



Supreme Court of Illinois

October 26, 2021

CLERK CAROLYN TAFT GROSBOLL TO RETIRE – TRANSFORMED OFFICE FOR DIGITAL AGE

ASSISTANT CLERK CYNTHIA GRANT APPOINTED AS NEXT CLERK

Illinois Supreme Court Clerk Carolyn Taft Grosboll, who led the transformation of the office from paper to digital and other important efforts since January 3, 2011, has announced her retirement effective Nov. 30, 2021. Cynthia A. Grant has been appointed as the new Clerk of the Supreme Court effective December 1, 2021.

“Serving as Clerk of the Supreme Court has been my greatest honor. I wish to thank the Court for providing me the opportunity to serve, and for its leadership and support throughout my tenure as Clerk. I also wish to thank the staff of the Clerk’s Office. Without their professionalism and dedication, the day-to-day operations of the Office would not have run as efficiently,” said Clerk Taft Grosboll.

Many of Clerk Taft Grosboll’s numerous accomplishments came in technology upgrades. These include developing the Court’s first e-filing process then migrating it to the Court’s Statewide e-filing system (eFileIL), creating electronic sharing of documents among Court staff to produce efficiencies in timeliness and reduce paper, creating a method for law firms to register with the Clerk’s Office each year online instead of through the mail – last year 84% of firm’s renewed online, and developing a new case management system that integrates with eFileIL and re:SearchIL.

“It has been a pleasure to work with Carolyn and she has fulfilled the duties of the office at the highest level,” Chief Justice Anne M. Burke said. “She is a talented administrator and lawyer whose professionalism and responsibility have been invaluable to the Court and to the public we serve. We have been incredibly fortunate to have her with us for the past 11 years and she will be greatly missed. We do expect a smooth transition as we welcome her successor, Cynthia Grant.”

Additional technological upgrades that improved convenience and efficiencies for Court users included developing a method for new attorneys to pay law license fees online, establishing an online system for attorneys to request and pay for certificates of good standing, creating a process for state court judges to file their required annual judicial ethics statement online and streamlining the notification of parties/counsel of Court depositions by email.

An important improvement in transparency came in 2018 when briefs in cases on the Court's Call of the Docket for oral argument started appearing online, providing the public with easy access to case information.

Clerk Taft Grosboll's leadership perhaps shined brightest during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was able to quickly adapt Court operations to hold the May 2020 Term of Court via video conference. Counsel and the Court appeared using Zoom with the intent of replicating as much as practicable as if the proceeding was in-person. The Court and counsel were given specific virtual backgrounds to use during the arguments to appear as if they were in the Courtroom. Counsel were trained on what to expect in advance of oral arguments. A lengthy Zoom guideline was developed to assist counsel in preparing for virtual oral arguments. All appellate court districts later adopted these procedures and guidelines providing practitioners uniformity when appearing before the Illinois courts of review. Clerk Taft Grosboll also swiftly established protocols for a virtual new attorney admission ceremony in lieu of the traditional in-person ceremonies.

"Carolyn continued the tradition of excellence in the Clerk's office," said J. Timothy Eaton, an appellate lawyer and former president of the Illinois State Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association. "The office has always been responsive to appellate lawyers' needs and with the new technology ushered in during Carolyn's tenure the appellate process has become much more efficient. She will be missed."

When the Court resumed in-person oral arguments in September of 2020, the Clerk's Office developed COVID-19 safety protocols in coordination with the Director of the Sangamon County Department of Public Health. These protocols have allowed the Court to continue operations in a safe and productive way despite the ongoing pandemic.

A major accomplishment for Clerk Taft Grosboll in 2013 was supervising the office move from the Supreme Court Building to a temporary location during the 14-month building restoration. This included packing and moving the Court's voluminous case files and records into a temporary storage facility with proper tracking to ensure access when needed. The Clerk was also tasked with holding five Terms of Court in Chicago during the renovation.

During Clerk Taft Grosboll's tenure, she oversaw the completion of a joint project with the Illinois State Archives to restore approximately 142,000 oaths of Illinois attorneys – some that preceded the Civil War. In April 2021, the Clerk's Office also entered into a coordinated joint effort with the State Archives and Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission to restore Supreme Court case records dating from 1820-1974.

As Clerk, Taft Grosboll participated in numerous Supreme Court Committees and Task Forces. Her memberships include the Special Supreme Court Committee on E-business, the E-business Policy Advisory Board, the Illinois Judicial College – Judicial Staff Education Committee, the Access to Justice Commission's Appellate Forms Subcommittee, and the Court's Website Task Force. She also served at the national level as a member of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks, including two years as a member of its Executive Committee.

The Clerk of the Supreme Court is an appointed officer who reports to the Court and serves at the Court's pleasure. The Clerk is the Court's principal case processing and records manager who operates the Clerk's main office in Springfield and an office in Chicago through a staff of 13 deputies whom the Clerk recruits, selects, trains, and supervises. The Clerk is also responsible for planning, developing, and implementing policies and procedures necessary to execute the responsibilities of the office.

In addition to the responsibilities of processing filings and maintaining the dockets, records, files, and statistics on the activities of the Supreme Court, the Clerk maintains the roll of Illinois attorneys, processes the licensing of attorneys, and registers and renews professional service corporations, associations, limited liability companies and partnerships engaged in the practice of law.

Ms. Grant has served as the Assistant Clerk in the Supreme Court's Clerk's Office since 2013. She has previously served for four years as legal counsel for various departments with the Illinois Secretary of State's office, including Vehicle Services, Accounting Revenue, and the Department of Police starting in 2009.

"I am proud to have had the opportunity to learn from Carolyn over these past eight years," Grant said. "I am truly humbled by this appointment and look forward to continuing the incredible work Carolyn has done."

Ms. Grant also spent two years on the staff of the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives where she worked for then Chief Legal Counsel, David W. Ellis, serving as legal counsel and parliamentarian to two House committees and researched a wide variety of issues including those surrounding the impeachment of former Governor Rod Blagojevich.

Ms. Grant earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Journalism from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She earned her *Juris Doctor* from the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law, where after graduating she was a research assistant for Professor Ann Lousin.