorneys report that she has excellent legal knowledge and is a thorough researcher. She received favorable comments regarding sensitivity to issues of diversity and bias with a good judicial temperament.

The Committee finds Chloe Georgianna Pedersen **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

ShawnTe Raines-Welch – Not Qualified

ShawnTe Raines-Welch has been licensed since 2009. Since 2019 she has been with Ancel Glink focusing on civil litigation defense and local government representation. Prior to that she worked at several other firms handling labor, employment and personal injury matters. She has been a local prosecutor and administrative law judge for several suburban municipalities. She has been a speaker and written about legal issues and served on the Proviso Township Mental Health Commission and the Hillside Zoning Commission.

She reports one jury and no bench trial experience as lead counsel, though she has litigated pre-trial motions in state and federal courts. While attorneys stated that she handles her duties as administrative law judge well and is knowledgeable in those areas, fair and even keeled, the Committee has concerns about her lack of trial experience and the depth and breadth of her overall legal experience.

The Committee finds ShawnTe Raines-Welch **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jerry Barrido - Qualified

Jerome Barrido has been licensed since 1999. He is a career assistant public defender, currently assigned to the Juvenile Justice Division. He has tried multiple criminal juries, including complex matters, and has substantial experience with mental health issues. He is considered to be a passionate and dedicated professional who is very knowledgeable about the law, with high character and integrity.

The Committee finds Jerome Barrido **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Patrick Campanelli – Not Qualified

Patrick Campanelli has been licensed since 1986. After working as an assistant state’s attorney from 1986 to 1997, he opened his own general law practice with an emphasis on trial work, mainly criminal. He has been a college instructor at the undergraduate level.

He has extensive jury, bench and motion experience in criminal law, including in very complex cases and has handled one appeal. Concerns were raised during the investigation about his temperament and professionalism, with attorneys reporting a lack of civility while appearing in court, and a lack of sensitivity as well.

The Committee finds Patrick Campanelli **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 5th Subcircuit – Portman-Brown vacancy

David L. Kelly - Qualified

David L. Kelly has been licensed since 2001. In 2021 he was appointed to the circuit court. Prior to this he served as an assistant state’s attorney until 2006 when he opened his own general practice focusing on criminal defense and real estate. He has both criminal and civil trial experience. He is well-regarded for his litigation skills, knowledge, and temperament, and is considered to be ethical and respectful. He is active in bar associations and legal clinics.

The Committee finds David L. Kelly **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jenetia Marshall - Qualified

Jenetia Marshall was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2004. At that time, she joined the Cook County Public Guardian’s Office where she remained until 2019, when she moved to the Department of Children and Family Services as Supervisor-Regional Counsel. She is currently the department’s Statewide Compliance Administrator. She is a member of several bar associations and was a Founding Member of Inner-City Mission, with other community involvement.

She has bench and motion litigation experience. Attorneys reported that she knows the law, is prepared and good in court, and has an excellent temperament.

The Committee finds Jenetia Marshall **qualified** to election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 5th Subcircuit – Shelley vacancy

Timothy W. Wright III - Qualified

Timothy W. Wright III has been licensed since 1984. Since 2011 he has been a partner at Quintairos, Prieto, Wood and Boyer, focusing on commercial litigation, public affairs, and public finance. He worked at several different firms before joining his current firm, focusing on similar areas. In addition, he was Chief of Staff to Representative Bobby Rush from 1997 to 1999, and member of the Clinton Transition Team from 1992 to 1993 as Domestic Policy Director, and Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development for the City of Chicago from 1985 to 1989.

He has been on the Board of Chicago's Theological Seminary and Claremont McKenna College and was awarded the Distinguished Public Service Award by Claremont McKenna in 2019. He is a member of several bar associations.

He is an experienced commercial litigator, with some jury and bench trial experience and substantial complex quasi-litigation before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other boards. The vast majority of attorneys described him as being smart and knowledgeable with an inclusive approach and high integrity.

The Committee finds Timothy W. Wright III **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Judie Lyn Smith – Not Qualified

Judie Lyn Smith was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1992. For the past eighteen years she has been an assistant public defender, currently assigned to the Sixth District (Markham). Earlier in her career, she was in private practice, worked in Japan and was an appellate law clerk. She is a member of various bar associations and served in the Illinois State Bar Association Assembly. She has also been a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice, serving on two committees.

While she does have jury and bench trial experience in criminal matters, attorneys contacted during the investigation were split on her legal ability to be a judge; some stated she was competent and prepared, but others raised concerns about the extent of her experience with complex matters and her ability to at times be timely in moving cases.

The Committee finds Judie Lyn Smith **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Tiffany N. Brooks – Not Qualified

Tiffany Brooks has been licensed since 2010. She is currently the General Counsel for the Clerk of the Circuit Court, a position she has held since December 2020. Prior to her current position, she served in various city positions, including Assistant Commissioner for the Business Affairs and Consumer Protection; as an investigator with the Civilian Office for Police Accountability; and as a legislative aide to the City Council. In addition to her posts with the city, from 2013 until 2020 she had her own law practice handling civil and criminal matters. She also taught at Northeastern and was a staff attorney at Urban Partnership Bank when she was first licensed. She has been active with various bar associations, a director on the South Side Community Federal Credit Union Board and provided pro bono services through various local community groups.

She reports two civil jury trials and two civil bench trials as lead counsel; none in the past five years. While attorneys praised her temperament, diligence, inclusiveness, and varied experience, concerns were raised about her lack of recent jury and bench trial experience.

The Committee finds Tiffany N. Brooks **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jackie Marie Portman-Brown – Not Qualified

Jackie Marie Portman-Brown has been licensed since 1999. She served as a prosecutor and general counsel of the Independent Police Review Authority before her election to the circuit court in 2008 and retention in 2014. As a judge, she was assigned for First Municipal and the Criminal Division. From February 2012 until February 2019, she presided over the Deferred Prosecution Court while simultaneously presiding over the Adult Redeploy Illinois Court until that program was terminated in October 2018. In November 2020 she was defeated for retention after being reassigned in March 2020 to First Municipal, administrative duties, pending the resolution of a complaint filed with the Judicial Inquiry Board after a well-publicized situation where she allowed her grandniece to be locked in the holding cell behind the courtroom as an act of discipline.

Attorneys varied widely regarding her tenure on the bench in their assessment of her legal knowledge and ability. Some reported she had good legal knowledge, others that she did not know the law or misapplied it. Many raised concerns about her judgment and her temperament, with some describing her as being abusive at times to staff and reporting her at times unorthodox behavior on the bench, including singing and ringing a cowbell.

The Committee finds Jackie Marie Portman-Brown **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 6th Subcircuit – Araujo vacancy

Charles “Charlie” Beach - Qualified

Charles “Charlie” Beach has been licensed since 1996. In September 2017 he was appointed as an associate judge to the Circuit Court, Traffic Section. He is currently assigned to the Pre-Trial Division at the Leighton Criminal Courthouse. Prior to his appointment, Judge Beach owned his own practice where he primarily focused on DUI and criminal defense. Early in his career he was a clerk for the Appellate Court and assistant public defender. Judge Charles Beach is found to be **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 6th Subcircuit – Vega vacancy

David S. Rodriguez - Qualified

David S. Rodriguez has been licensed since 1984. Since 2006 he has been a sole practitioner with a general practice focusing on civil litigation, real estate and business transactions. Prior to opening his solo practice, he had been the First Deputy Commission of the Illinois Office Banking and Real Estate from 1999 to 2005; an assistant attorney general from 1989 to 1999; a sole practitioner from 1985 to 1989; and a tax consultant with two different firms from 1983 to 1985. In addition, from 2011 to 2017 he served as a Commissioner on the Court of Claims. He is a member of various bar associations and active in community affairs; he serves on the Board of Directors of Aspira Illinois and the Hispanic Health Alliance and the AIDS Pastoral Care Network.

He has litigation experience in both jury and bench trials and has handled two appeals. Attorneys report that he has good legal knowledge and is diligent and professional.

The Committee finds David Rodriguez **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Kerry Maloney Laytin – Qualified

Kerrie Maloney Laytin was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2000 and was appointed to the Circuit Court in January 2019. She is currently assigned to the Municipal Department - Traffic Section having been appointed as an associate judge in 2017. From 2000 to 2002 she worked for the Legal Assistance Foundation; from 2002 until her appointment, she was an assistant corporation counsel to senior counsel in the Appeals Division. Before being licensed in Illinois, she clerked for two federal judges and was a trial attorney with the Department of Justice. She is a member of various bar associations and participates in community activities.

Judge Laytin is well-regarded by attorneys for her legal knowledge and ability to deal with substantive issues. She is considered to be professional, courteous and to have high ethical standards.

The Committee finds Kerrie Maloney Laytin **qualified** election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 7 th Subcircuit – Martin vacancy

Marcia O’Brien Conway - Qualified

Marcia O’Brien Conway was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1984. She currently practices with the Conway Law Group. She was an assistant state’s attorney from 1993 until 2018. Her assignments included Real Estate Tax Division, Corporate Transactions and Chancery. Prior to her employment with the State’s Attorney’s Office, she had been a sole practitioner handling real estate matters, and both a consulting attorney and an associate attorney with Winston and Strawn handling commercial litigation and real estate cases. She was a member of the River Forest Plan Commission from 1995 to 2008; is a member of various bar associations; and is active in community affairs.

She has civil litigation experience and attorneys report that she has excellent legal knowledge citing her ability to reduce complicated issues into manageable parts. She is considered to be professional and compassionate.

The Committee finds Marcia O’Brien Conway **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Owens “Joe” Shelby - Qualified

Owens “Joe” Shelby has been licensed since 2007. Aside from a brief period as assistant counsel to the Speaker of the Illinois House, he has been a career assistant state’s attorney currently assigned to a felony courtroom in the Fourth Municipal District (Maywood). He has been treasurer of the National Black Prosecutors Association – Chicago Chapter and is active with the NAACP – Chicago Westside Chapter.

Attorneys generally reported that he has solid legal knowledge and ability and knows how to apply the law to the facts. He is considered to be respectful of all with solid character. He has some criminal jury trial experience, though attorneys reported not necessarily in very complex matters.

The Committee finds Owens Shelby **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Pat Casey – Not Qualified

Patrick A. Casey has been admitted to the Illinois bar in 2001. He is currently in private practice, prior to that he was an administrative law judge for ten years, the last seven of those with the Illinois Department of Human Services hearing matters involving long-term care cases. Prior to becoming an ALJ, he was in private practice both on his own and with a firm, focusing on police misconduct, criminal defense and personal injury matters. He is a member of several bar associations, a supporter to various community groups, and has done pro bono work.

He does not have jury or bench trial experience as lead counsel. While attorneys reported that he is diligent and sensitive to seniors, concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of his legal experience.

The Committee finds Pat Casey **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Bradley R. Trowbridge - Qualified

Bradley R. Trowbridge has been licensed in Illinois since 2000. He has had his own law practice since 2003 handling domestic, chancery, probate, and criminal matters. He also serves as an appointed guardian ad litem and has taught at The John Marshall Law School. He previously worked for several agencies included the Legal Assistance Foundation and is a mediator and arbitrator. He has published articles, volunteered with First Defense Legal Aid, and was president of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women’s Network.

Attorneys consider him to be professional, civil and fair.

The Committee finds Bradley R. Trowbridge **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

John Fritchey – Not Qualified

John Fritchey has been licensed since 1989. Since 2006 he has been president of F4 Consulting, Ltd. focusing on providing strategic and legal counsel to clients dealing with government agencies and handling land use and zoning matters. In addition, from 2010 until 2018, he was a commissioner on the Cook County Board, after first serving as a state representative to the Illinois General Assembly from 1996 to 2010. During that same time period, he worked for various firms handling government and zoning issues. Before his election to the General Assembly, he was an associate at Barnett, Bornstein and Blazer handling civil litigation, after first working as an assistant attorney general. While in the legislature he served as chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

He has no jury experience as lead counsel, and very little bench or quasi-trial experience. While attorneys consider him to be very bright, professional, well-prepared, and with a good understanding of the law, concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of his legal experience and his lack of trial experience.

The Committee finds John Fritchey **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Stephen Swedlow - Qualified

Stephen Swedlow was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1996. He is currently the managing partner at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart and Sullivan, where he has been employed since 2011, focusing on business litigation. Prior to that, he was with two other firms handling corporate litigation, and also served for one year as a clerk to the U.S. Court of Appeals. He is a member of several bar associations, has lectured on legal matters to seminars and at Northwestern University.

He has both jury and non-jury experience in civil cases, has an extensive motion practice, appears in both state and federal courts, and has handled fifteen appeals. Attorneys describe him as having an encyclopedic knowledge of substantive law, unflappable, always prepared, and a straight shooter.

The Committee finds Stephen Swedlow **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jennifer Bae – Qualified

Jennifer Bae was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1997. She currently is the Director of Employee Discipline at the Cook County Sheriff’s Office, managing the department which oversees discipline, training and grievances. Prior to taking that position, she was in private practice, focusing on criminal defense and administrative hearings, after beginning her career as an assistant state’s attorney. While in private practice, she also served on the Cook County Sheriff’s Merit Board. She is active as a committee and board member and author for various bar associations, and a past president of the Women’s Criminal Defense Bar Association. She also served as chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Character and Fitness, First Judicial District, and volunteers with Korean American organizations. She has received a number of awards, including from the Illinois Supreme Court for Outstanding Service. a number of awards, including from the Illinois Supreme Court, for Outstanding Service; the Women’s Criminal Defense Bar Association, and the Asian American Bar Association.

She has substantial criminal jury and bench trial experience. Attorneys report that she has good legal knowledge, and is always prepared and professional, with an excellent temperament.

The Committee finds Jennifer Bae **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Sanjay Tailor – Highly Qualified

Sanjay Tailor has been licensed since 1991. He was appointed to the circuit court as a full judge in January 2021 and is currently the Presiding Judge of the County Division. Prior to the appointment, he had been serving as an associate judge since 2003 in First Municipal, Domestic Relations, Law Division, and Chancery. Prior to his appointment, he had worked as an assistant state’s attorney, for First National Bank and Chapman and Cutler. He is a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Education, and also served on the Court’s Committee on Judicial Performance for six years. He was a founding member of the South Asian Bar Association. He is active with other judicial organizations and has lectured on legal topics and taught at Loyola.

Lawyers appearing before him describe him as having superior legal knowledge, being always prepared, and excellent with complex cases. He has a calm demeanor and is always on time.

The Committee finds Sanjay Tailor **highly qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Ann Buran-Vongher – Not Qualified

Ann Buran-Vongher was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1989. She is currently a sole practitioner focusing on criminal defense, after retiring from the Cook County Public Defender in December 2020. Her assignment as an assistant public defender included Felony Trial in the Second Municipal District (Skokie Courthouse), the Leighton Criminal Court Building, Juvenile Court and Preliminary Hearings. She was a union steward for AFSCME Local 3315 and active with animal rescue groups.

She has jury, bench and quasi-trial experience in criminal matters, including some complex cases. Attorneys praised her legal ability, zealous advocacy for her clients, and her professionalism. Concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of her experience.

The Committee finds Ann Buran-Vongher **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 9th Subcircuit – Jacobius vacancy

Don R. Sampen - Qualified

Don R. Sampen has been licensed since 1975. He is currently a partner at ClausenMiller where he focuses on appellate litigation. He also spent several years as an assistant attorney general, where he was the Chief of Public Interest and Special Litigation and was a partner at two other law firms before that. He has taught at both Loyola and Northwestern, spoken at seminars, and handled pro bono matters. He is active with several bar associations, having chaired a section council with the Illinois State Bar Association, served as a committee chair with the Chicago Bar Association, and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Appellate Lawyers Association. He has teaching and writing experience. He has been a members of the Lincolnwood Plan Commission and the Evanston Zoning Board of Appeals.

He has civil jury and bench trial experience, and handled eighty appellate cases, in addition to being an arbitrator. Attorneys give him high marks for his legal knowledge and ability, high character, and kind demeanor.

The Committee finds Don R. Sampen **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Torrack Alan Ward - Qualified

Torrack Ward was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1998. In 2015 he left his private practice to become Senior Labor Counsel for the Cook County Labor Relations office; in 2019 he became Deputy Director, his current position. Prior to opening his practice in 2010 where he focused on labor and employment law, he had been Deputy Director of the Office of Compliance for the City of Chicago, and an assistant corporation counsel. He has spoken on labor law issues and taught at DePaul and had been active with the Rogers Park Business Alliance.

He has civil jury and bench trial experience in both state and federal courts. Attorneys consider him to be well-experienced, civil, professional, with excellent integrity and legal knowledge.

The Committee finds Torrick Ward **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Barry Goldberg - Qualified

Barry Goldberg was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1999. He has spent his career as an assistant attorney general, where is currently is the Bureau Chief of the Charitable Trust Bureau. He is a member of several bar associations and a past president of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers. In addition, he has lectured at law schools and written on legal topics and is active in community organizations.

He does not report jury or bench trial experience, but does have substantial quasi-trial civil experience, including administrative and evidentiary hearings. Attorneys reported that his legal knowledge was superior in the art of charitable trust issues and fraud. He is considered to have high integrity with a good temperament.

The Committee finds Barry Goldberg **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Basileios “Bill” John Foutris – Qualified

Basileios “Bill” Foutris has been licensed since 2000. Since 2005 he has been a sole practitioner with Foutris Law Office, Ltd. where he represents plaintiffs in civil rights and police misconduct civil litigation matters. Prior to opening his own firm, he was an associate and a contract attorney with two other civil litigation firms. He is a member of several bar associations and does pro bono work through his practice.

He has substantial civil jury and bench trial experience in both state and federal courts and has handled some high-profile cases as well as some appeals. Most attorneys generally reported that he a formidable opponent respected for his knowledge. A few attorneys interviewed felt that at time he took advantage of less-experienced colleagues in resolving disputed and was not always easy to work with; some attributed any such issues to his passion for his clients.

The Committee finds Basileios Foutris **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 11 th Subcircuit – McGuire vacancy

Chris Taliaferro – Not Qualified

Christopher Taliaferro has been licensed since 2007. Since being licensed he has practiced in the area of family with Taliaferro Law Group. He has also served as Alderman from the 29th Ward to the Chicago City Council since 2015 where he chairs the City Council Committee on Public Safety. He is a Marine Corps veteran. He has lectured on estate planning and on civics and is a member of bar associations.

He reports no jury trial experience and three civil bench trials as lead counsel. While attorneys consider him to have good legal knowledge in his area and to be hard working and diligent, concerns were raised about the depth and breadth of his overall legal experience and his lack of trial experience.

The Committee finds Chris Taliaferro **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Aileen Bhandari - Qualified

Aileen Bhandari was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2002. She is a career assistant state's attorney currently assigned to the Felony Trial Division. She has been active with various bar associations, including serving as treasurer of the Indian American Bar Association, has spoken on various legal issues, works on diversity issues with the State's Attorney's Office, and helped organize a naturalization drive.

Ms. Bhandari has extensive criminal jury and bench trial experience. Attorneys report that she is punctual, prepared, follows court rules, and presents evidence honestly and straightforwardly.

The Committee finds Aileen Bhandari **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 13 th Subcircuit – Groebner vacancy
--

Christine Svenson (R) - Qualified

Christine Svenson was admitted in 1995. She opened her own practice in 2008 focusing on domestic, chancery, workers' compensation, and tort matters. She is also a mediator and an arbitrator and did civil litigation with two firms. She has minimal jury trial experience and some bench trial experience. Most attorneys reported positive comments on her diligence, and she is considered to have sound knowledge of workers' compensation. She has community involvement.

The Committee finds Christine Svenson **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court on Cook County.

Gary William Seyring (R)– Qualified

Gary William Seyring has been licensed since 1978. He has been a private practitioner since with his own practice: Law Offices of Gary Seyring, focusing on various areas of civil law including domestic relations, real estate, probate and estate planning, and business law. He has taught at Roosevelt University, been active on committees with the Chicago Bar Association and the Northwest Suburban Bar Association and assisted military families with tax preparation through a pro bono program. He is on the board of the Illinois Youth Soccer Association.

He is considered to be a well-prepared litigator with good writing skills. He has a diverse clientele and is patient and calm. He has substantial civil trial experience including in complex matters.

The Committee finds Gary William Seyring **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Dominic J. Buttitta, Jr. - Qualified

Dominic J. Buttitta, Jr. was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2010. He first spent three years as an assistant state's attorney in McHenry County, then went into private practice with Carponelli and Buttitta. In 2015 he opened his present practice, Buttitta Law Group, focusing on criminal defense and family law. He is a member of various bar associations.

He has both jury and bench trial experience in criminal matters. Lawyers reported that he has a strong work ethic, is able to see core issues quickly, and makes sure to do his own research. He is considered to be very fair, kind and even-tempered.

The Committee finds Dominic J. Buttitta, Jr. **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

James "Jack" Costello - Qualified

James Costello has been licensed since 2007. He is a career prosecutor currently assigned to the Public Corruption/Financial Crimes Unity; before his assignment there in 2019, he worked in the Felony Trial Division, Misdemeanors/Traffic, and Appeals. He has been a speaker and guest lecturer at both law schools and high schools, and coached mock trial teams. He is a Board Member of the Arlington Heights Historical Society.

He has substantial jury and bench trial experience in criminal matters, including in complex cases. Attorneys praised his legal skills and ability, and analytical skills. He is reported to be of high integrity, even keeled and fair.

The Committee finds James Costello **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Joe Gump (D) – Qualified

Joe Gump was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1987. He was a career assistant public defender who recently retired from that office. After spending eleven years in the Appeals Division, he moved to Felony Trial in the Third Municipal District (Rolling Meadows). He has also handled real estate matters. He served in many leadership positions in AFSCME Local 3315, the public defenders' union, including president, vice-president, chief steward, and as a bargaining committee member. He is considered to be a strong advocate and an experienced trial attorney who gets good dispositions for his clients.

Attorneys and judges reported that he writes well and has excellent research skills, is sensitive to diversity and even keeled. A few indicated that at time punctuality was an issue, though others attributed any issues there to the number of cases and nature of the job. He has substantial trial experience, including in complex matters, and also handled many appeals hear in his career.

The Committee finds Joe Gump **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 14th Subcircuit – Brown vacancy

Iris Y. Chavira – Not Recommended

Iris Y. Chavira declined to participate in the judicial evaluation process. Pursuant to ISBA guidelines, Ms. Iris Y. Chavira is found to be **not recommended** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 14th Subcircuit – Jagielski vacancy

Viviana Martinez – Not Qualified

Viviana Martinez has been licensed since 2007. Since 2022 she was appointed Deputy General Counsel for Chicago Public Schools, managing attorneys, and drafting CPS contracts. Prior to her recent appointment, she held various positions within Cook County government, including as Special Assistant for Legal Affairs in the Cook County Bureau of Administration (April 2018 to April 2022), Interim Director of the Cook County Department of Adoption and Family Supportive Services (November 2018 to August 2019); Assistant Special Legal Counsel to the Office of Cook County Board President (March 2013 to April 2018); and Chief of Staff and General Counsel to then Cook County Commission Jesus “Chuy” Garcia (December 2010 to March 2013). Before that she has been an assistant attorney general and in private practice. She is a member of various bar associations, and a past board members of the Puerto Rican Bar Association. Currently she is on the board of the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation and volunteers with other community groups.

She does not report having any jury trial experience, and some non-jury trials from early in her career. Attorneys reported that, while due to the nature of her job, they had limited experience observing her legal knowledge and ability, within the confines of her current role, she did have good knowledge of, especially with the effects of proposed legislation. All consider her to be very diligent, with a good temperament, and described her as a strong proponent of promoting equity and diversity.

The Committee finds Viviana Martinez **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Steve Demitro – Qualified

Steve Demitro has been licensed since 2000. He has been a sole practitioner his entire career with a general practice handling mainly torts, but also some criminal, domestic relations, real estate, and probate matters. He was a hearing officer fir the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and an arbitrator for seventeen years. He is currently the Vice President of the Ukrainian National Museum, has lectured on legal topics to students, and is involved in other community organizations in the McKinley Park area.

He has limited bench trial experience. Most attorneys who have worked with him or appeared before him stated that he has good legal knowledge and ability, does research, and works well with different ethnic groups. He is always prepared, even keeled, and listens well.

The Committee finds Steve Demitro **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jorge V. Cazares – Not Qualified

Jorge V. Cazares has been licensed since 1990. In 2020 he joined Hinshaw and Culbertson as a partner, handling diverse litigation matters. Prior to joining Hinshaw, he had worked in both the private and public sectors including with Altheimer and Gray, then Pugh, Jones and Hubbard which became Pugh, Jones and Johnson. In the public sector, he served as General Counsel to the Chicago Housing Authority from 2007 to 2008 and also as the CHA’s Chief of Ethics and Chief EEO officer from 2017 to 2019. He was also an arbitrator for Cook County for seven years.

He is currently on the board of the Chicago Police Foundation and is a past president and current board member of the Gads Hill Foundation. He received an award for Outstanding Volunteer Service from the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago and also was recognized for service as president of the Loyola University Latino Alumni Board.

He has civil jury trial experience as lead counsel and has handled complex matters in both state and federal courts. While attorneys referred to him as straightforward, knowledgeable, hard-working, and diligent, there were concerns raised to the Committee regarding sensitivity to diversity.

The Committee finds Jorge Cazares **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Circuit Court - Cook County – 15 th Subcircuit – Lawler vacancy
--

Bernadette Barrett - Qualified

Bernadette Garrison Barrett has been licensed since 1991. She practices in the areas of domestic relations, civil litigation and corporate law with the Barrett Law Group. Prior to starting her firm in 2019 she worked in a general practice with Barrett and Sramek from 1991 to 2018. She is a former president of the Southwest bar Association and a member of various other bars. She is currently serving as Trustee of Moraine Valley Community College and as a board member for Rise From The Ashes.

She has some civil jury trial experience, has handled some appeals and substantial quasi-litigation experience. Attorneys reports that she is known for handling complex family law cases and has more than a typical knowledge of the law. They described her as professional and calm.

The Committee finds Bernadette Barrett **qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Jim Gleffe – Not Qualified

James Gleffe was admitted to the Illinois bar in 2007. He is currently the Deputy Chief of Staff and Labor Counsel for the Cook County Clerk’s Office, handling labor and employment matters and union negotiations. He has served in various other government agencies, including as Chief Deputy Recorder, Chief of Staff and Chief Legal Counsel for the Cook County Recorder of Deeds; Chief Deputy Director and Enforcement Attorney, Illinois Secretary of State Securities Department; and as an assistant corporation counsel.

While attorneys contacted consider him to be knowledgeable in his practice area, conscientious and professional, concerns were raised about his lack of trial experience and the depth and breadth of his overall legal experience.

The Committee finds James Gleffe **not qualified** for election to the Circuit Court of Cook County.