



Supreme Court of Illinois

September 12, 2022

CHIEF JUSTICE ANNE M. BURKE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT *JUSTICE JOY V. CUNNINGHAM TO FILL VACANCY*

Chief Justice Anne M. Burke has announced her retirement from the Illinois Supreme Court. Her last day on the bench will be November 30, 2022. Chief Justice Burke has served on the Supreme Court since 2006 and has served as Chief Justice since October 2019. Her term as Chief Justice concludes on October 25, 2022. Justice Burke’s full statement on her retirement is available [here](#).

“I have been blessed to serve as a Supreme Court Justice for the past 16 years and have loved working with my staff, colleagues and Judicial Branch staff to serve the people of Illinois,” Chief Justice Burke said. “The past three years as Chief Justice have been a challenging time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but I am thrilled with the progress made by the Illinois Courts.”

The Supreme Court has constitutional authority to fill interim judicial vacancies and has appointed First District Appellate Justice Joy V. Cunningham to fill the seat vacated by Chief Justice Burke. Justice Cunningham, whose term is effective December 1, 2022, through December 2, 2024, will be the second Black woman to serve on the Illinois Supreme Court. The first, Justice Lisa Holder White, was appointed earlier this year.

“I am grateful to the Supreme Court for the trust it has placed in me by allowing me to continue to serve the people of the State of Illinois as a Justice of our Supreme Court. I will do my best to serve with humility, integrity and compassion and always remember why I am there – to serve the people,” Justice Cunningham said. “We have a distinguished Supreme Court in Illinois, and I am proud to have the opportunity to serve alongside these exceptional public servants. I am pleased to live in a state and a country in which my contributions are valued and my opportunities are limitless.”

Born in Chicago in 1944 and raised on the South Side, Chief Justice Burke received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the DePaul University School for New Learning, where she majored in Education. A longtime advocate for children with learning differences, Chief Justice Burke started her career teaching physical education at the Chicago Park District. There she took part in a new program that offered children and young adults with mental and physical differences the opportunity to learn the skills to participate in sports.

Having recognized the positive impact that sports competition had on her students, she championed the idea of a city-wide competition. This ultimately led to the creation of the Chicago Special Olympics in 1968, which grew to become the International Special Olympics, reaching tens of millions in 192 nations across the globe. Chief Justice Burke later served as a Director of the International Special Olympics and remains involved with the Chicago Special Olympics organization to this day. Currently, Chief Justice Burke serves on the Executive Steering Committee of the Kennedy Forum Illinois, whose goal is to bring about advancements in the way mental health and addictions are considered and treated.

In 1983 Chief Justice Burke attended the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago-Kent College of Law and received her *Juris Doctorate*. In 1987 Governor James Thompson appointed her Judge to the Court of Claims and, in 1991, she was reappointed by Governor Jim Edgar. In April 1994, she was appointed special counsel to the Governor for Child Welfare Services. In August 1995, she was appointed to the Appellate Court, First District. In 1996, she was elected to the Appellate Court, First District, for a full term.

She was appointed to the Supreme Court on July 6, 2006, following the retirement of the late Mary Ann McMorrow, and was then elected to that office in 2008. In 2018, she was retained for a second 10-year term with 81 percent of the vote.

In her tenure as Chief Justice, Chief Justice Burke guided the Illinois Courts through the COVID-19 pandemic. A statewide “Listening Tour”, hosted by the Illinois State Bar Association, that had been scheduled to be held in person was instead held virtually to conduct forums where local stakeholders engaged in dialogue about the way justice is administered across the state to help foster discussion and to exchange ideas about the system of justice. The virtual format allowed for greater attendance and increased reach throughout the state.

As a member of the Illinois Supreme Court, Chief Justice Burke has been a frequent speaker and panelist before many civic organizations and local Bar Associations. For more than two years, serving as Interim Chair, she directed the efforts of the National Review Board of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops investigating the causes and effects of the clerical sexual abuse scandal and helped to establish guidelines and policies for effectively responding to this scandal.

Chief Justice Burke has been recognized with honorary degrees from 13 colleges and universities, including: St. Ambrose University, Catholic Theological Union, DePaul University, College of the Holy Cross, Aurora University, Lewis University, Loyola University Chicago School of Law, MacMurray College, Blackburn College, The John Marshall Law School, Marquette University, St. Mary's College and Dominican University.

Chief Justice Burke has won countless awards in her illustrious career, with a few of the most recent being the 2021 ISBA Board of Governor’s Award, the Laura Liu Access to Justice Award from the Diversity Scholarship Foundation, and the 2019 Catchers in the Rye Humanitarian Award from the American Academy of Chicago and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Chief Justice Burke is a member of the American Bar Association, the Catholic Lawyers Guild of Chicago, the Celtic Legal Society, the Chicago Bar Association, the Economic Club of Chicago, the Illinois Judges Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Lincoln Academy of Illinois (Rector in the area of Law and Government), the Chicago Network, and the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation.

Chief Justice Burke is married, the mother of five children, and the grandmother of nine.

Justice Joy V. Cunningham has served as a First District Appellate Court Justice since 2006 and currently serves as Chair of the Executive Committee. She has served on and chaired the Settlement Committee and serves on the Orientation Committee for new justices. She spent a decade on the Education Committee and chaired the court's Judicial Performance Committee. She currently co-chairs the First District's Diversity Committee.

Justice Cunningham received her Bachelor of Science from the City University of New York and earned her *Juris Doctorate* from the John Marshall Law School. She began her career in 1982 as an Assistant Attorney General in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. She went on to be a law clerk to First District Appellate Court Justice Glenn T. Johnson. For 10 years she was the Associate General Counsel and Chief Counsel for HealthCare at Loyola University where she established, directed, and managed Loyola University's in-house healthcare legal division.

In 1996, Justice Cunningham was sworn in as an Associate Judge in Cook County Circuit Court where she was assigned to the civil trial division. She left the bench in 2000 to serve as Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary at Northwestern Memorial Healthcare where she reported and provided counsel to the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer. She returned to the bench in December 2006 as an elected First District Appellate Court Justice and was retained by voters in 2016.

Her professional associations include the Chicago Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Cook County Bar Association, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the Black Women Lawyers Association, the Illinois Judicial Council, the Illinois Judges Association, the Economic Club of Chicago, the Chicago Network, the CBA Past Presidents' Council, the American Law Institute, and the American Bar Foundation.

Justice Cunningham was the first African American woman elected President of the Chicago Bar Association, the nation's largest municipal bar association. Her awards include the John Paul Stevens Award, the Earl Burrus Dickerson Award, the Mary Heftel Hooten Award, and the Torchbearer Award.

She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Loyola University Health System, the Chicago Bar Association's Strategic Planning Committee, the Governor's Commission for Eradicating Poverty, the Board of Directors of the James R. Jordan Foundation, the Board of Directors of the Chicago Bar Association Media Organization, and is the Chair of the Associate Commissioners of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission since 2010.

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Chris Bonjean, Communications Director to the Illinois Supreme Court at 312.793.2323 or cbonjean@illinoiscourts.gov.)