



Supreme Court of Illinois

April 11, 2024

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT APPOINTS 12 JUDGES TO CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

The Illinois Supreme Court announced today the appointment of 12 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. They will run unopposed in the November general election. Ten of the appointments are effective April 29, 2024, and all will conclude on December 2, 2024, following the November 2024 general election. The other two appointments, those of Judge Stephanie Kathryn Miller and Bridget Colleen Duignan, are effective June 11, 2024.

The appointees are Rivanda Doss Beal, Nadine Jean Wichern, Audrey Cosgrove, Judge Jeffery Chrones, Michael Chvatal, Judge Lloyd James Brooks, Pablo F. deCastro, Griselda Vega Samuel, Judge Miller, Ms. Duignan, Judge John A. Fairman, and James V. Murphy.

Rivanda Doss Beal has been appointed to the 17th Subcircuit. Ms. Beal started as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County Attorney's Office in 1994 and retired from the office in 2021 as a Supervising Assistant State's Attorney, and since went into solo practice at the Law Office of Rivanda Doss Beal.

Ms. Beal earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and earned her *Juris Doctor* from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Illinois State Bar Association, the Black Women Lawyers of Greater Chicago, the Cook County Bar Association, the National Lawyer's Guild, the Women's Criminal Defense Bar Association, the South Suburban Bar Association, the Catholic Lawyer's Guild of Chicago, and the Appellate Lawyers Association of Illinois.

Nadine Jean Wichern has been appointed to the 20th Subcircuit. Ms. Wichern has 23 years of public service at the federal, state, and local levels of Illinois, and she has served as Chief of the Civil Appeals Division in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General since 2015, leading a team of 24 attorneys.

Ms. Wichern earned her Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University and earned her *Juris Doctor* from DePaul University College of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Appellate

Lawyers Association, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the Chicago Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the American Bar Foundation.

Audrey Cosgrove has been appointed to the 11th Subcircuit. Ms. Cosgrove has served as Deputy Chief General Counsel for the Illinois Lottery since 2019. She previously served as Deputy Chief Legal Counsel for the Illinois Department of Labor and as Assistant General Counsel for the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Division of Banking. She spent nearly 20 years as the managing attorney for The Cosgrove Law Firm from 1998 to 2017 and started her career as an Assistant Public Defender in the Office of the Cook County Public Defender in 1990.

Ms. Cosgrove earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois Chicago and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Illinois State Bar Association and she is a past President of the Advocates Society.

Judge Jeffery Chrones has been appointed to the 18th Subcircuit. Judge Chrones has served as an Associate Judge in Cook County since 2018. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Chrones was a trial attorney at Johnson & Bell Ltd. from 2003 to 2018, an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office from 1995 to 2003, and an Assistant Attorney General in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General from 1993 to 1995.

Judge Chrones earned his Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University and earned his *Juris Doctor* from the Cooley Law School. His professional affiliations include the Order of Themis Hellenic Judges Association, where he is Board Secretary and founding member, the Hellenic Bar Association, where he is Director and Judge's Night Chairman, the Illinois Judges Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, and the Chicago Bar Association.

Michael Chvatal has been appointed to the 4th Subcircuit. Mr. Chvatal has nearly 20 years of law experience and has been the owner operator of the Law Office of Michael Chvatal since 2016. He previously worked at Ferdinand Serpe & Associates LTD. from 2009 to 2016 and served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office from 2006 to 2009.

Mr. Chvatal earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Iowa and earned his *Juris Doctor* from The John Marshall Law School. His professional affiliations include the West Suburban Bar Association, of which he is a past President.

Judge Lloyd James Brooks has been appointed to the 17th Subcircuit. Judge Brooks served as a Cook County Circuit Judge from 2018 to 2020 and has served as an associate judge since 2021. Prior to joining the bench, Judge Brooks spent nearly 20 years in private practice as co-founder of the Consumer Legal Group, P.C., owner operator of The Brooks Law Firm, and as an Associate at Lord Bissell & Brook LLP and Zevnik Horton LLP.

Judge Brooks earned his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and earned his *Juris Doctor* from Northwestern University School of Law. His professional affiliations include the Illinois Judges Association, where he served on the Judicial Selection & Retention Committee, the Illinois Judicial Council, the Appellate Lawyers Association, where he

served on the Rules Committee, the Cook County Bar Association, and the Illinois State Bar Association.

Pablo F. deCastro has been appointed as an At-Large Judge to fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge James P. Flannery. Mr. deCastro has 28 years of litigation experience, most recently as sole practitioner at the Law Offices of Pablo F. deCastro. He is a past partner at Rascia and deCastro Attorneys at Law, a past associate at Serpico, Novelle, Petrosino and Rascia, and was a trial attorney for the Office of the Cook County Public Defender.

Mr. deCastro graduated from the University of Chicago and earned his *Juris Doctor* from Tulane University School of Law. His professional affiliations include the American Bar Association, the National Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, the Illinois Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, the Chicago Bar Association, the Cook County Bar Association, the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois, and the Puerto Rican Bar Association.

Griselda Vega Samuel has been appointed to the 14th Subcircuit. Ms. Samuel has served as Midwest Regional Counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund since 2018 and has 22 years of experience as a civil rights lawyer, litigating complex discrimination cases in both federal and state court for low-wage workers.

Ms. Vega Samuel earned her Bachelor of Arts from Briar Cliff University and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the University of Iowa College of Law. She was the recipient of the 2022 Chicago Bar Association's Vanguard Award, Mayor Lori Lightfoot's 2020 "Campeones de la Comunidad Latina" (Latinx Community Champions) Civil Rights Award, and 2019 Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois Latina Lawyer of the Year.

Judge Stephanie Kathryn Miller has been appointed to the 14th Subcircuit. Judge Miller has served on the bench as an Associate Judge since 2017. She served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office from 2001 to 2016 and was a lead prosecutor assigned to a felony trial courtroom. From 1996 to 2001 she served as an Assistant Public Guardian for the Cook County Office of the Public Guardian.

Judge Miller earned her Bachelor of Arts from Northwestern University and earned her *Juris Doctor* from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago, the Women's Bar Association, the National Hispanic Prosecutors Association, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, and the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois.

Bridget Colleen Duignan has been appointed to the 19th Subcircuit. Ms. Duignan serves as the managing partner at Latherow & Duignan where she has represented victims of medical negligence, construction negligence, sexual abuse, and wrongful death for 17 years.

Ms. Duignan earned her Bachelor of Arts from Illinois State University and earned her *Juris Doctor* from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law. Her professional affiliations include the Illinois State Bar Association, where she is 2nd Vice President, the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, where she serves on the board of managers, the Illinois Bar Foundation,

where she serves on the board of directors, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, the American Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association, and the American Association for Justice.

Judge John A. Fairman has been appointed to the 15th Subcircuit. Judge Fairman has served as an Associate Judge in Cook County Circuit Court since 2018. Prior to joining the bench Judge Fairman worked in private practice at Lee & Fairman and served as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

Judge Fairman earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from Howard University and earned his *Juris Doctor* from Texas Southern University School of Law. His professional affiliations include the Cook County Bar Association, where he is a Past President, the National Bar Association, the National Black Prosecutors Association - Chicago Chapter, where he is a Past President, the Southwest Bar Association, and the Illinois State Bar Association.

James V. Murphy has been appointed as an At-Large Judge to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Laura Sullivan through Dec. 2, 2024. Mr. Murphy spent nearly 25 years as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office where he supervised preliminary hearings and ultimately oversaw 81 felony jury trials and 41 murder trials.

Mr. Murphy earned his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and earned his *Juris Doctor* from The John Marshall Law School. His professional affiliations include the Chicago Bar Association, and he was the recipient of the 2011 American Legion, State of Illinois Award of Excellence.

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