



## Supreme Court of Illinois

January 17, 2024

### **ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT APPOINTS SEVEN JUDGES TO CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY**

Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis and the Illinois Supreme Court have announced today the appointment of seven judges in the Circuit Court of Cook County. These appointments were made out of public necessity in order to ensure an adequate level of judicial staffing.

Each appointee has received recent positive ratings following interviews and evaluations from the Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening and the Chicago Bar Association. Each appointee is the only candidate who has filed for nomination in the March 2024 primary election. They would then be unopposed by a party candidate in either the primary or general elections. The appointments are all effective February 2, 2024, and will conclude December 2, 2024, following the November 2024 general election.

The appointees are Caroline Glennon-Goodman, Loveleen Ahuja, Mary Sevandal Cohen, Ralph E. Meczyk, Dawn M. Gonzalez, Koula A. Fournier, and Jennifer P. Callahan.

Caroline Glennon-Goodman has been appointed to the 10<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit of Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Claire E. McWilliams. Ms. Glennon-Goodman has served in the Cook County Public Defender's Office since 1997 and has nearly 20 years of experience as a homicide attorney litigating murder cases in the county.

Ms. Glennon-Goodman earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the John Marshall Law School. Her professional affiliations include the North Suburban Bar Association, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois and the Decalogue Society of Lawyers.

Loveleen Ahuja has been appointed to the 8<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit of Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Ann Collins-Dole. Ms. Ahuja has served in the Cook County Public Defender's Office since 2005 and has been a homicide attorney since 2019, representing indigent defendants charged with murder. She previously served in the Felony Trial, Domestic Violence, First Municipal, and Child Protection Divisions of the Office and has litigated hundreds of juries, bench trials and motions.

Ms. Ahuja earned her Bachelor of Arts from St. Louis University and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the California Western School of Law. Her professional affiliations include the South Asian Bar Association, the Asian American Bar Association, and the Women's Bar Association.

Mary Sevandal Cohen has been appointed to the 13<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit of Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Ketki Steffen. Ms. Sevandal Cohen has served as in-house legal counsel for Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, since 2011 where she represents Pace Bus in civil litigation cases and has carried over 200 litigation case files from inception to final disposition. She started at Pace in 2008 as a Senior Staff Attorney. She previously served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the DeKalb County State's Attorney's Office from 2005 to 2008 and started her career interning at the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago and the Chicago Legal Clinic in Pilsen.

Ms. Sevandal Cohen earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the University of Iowa College of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Asian American Bar Association, the Filipino-American Lawyers Association, the Northwest Suburban Bar Association, the Decalogue Society of Lawyers, the St. Ignatius Law Society, the Illinois State Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.

Ralph E. Meczyk has been appointed to the 13<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit of Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Samuel J. Betar, III. Mr. Meczyk is the founder of Ralph E. Meczyk & Associates and has been a licensed attorney since 1977. He has tried more than 130 jury trials and 400 bench trials to verdict in state and federal district courts. Mr. Meczyk has argued in nearly every U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and argued a landmark search and seizure case (*Illinois v. Caballes*) before the United States Supreme Court in 2004. Mr. Meczyk earned his *Juris Doctor* from the Chicago-Kent College of Law.

Dawn M. Gonzalez has been appointed to the 11<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit of Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Ann Finley Collins. Ms. Gonzalez has been a Partner at Stone & Johnson, Chartered, since 2018. She was previously Senior Coverage Litigation Attorney at Continental Casualty Company, CNA Insurance, an Equity Partner at Baugh, Dalton, Carlson & Ryan, LLC, and a non-equity Partner at Litchfield Cavo, LLP. She also served as an Associate at Litchfield Cavo, at Meckler Bulger & Tilson LLP, and at Haskell & Perrin, LLP, constituting nearly 30 years of law practice in all.

Ms. Gonzalez earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the DePaul University College of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, where she is a past President, the American Bar Association, and the Chicago Bar Association. She is a member of the Lawyers Auxiliary Committee of the Illinois Judges Foundation and served on the Board of Directors of the Women's Bar Foundation of Illinois from 2010 to 2012.

Koula A. Fournier has been appointed to the 4<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit of Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge Edward Maloney. Ms. Fournier has served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the the Cook County State's Attorney Office since 2000. She has been assigned a variety of units within the State's Attorney's Office, including Felony Trial, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Juvenile Justice, and Narcotics. She handled high-profile sexual assault and domestic violence cases as a Sex Crimes Trial Specialist and has extensively practiced and argued cases before the Illinois Appellate Court.

Ms. Fournier earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the DePaul University College of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Women's Bar Association, the Decalogue Society of Lawyers, LAGBAC and the Hellenic Bar Association (HBA), where she is a past President and Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and currently serves on the HBA's Foundation Board of Directors, dedicated to raising funds to award scholarships to deserving law students.

Jennifer P. Callahan has been appointed as an At-Large Circuit Judge in Cook County to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge William B. Raines. Ms. Callahan has been the Managing Attorney at Callahan Law, P.C. since 2017. As part of her solo practice, she serves as an administrative law judge for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, conducting hearings on financial obligations and rendering written decisions. She previously served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office from 2006 to 2017, handling hundreds of felony cases and later serving in the Alternative Prosecutions Unit where she handled cases in the Drug Treatment Court, Mental Health Treatment Court, and Veteran's Treatment Court.

Ms. Callahan earned her Bachelor of Science from Miami University and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the John Marshall Law School. Her professional associations include the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, where she serves on the Judicial Evaluation Committee. She has volunteered at Chicago Volunteer Legal Services handling pro bono cases and as guardian ad litem at Wills for Heroes providing pro bono legal counsel.

**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: James Brunner, Public Information Officer of the Illinois Supreme Court at 217.208.3354 or [jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov](mailto:jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov).)**