Bench & Bar

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Bench & Bar Section

Editor's Note: Save the Date for Midyear!

BY KIMBERLY DUDA

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the 2025 Joint Midyear Meeting, hosted by the Illinois State Bar Association and the Illinois Judges Association! We will return to the JW Marriott in downtown Chicago on December 11 and 12. Expect outstanding programming and valuable networking opportunities. Stay tuned for more information on the ISBA website. I hope to see you there!

The "Scarcity of Success": How Law Schools' Hyper-Competitive Cultures Fuel Bullying

BY RACHEL KOLB

IN A SURVEY OF 6,000 ATTORNEYS

conducted by the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism (ISCPP), one in four reported experiencing bullying in the workplace in the past year. These incidents point to a culture that permits bullying—often prioritizing prestige and performance over people. Importantly, as one ISCPP survey participant put it plainly, "[i]t starts with the hyper-competitiveness in law school and continues into the workplace."

That idea resonated deeply with me as a law student. While I have been fortunate not to experience the worst effects of that environment, I have seen how hypercompetitive culture negatively impacts law students across the country. Many students attend class within a climate that encourages exclusion, hierarchy, and toxic competition. For some, bullying becomes a strategy to get ahead.

To better understand how this dynamic unfolds, I interviewed several students about their experiences with their law

school's culture. Their experiences closely reflected the testimonials and data I read within the ISCCP's report, "Bullying in the Legal Profession: A Study of Illinois Lawyers' Experiences and Recommendations for Change."

Healthy competition certainly has a place in legal education and practice—it can drive excellence and growth.

Conversely, when competition becomes the dominant cultural force, it can create an environment where exclusion and intimidation are not just tolerated but incentivized. The same hyper-competitive mindset that isolates students in the classroom lays the foundation for the bullying behaviors that persist throughout the profession.

So how does hyper-competitive culture incentivize bullying? "I personally think 'competitive culture' IS bullying and wish law schools would completely change their model," said one ISCPP survey respondent.

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The "Scarcity of Success"

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"The curve teaches us to not even care whether we understand the substantive law as long as we beat our friends."

It is true that law school is, by design, competitive. One student I interviewed put it this way: "It's impossible to avoid the internal pressures that comparison creates, especially at such a large law school." Even before day one, we are comparing ourselves to our classmates with our LSAT scores. Later, we are ranked on the dreaded 1L curve. We compete for the same scholarships, internships, journal spots, positions within organizations, and more—constantly reminded of what feels like the scarcity of success.

That scarcity mindset—the idea that there are only so many spots at the top, and that your success depends on someone else's failure—does more than create pressure. It fosters bullying behavior aimed at undercutting others to get ahead. That behavior doesn't always look like ripping pages out of books in the library; more often, it's subtle, social, and cutting. Many students I spoke with described groups that would mock a student for a poor cold call performance. A few of them even stated that students would share others' grades and opinions about them after returning from winter break.

It is not just those who are struggling that suffer from the hypercompetitive environment. One student I spoke with recalled an incident where a professor used an anonymized exam answer as a sample in his feedback memo. Even though the author's identity was not revealed, classmates still felt the need to "talk negatively" about it. Instead of engaging in a conversation about what made the answer effective—or how to improve it—their instinct was to tear it down.

This culture can be especially harmful for students from underrepresented backgrounds. One student recalled hearing a dismissive, offhand comment about a classmate who earned a 1L diversity position at a major firm, essentially writing off the major accomplishment as fully reliant on that person's identity, rather than on merit. Comments like that don't

just reflect bias—they expose how the hypercompetitive culture fosters suspicion around others' accomplishments. When law students are trained to see success as a scarcity, it becomes easier to downplay the hard work of their peers and explain accomplishments away as unearned.

The effect is clear: when law students are taught to treat success as limited, many begin to put their peers down. It's time for law schools to actively dismantle the scarcity mindset and remind students that there is room for everyone to succeed.

One student I spoke with reflected on her school's current approach: "despite what I would describe as half-hearted attempts by the orientation programmers to get in front of competitive/uncomfortable class culture, certain groups instantly gravitated to each other and created negative cultures around themselves."

This points to a larger issue. Many schools introduce the issue of competition early, but students haven't yet encountered the realities that make it so pervasive. At orientation, it is easy enough to believe that everyone can support each other. But when finals roll around months later, as students are barricaded in libraries with outlines and the hope that they can earn one of the few available A's, those early messages are long forgotten. By the time 1L's get to spring semester and have added in Big Law application pressures to the rest, it's as if the messages were never given in the first place.

If law schools want to truly shift the culture, they will need to do more than frontload a brief discussion about it.

Addressing toxic competition needs to be an ongoing effort—woven into the academic year, reinforced by faculty, and modeled by student leaders. As one student positively noted, "all of our professors go out of their way to encourage collaboration and emphasize that the people you are in school with will be your colleagues in the future." This is the kind of message students need to hear consistently, especially when the stress has piled up.

By reframing success as something expansive and shared, law schools can

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encourage students to see collaboration as a strength—and an investment in the professional community they're about to join.

Hypercompetition may create space for bullying to thrive, but the problem exists beyond that—law schools need to confront bullying directly, in whatever form it takes. The consequences of inaction are well-documented. According to the ISCCP's report, even when bullying is acknowledged, institutional responses often fall short. More than half of attorneys who reported being bullied said their employers' reactions were insufficient or entirely unsatisfactory. Most alarming, 96% of the 150 attorneys who admitted to bullying others faced no consequences at all.

Like bullying itself, this lack of accountability begins long before attorneys enter the professional environment. One law student I spoke with described a situation in which several of her classmates participated in a group chat where they exchanged racist, homophobic, sexist, and antisemitic messages about other classmates-messages that could

sometimes be read over their shoulders during class. "Nothing formal happened to these men," she told me, "and their careers will likely be unscathed, barring the social stigma they've generated."

As the ISCCP report states plainly, "[i]f there are no consequences to bad behavior, it will continue." When bullying is ignored in law school, it will almost certainly reappear in the workplace—perpetuated by individuals who learned early that mistreating others carries little risk.

But it doesn't have to be this way. As another student shared, "when things have gotten very out of hand, our administration has stepped in and spoken to students." She recalled a classmate who had made a habit of mocking others after cold calls—until the administration called her in, made clear that her behavior had been noticed, and warned that if it continued, she could face consequences through the school's honor court process. "After rumor got around that she had been spoken to," the student added, "everyone else toned down their usual behavior." This example illustrates what is possible when

institutions take action, and points toward the broader role law schools can play in creating a more welcoming profession.

The work of building a healthier legal culture begins in law school. When institutions take bullying seriously and reinforce the consequences, they lay the groundwork for a more respectful and equitable profession. Students internalize the standards they see upheld—and over time, those standards evolve into habits. It's up to all of us—students, faculty, and institutions alike—to ensure we create habits of leadership, advocacy, and professional integrity. Together, we can build a legal community where hypercompetition fades into the past. ■

Rachel Kolb is a second-year law student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign College of Law. During her 1L summer, Rachel gained valuable experience externing for Justice Debra Walker. She is excited to embrace new challenges this year as a member of Law Review and Moot Court. Committed to paying forward the support she received throughout her first year, Rachel also looks forward to serving as a Legal Writing & Analysis teaching assistant for incoming 1Ls.



Smatterings, a Collection of Short Stories, by Jim Friedlander

BY HON. MICHAEL S. JORDAN

SMATTERINGS, A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES, by Jim Friedlander is available on Amazon; 231 pages. Jim Friedlander (1942-present) was born and raised in Chicagoland, going to public schools and then on to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he continued to excel academically as well as in sports. During his senior year in college, he decided to join the newly created Peace Corps. At the urging of his father, he postponed beginning his public service until he completed Law School at Harvard and took and passed the Illinois bar exam. He was admitted as an attorney in Illinois



in December 1966. Shortly thereafter, he began his Peace Corps service in Africa. He now resides in London, England.

Smatterings is a well written series of stories about some of

Friedlander's adventures, encounters, and service in various African states and his own diplomatic service for the country he was first assigned to in the Peace Corps—Malawi—after his volunteer service with

the Peace Corps ended. He tells about dangerous encounters with more than one rhino, a wild buffalo, and a multitude of roaches.

Friedlander created a framework for many African countries and companies to use to negotiate treaties, agreements, and contracts. He engaged diplomats from many countries, CEOs from significant entities, and yet walked with the people on the street to get a flavor of the 100 countries he has lived in or visited. He found a way to converse with people fluent in many languages other than English and develop deep and lasting friendships.

His stories give us a vivid understanding of the geography, the type of government and leadership quirks of rulers in socialist,



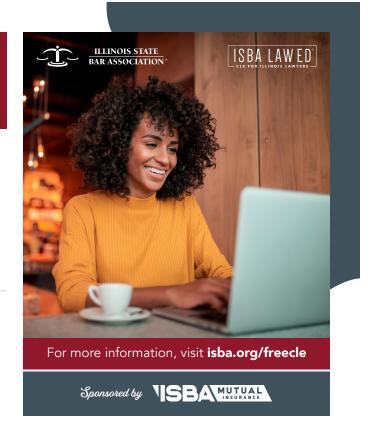
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democratic, and autocratic regimes, as well as unique customs of various places. We learn of the difficulties to obtain work permits and visas to enter certain countries needed to fulfill his mission. His employment by the World Bank for the time of his tenure there gave him a greater ease in entry flying under the UN banner when he had to engage locals for Bank investments. He went to remote places including deep into a mining shaft to better understand a bank investment. Some of his friendships with diplomats nurtured over time helped as well. In one instance a tip or gratuity (a bribe), was necessary to enter a certain African country where corruption was present.

Friedlander tells how he and his wife traveled in her final months of pregnancy before the birth of their first child going from Malawi to Mauritius, to Nairobi, Kenya to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel, to Tehran, Iran, to Kabul, Afghanistan, to Delhi, India and Kashmir, to Bangkok, Thailand, to Taiwan, to Japan to the

US in Honolulu, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago, New York, and Washington DC. Friedlander retells experiences in each place giving us some sense of the political and civic climate then and now. Some of those places became war zones but fortunately not when the Friedlanders were there.

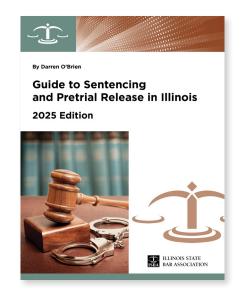
We learn of business events taking Jim to many other countries to establish agreements for air travel, gold mine licenses, law firm expansion, trade agreements, as well as social engagement. The author takes us to fancy places like the Taj Mahal and isolated and desolate areas.

We have the chance to become world travelers with Jim in the safety of our own reading chairs and do not face the dangers to life and limb he experienced. My own conclusion in reading this fine book that I highly recommend is that Jim's life takes courage, intelligence, patience, endurance, and openness to difference. He was one important face to change the image of the

ugly American to the helpful, loving, open, smart, and friendly American. Smatterings is a book one can easily read through from start to finish in a relatively short time. Since each chapter is independent of the others, one can pick and choose which story to read in any order. I went from start to finish moving in chronological order. I hope you order the book on Amazon and find as much enjoyment in reading this book as I did. John F. Kennedy's New Frontier brought new fresh honest young people to places in the world in the 1960's with great impact where professional diplomats had not previously been as effective. ■

Hon. Michael S. Jordan, Mediation & Arbitration Services, is located in Glenview, Illinois. He can be reached at 847-724-3502. Hon. Michael S. Jordan served as a judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County from 1974 to 1999 and then began a private mediation and arbitration practice from 1999 to the present. Jordan is the author of a biography: Becoming a Judge: An Inside Story, available from Amazon. com, which includes his role in the rise of John Paul Stevens to the United States Supreme

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Minority Representation in the Judiciary: What More Needs To Be Done?

BY JUNAID AFEEF

Editor's Note: The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect those of the ISBA or the Bench & Bar Section as a whole.

I GRADUATED FROM LAW SCHOOL

in 1994 and soon after began as an assistant public defender with the Cook County Public Defender's Office. I was fortunate to have practiced before Judge Lynne Kawamoto, the first female Asian-American to serve in the Illinois state courts. While primarily practicing in Cook County, I appeared before some Black and a few female judges. Early on in my career, I was exposed to what is possible.

The state and federal bench have become more diverse since 1994. We can take pride in these advancements, but there is still much work to be done.

One bright spot for Illinois is the Illinois Supreme Court, which has become one of the nation's most diverse state supreme courts, with a majority of female justices and 43% justices of color. Another is the substantial progress toward judicial diversity in Cook County. But other circuits appear to have made limited advancement. I use the term "appear" because there is little data on the diversity of the state courts at the trial level, which is common.

Broadly speaking, the data available tends to focus on federal courts and state supreme courts. However, more than 90% of legal matters begin and end at the state trial court level.² We need to gather data about the diversity of our state trial courts.

Data-driven diversity

In the business world, there is an aphorism, "We measure what we treasure." This means metrics are essential for assessing the effectiveness of operations.³ Without data, we cannot effectively improve judicial diversity. Data allows us

to see where we have been and how far we have come. Data also helps us think more clearly about the problems and how to address them.

Collecting and analyzing data on the Illinois judiciary can promote judicial diversity. Data can demonstrate what works and where more work is needed. Illinois courts should collect data on the current demographics of all sitting judges in Illinois as a first step. A necessary follow-up would be the consistent collection of demographic data on attorneys evaluated by judicial evaluation committees, including their ratings as well as the demographics on those applying for associate judgeships and circuit court vacancies, along with the outcomes of those appointments. This data must be available to researchers, civic organizations, and the public.

Does diversity in the judiciary matter?

Many organizations, such as the Conference of Chief Justices, the National Center for State Courts, and the American Judicature Society, publicly support judicial diversity, and many of them have also publicly expressed concern about the lack of diversity at the state and federal court levels.⁴ Illinois-specific survey data on how Illinois judges at every level perceive diversity would be invaluable. Are there differences between how diversity on the bench is viewed in different parts of the state? Given that judicial selections take place locally (within the circuits), having more granular data would be key.

However, there is a growing resistance to diversity efforts. Worse still, some research suggests that Americans doubt the impartiality of minority judges.⁵ These perceptions must be actively challenged within the legal community and civil society. A perception that judges from underrepresented communities cannot be impartial represents a stereotype. Judges

who look like those who appear before them or have similar backgrounds inspire confidence in the system. This impact can be subtle, influencing how questions are framed from the bench.

For instance, a judge may ask, "Sir, do you have a matter on the call this morning?" as opposed to "Good morning, counsel. Which case are you here on?" While the first question is not inherently rude or offensive, it may carry implicit biases because it suggests the individual may have no reason to be present in the courtroom. As a brown man, I have experienced this at least a few times in my career. The white men in the courtroom were presumed attorneys, and I was not. Female Muslim attorneys who wear the hijab (a head cover worn for religious purposes) have faced similar experiences.

The issue also affects how litigants feel about the judicial system as a whole. Seeing judges who look like them, whose "unique" names are recognizable to minority members of the community, as well as those who are women, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, LGBTQ+, or have other immutable characteristics is powerful. In the long run, a judiciary that resembles the community it serves will gain greater legitimacy than one that does not.⁶

Judges from diverse backgrounds, particularly from communities historically discriminated against in our society, often understand better that a failure to protect democratic processes and institutions can result in thwarting the will of the people.7 For example, in Florida, voters passed a constitutional amendment that enabled individuals convicted of felonies to regain the right to vote after serving their sentences. The state legislature then passed a law that made payment of all fines, fees, and court-ordered restitution a requirement before being able to vote. The law was challenged as an unconstitutional poll tax, but the courts ruled against the voters. As a result, the courts "effectively prevent[ed] the participation of hundreds of thousands of people that Floridians had

voted to enfranchise."8

Finally, diversity in the judiciary is long overdue and should be considered a matter of rights and representation. The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees due process and equal protection of the law to all people, and this is widely understood to include the right to an impartial judge. Some scholars have argued that the impartiality mandate should encompass "structural impartiality of the bench as a whole," and this may be understood to exist when "the judiciary as a whole is comprised of judges from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints." 10

Judges and umpires

Those who believe that diversity in the judiciary is not an important goal often cite the Fourteenth Amendment's impartiality mandate. To illustrate the point, some use the analogy of an umpire. According to this line of thinking, judges are like umpires; their job is to simply call balls and strikes. It does not matter what the umpire's background is, what immutable characteristics they possess, or what life experiences they bring behind the plate. So long as they are qualified to be an umpire, the right calls will be made.

This analogy is flawed. It overlooks the complexities of an umpire's job. Many close calls must be made in a game. Every pitch is not clearly in or clearly out of the strike zone. Not every call is black and white. Similarly, there is discretion and judgment involved in making decisions on the bench; lived experiences matter.

A dearth of qualified candidates: Fact or fiction

There is a perception that there are few "qualified" minority attorneys to fill the judicial positions. Several years ago, I attended an NAACP candidate forum. Several judges and judicial candidates were being interviewed. The moderator asked why the judiciary in this particular circuit lacked diversity. One of the candidates, a judge at the time, said, "There are not enough qualified minority candidates." Sadly, there was minimal follow-up questioning.

"That can't be true," I thought as I listened. But I had no way of knowing. The bar association in that circuit had

few attorneys of color, and there was no publicly available data on how many minority attorneys resided there.

Recently, I gained first-hand experience that further underscores the implicit biases that feed the perception that there are not enough qualified minority candidates.

A few years ago, I underwent an evaluation by the local bar association's judicial evaluation committee. The experience was both troubling and enlightening. At the time of my evaluation, I had two years of experience as an administrative law judge and 26 years as a practicing attorney. The interview before the judicial evaluation committee was pleasant. The lead investigator noted that everyone they spoke to said positive things about me. The committee had no substantive questions. The interview lasted less than five minutes. A few days later, I learned I was rated "Qualified." I was relieved.

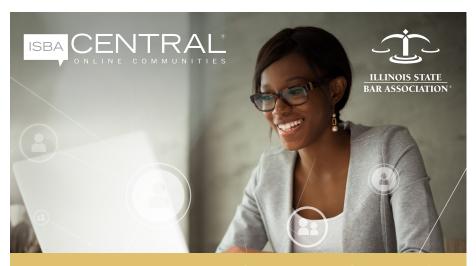
About six months later, I learned that another attorney in my circuit was rated "Highly Qualified." I looked at his resume on his website. I could see that he was indeed qualified. I had no quarrel with his "Highly Qualified," but it made me wonder what more I needed to achieve "Highly Qualified."

I contacted the chair of the judicial evaluation committee, and I explained that I wanted to know what I needed to do to earn the "Highly Qualified" rating. The answer floored me. "I can't tell you

what else you would need," said the chair. The conversation was polite, and the comments about me and my qualifications were laudatory. The chair noted that not enough members thought I was worthy of the "Highly Qualified" rating, and since the vote is by secret ballot, the chair had no way of knowing which members thought I was unworthy of the higher rating. The individual I was comparing myself to was a white male with half my years of experience, and I had two full years of experience as an administrative law judge.

I asked the chair for a list of all the candidates who have been rated by the bar association over the last 10 years (or whatever shorter list they had) who had been rated "Qualified" or "Highly Qualified." I wanted to do my due diligence, research each candidate's background from open-source materials, and look for patterns. Maybe this was an anomaly, or maybe there is a pattern. Having the data would help answer my questions. Furthermore, the bar association rules state that all findings are to be made public, so I was not anticipating the chair's answer. "We can't do that," responded the chair.

When the gatekeepers of who is deemed qualified cannot share this basic information, the process's validity and integrity can be questioned. Given the slow pace of diversifying the bench, the concern over implicit biases is not unwarranted.



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Pipeline of candidates

A corollary to the qualifications issue is the pipeline issue. While I disagree with the assumption that there are few minority attorneys qualified to be judges, I do see a problem with too few qualified candidates pursuing a judgeship.

I mentor attorneys. Many minority attorneys I know are extremely qualified to serve on the bench, but many worry that they are not qualified enough. After 31 years of practicing law, first as an attorney and then as an administrative law judge, I have seen excellent judges and excellent advocates. I know their self-doubt is misplaced. This "impostor syndrome" limits the number of minority candidates in the pipeline.

Another roadblock to a more robust pipeline is the lack of information on how the appointment and election process works. While some of the larger bar associations occasionally hold "So You Want to Be a Judge" seminars, it is insufficient to provide the real ins and outs of the process. Many "unwritten rules" need to be understood. More needs to be done at a systemic level to even the playing field.

Convincing qualified minority attorneys to pursue a judgeship is only part of the pipeline problem. The "unofficial" requirements create additional hurdles for minority attorneys, particularly regarding associate judge appointments. For example, circuit court judges have repeatedly told me they prefer to promote attorneys who appear before them regularly.

To be clear, this is not a legal requirement. Where one regularly practices often is dictated by economics, not residency. Many law firms, corporations, and state of Illinois attorney positions are based in or near Chicago. Attorneys often commute from Lake, DuPage, Kane, McHenry, and Will counties, for example, and may amass outstanding experience in Cook County courtrooms only to find that experience is discounted by the circuit where they reside.

The laws and rules are the same across the state. The issues of ability, experience, and temperament can be assessed without extended trial practice within the residential circuit. When asked about attorneys who, by dint of circumstance, have well-established and secure jobs in larger

metropolitan areas outside of the circuit one judge said, "They should start practicing locally if they want to be appointed as an associate." This is unrealistic.

Another barrier to a robust pipeline of candidates is a bias against public interest and civil rights advocates. ¹¹ A circuit court judge told me he did not think I could take off my advocacy hat if I were to become a judge. I asked him what he meant, and, to his credit, he was candid. He told me he knew I was involved in a lot of civic and political advocacy work, including issues involving Black Lives Matter. Could I be fair and impartial once I was on the bench?

"Certainly," I responded. "Thurgood Marshall is one of my personal heroes, and he went from being a zealous advocate for civil rights to becoming a distinguished jurist."

"That's not a good analogy," the circuit court judge replied. "The Supreme Court decides policy, and here at the trial level, we apply the law to facts. It's different."

Some impediments to a more fulsome pipeline are things no one discusses in public forums. Candidates may be hesitant to shine a light on these issues, and once appointed or elected, it is the rare outspoken judge who shares sordid experiences from his or her path to the bench.

Solutions

I raised several issues, problems, and roadblocks that stand in the way of attaining a more diverse judiciary. Overt bias is another concern, but it is a thornier issue. In the shorter term, we can tackle the "easier" issues, and revisit overt bias when more data is available. The following are some recommended solutions:

Acknowledge the problem. The judiciary, the bar, and civil society must tackle this issue with greater urgency and collaboration. Without the judiciary's support, solving this problem becomes significantly more difficult.

Data collection and analysis. The courts need to collect more data about themselves. That data must be publicly available so scholars, academics, activists, and individuals can review, study, and analyze it. Let's "measure what we treasure."

Public debate. Bar associations, the judiciary, and civic organizations need to bring the conversation to increase the

diversity of the bench into the public square. Too much conversation is limited to continuing legal education or judicial meetings. We cannot move the needle on this issue until the public realizes it is an issue. The bar associations and the judiciary should consider creating a public education campaign to (1) highlight the severity of the problem, (2) explain why it should matter to the public, and (3) promote grassroots solutions to complement those crafted within the judiciary.

Reform judicial evaluations. The judicial evaluation system is flawed. As a bar leader, I see proposed fixes being discussed and good ideas in development, but accountability remains missing. There needs to be transparency. It is a tremendous responsibility to vote on who is deemed qualified or not qualified. Those votes must be taken in public.

Re-imagine judicial training. An attorney must get training and certification *before* becoming an arbitrator or a mediator. Judges, on the other hand, attend judicial training *after* being selected. Does that make sense?

The National Judicial College12 offers a five-day, in-person training for attorneys who aspire to become judges, called "Judicial Academy: A Course for Aspiring Judges." In Illinois, the Judicial Education Division of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) develops and delivers training for new judges and continuing education for all judges. Through a collaboration between the Judicial Education Division of the AOIC and various bar associations, training similar to the National Judicial College's should be offered. This way, new judges can hit the ground running. Completing such pre-appointment/election training can also inform a more merit-based metric in evaluating attorneys seeking the bench.

Judicial mentorship. Mentoring works. Lawyers mentor law students. Seasoned lawyers mentor newer lawyers. Experienced judges mentor new judges. So, why not have judges mentor aspiring judges?

I have heard judges say, "So-and-so judge mentored me when I was an attorney." I have heard sitting judges say, "So-and-so judicial candidate was my protege." That's wonderful. It is also a *privilege*.

The attorneys we need in the

pipeline often do not have the personal relationships with sitting judges to be guided and mentored. To help diversify the bench, prospective candidates should be able to work with a mentor not as an *ad hoc* effort but as an intentional, resourced program that equitably selects candidates and pairs them with motivated mentors.

Conclusion

Illinois' Supreme Court is an excellent example of progress. The growing number of diverse appointments is also noteworthy. Some will say, "We can't fix this overnight." That is true. Diversifying the bench requires dismantling systemic impediments. It requires recognizing the disparities in the pipeline, deconstructing why these disparities exist, and then collaborating to make the pipeline reflect the community. None of this can happen without open and frequent discussions about these critical issues.

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- 1. Amanda Powers & Alicia Brown, *State Supreme Court Diversity May 2023 Update*, Brennan Center for Justice, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/state-supreme-court-diversity-may-2023-update.
- 2. Natalie Gomez-Velez, Judicial Selection: Diversity, Discretion, Inclusion, and the Idea of Justice, 48 Cap. U.L. Rev. 285, 295 (2020).
- 3. Joan C. Williams & Jamie Dolkas, *Data-Driven Diversity*, Harvard Business Review (April 2022), https://hbr.org/2022/03/data-driven-diversity.
- 4. Natalie Gomez-Velez, Judicial Selection: Diversity, Discretion, Inclusion, and the Idea of Justice, 48 Cap. U. L. Rev. 285, 296-297 (2020).

- 5. Yoshikuni Ono & Michael A. Zilis, *Do Americans perceive diverse judges as inherently biased?* Politics, Groups, and Identities, 11:2, 335-344, (2023).
- 6. See Theresa M. Beiner, What Will Diversity on the Bench Mean for Justice? 6 Mich. J. Gender & L. 113 (1999); see also Edward M. Chen, The Judiciary, Diversity, and Justice for All, 91 Calif. L. Rev. 1109 (2003).
- 7. Brandon Hasbrouck, *Movement Judges*, 97 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 631, 633 (2022).
- 8. Id.
- 9. See Sherrilyn A. Ifill, Judging the Judges: Racial Diversity, Impartiality and Representation on State Trial Courts, 39 B.C. L. Rev. 95 (1998).
 - 10. *Id.* at 99.
- 11. Josie Duffy Rice, A Judiciary Without Public Defenders Is Broken, Balls and Strikes (Mar. 3, 2022), https://ballsandstrikes.org/legal-culture/ketanji-brown-jackson-public-defender-broken-judiciary/#:~text=1%20keep%20going%20back%20 to,yet%20another%20indication%20of%20a; see also Marc Bookman, "Can Public Defenders Become Fair Judges, and Other Stupid Questions," 51 Geo. L.J. Ann. Rev. Crim. Proc. (2022); Maggie Jo Buchanan, "Pipelines to Power: Encouraging Professional Diversity on the Federal Appellate Bench," Center for American Progress (2021); Andrew Goudsward, "Senate confirms ACLU lawyer to NY federal court after GOP backlash," Reuters (Jun 14, 2023).
 - 12. See https://www.judges.org/.

Recent Appointments and Retirements

- 1. Pursuant to its Constitutional authority, the Supreme Court has appointed the following to be Circuit Judge:
 - Hon. Michelle Ann Vescogni, 13th Circuit, May 5, 2025
 - John P. Carroll, Cook County Circuit, 3rd Subcircuit, May 23, 2025
 - Lester W. Finkle, Cook County Circuit, 8th Subcircuit, May 30, 2025
 - Daniel Naranjo, Cook County Circuit, 13th Subcircuit, June
 5, 2025
 - Michael M. Cabonargi, Cook County Circuit, June 13, 2025
 - Ginger L. Odom, Cook County Circuit, 1st Subcircuit, June 23, 2025
 - Hon. Richard A. Zimmer, 14th Circuit, July 1, 2025
 - Sara A. McGann, Cook County Circuit, 19th Subcircuit, July 18, 2025
- 2. The Circuit Judges have appointed the following to be associate judges:
 - Deborah J. Menas, 19th Circuit, March 3, 2025
 - Robert P. Walsh, 18th Circuit, March 24, 2025
 - Wesley A. Gozia, 4th Circuit, March 28, 2025
 - Thomas E. St. Jules, 16th Circuit, March 31, 2025
 - Mark Anderson, 13th Circuit, July 16, 2025
 - Emily J. Young, 11th Circuit, August 8, 2025
 - Hany G. Khoury, 14th Circuit, August 19, 2025
- 3. The following judges have retired:
 - Hon. John J. Curry, Jr., Cook County Circuit, 13th Subcircuit, May 9, 2025

- Hon. Jeffrey I. Warnick, Associate Judge, Cook County Circuit, May 16, 2025
- Hon. Linnea E. Thompson, 14th Circuit, June 30, 2025
- Hon. Thomas Joseph Hennelly, Associate Judge, Cook County Circuit, July 4, 2025
- Hon. Ray W. Vaughn, 2nd Circuit, July 4, 2025
- Hon. Maria Kuriakos Ciesil, Associate Judge, Cook County Circuit, July 31, 2025
- Hon. William Gordon Workman, Associate Judge, 11th Circuit, July 31, 2025
- Hon. Alexander F. McGimpsey, Associate Judge, 18th Circuit, August 1, 2025
- Hon. Patrick J. Sherlock, Cook County Circuit, 3rd Subcircuit, August 17, 2025
- Hon. Kevin J. Ward, 15th Circuit, August 22, 2025
- Hon. Dwayne A. Gab, 7th Circuit, August 24, 2025
- Hon. Kathleen Marie Burke, Cook County Circuit, August 31, 2025
- 4. The following judges are deceased:
 - Hon. Thomas E. Hoffman, Appellate Court, 1st District, July 4, 2025
 - Hon. Thomas M. Welch, Appellate Court, 5th District, July 7, 2025
- 5. Pursuant to its Constitutional authority, the Supreme Court has recalled the following judge to the Appellate Court:
 - Hon. James David Hackett, retired judge recalled, Appellate Court, 5th District, August 8, 2025











































