

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SUPREME COURT NAMES EXPERIENCED JURIST TO NEWLY
CONVERTED SUBCIRCUIT SEAT IN 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Monday the appointment of Associate Judge J. Todd Kennedy to fill a converted Circuit Court judgeship that will be created by the retirement of Associate Judge Angus More in the 17th Judicial Circuit.

Judge More is retiring, effective September 30, 2006; and under legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed into law his associate judge seat converts to a Circuit Court seat once it is vacant.

The appointment of Judge Kennedy, an experienced judge who has presided over major criminal and civil litigation for 17 years, is effective October 1, 2006 and runs through December 1, 2008.

“I am very grateful to the Illinois Supreme Court, and especially to Chief Justice Robert Thomas, for moving expeditiously in making this appointment,” said Judge Kathryn E. Zenoff, chief judge of the 17th Circuit. “The 17th Judicial Circuit is operating under extremely heavy caseloads and conditions of jail overcrowding. Allowing us to fill the position temporarily with a senior, experienced jurist will enable us to continue to try to move our growing caseloads efficiently and to serve the public effectively.

“Judge More’s service to the Circuit has been invaluable,” Judge Zenoff said. “His leadership will be greatly missed.”

Judge Kennedy, an associate judge since April 1989, has served as presiding associate judge in the Circuit for four years, responsible for scheduling high volume court rooms. He initiated victim impact panels for DUI cases, played a key role in organizing an ongoing small claims mediation program, and completed judicial seminars established by the Supreme Court, on Capital Cases in 2002, 2004 and 2006. He is currently Presiding Judge of the Probate and Small Claims divisions.

“I am very honored to be given the opportunity by the Illinois Supreme Court to serve the community in this important position,” Judge Kennedy said. “I will do my utmost to fulfill all my new judicial responsibilities and to ensure that all litigants before me receive fair and impartial justice.”

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With termination of his appointment in 2008, Judge Kennedy said he will retire from the bench at that time.

Under legislation, Judge More's resignation triggers the conversion of his associate judge position to that of a resident Circuit judge in the First Subcircuit. With Judge Kennedy's intention to retire, candidates will vie for election to the position in the 2008 election cycle.

It is anticipated that Judge Kennedy's associate judge position will be filled in a timely manner and allow the circuit to administer the courts at full capacity.

Judge Kennedy received his law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in 1972 after serving with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Before he became an associate judge, he served as an assistant state's attorney in Winnebago County and as a partner in the Rockford law firm of Reno Zahm.

The 17th Judicial Circuit is composed of Winnebago and Boone counties.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION: contact Chief Judge Kathryn Zenoff from the 17th Judicial Circuit, at 815- 319-4800 or Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court at 312-793-2323)