**Supreme Court of Illinois**

November 18, 2026

# ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT APPOINTS THREE JUDGES IN CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

Justice Sanjay T. Tailor and the Illinois Supreme Court have announced today the appointment of three judges in the Circuit Court of Cook County. Cook County Associate Judge Alfredo Maldonado and attorney Caroline Kim Kwon have been appointed as At-Large Judges and attorney Gina DiVito has been appointed as a Circuit Judge in the 12th Subcircuit of Cook County.

Judge Maldonado is being appointed to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Shelley Sutker-Dermer, who did not seek retention. The appointment is effective December 7, 2026, and will conclude on December 4, 2028.

Judge Maldonado has served as an Associate Judge in Cook County since being appointed in 2014. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Maldonado served for 16 years as an Assistant Cook County Public Defender, representing individuals in criminal matters and advocating for the constitutional rights of defendants. In addition to his judicial duties, Judge Maldonado has devoted substantial time to advancing legal education. He serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law and DePaul University College of Law and is a trial advocacy coach at the Loyola University School of Law.

Judge Maldonado has served on several committees for the Supreme Court of Illinois including the Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions for Criminal Cases, the Advisory Committee for Justice and Mental Health Planning, the Illinois Judicial College Committee on Judicial Education, the New Judge Orientation Committee, and the Illinois Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP).

He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa and his *Juris Doctor* from the University of Iowa College of Law.

His professional affiliations include the Illinois Latino Judges Association, where he is a past Treasurer, and he previously served as an executive board member for the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois.

Ms. Kwon is being appointed to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Diana Rosario, effective June 1, 2026. The appointment is effective December 7, 2026, and will conclude on December 4, 2028.

Ms. Kwon brings more than 30 years of experience in child protection law and public service to the bench. Since 2019, she has served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, where she is a First Chair of the Child Protection Division. In that role she has been responsible for litigating abuse and neglect cases, termination of parental rights proceedings, permanency hearings, and other matters involving the protection and welfare of children.

Prior to joining the State's Attorney's Office, Ms. Kwon served for nearly 23 years as an Assistant Public Guardian in the Cook County Public Guardian's Office. She represented children in juvenile court proceedings and handled all aspects of child protection litigation, including trials, evidentiary hearings, appeals, and permanency reviews. She also supervised attorneys and managed a substantial child protection caseload throughout Cook County.

Ms. Kwon earned her bachelor's degree from Loyola University Chicago and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law (formerly the John Marshall Law School).

Her professional affiliations include the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the Asian American Bar Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and the Korean American Bar Association where she is a past president and vice president and a current advisory board member. In addition, she serves on the board of the Asian American Bar Association Law Foundation and on the advisory board of the Hanul Family Alliance.

Ms. DiVito is being appointed to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Pamela E. Loza, effective September 18, 2026. The appointment is effective December 7, 2026, and will conclude on December 4, 2028.

Ms. DiVito has served in the Criminal Appeals Division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office since 2010. She currently serves as Briefing Supervisor and First Chair, where she supervises attorneys handling complex appeals, researches and drafts appellate briefs, and presents oral arguments before the Illinois Appellate Court.

In 2018, Ms. DiVito was appointed Child Protection Appeals Supervisor, overseeing attorneys handling appellate matters involving the protection and welfare of children. Earlier in her career, she served in both the Juvenile Justice Bureau and Child Protection Division, where she handled thousands of juvenile and child protection matters and conducted hundreds of trials involving allegations of abuse, neglect, delinquency, and parental unfitness.

She earned her bachelor's degree from Lake Forest College and earned *her Juris Doctor* from Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Ms. DiVito has been active in mentoring and service initiatives throughout the legal community. She has served as a mentor through the Illinois State Bar Association's Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program, volunteered as a moot court judge for law students, and served as a speaker for Women Everywhere, a nonprofit organization in the Chicagoland legal community dedicated to creating opportunities for women and children in need through education and community service.

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