



Supreme Court of Illinois

Joseph R. Tybor
Director of Communications

222 North LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone (312) 793-2323
Mobile (312) 636-0479
Fax (312) 793-0871

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CHIEF JUSTICE THOMAS L. KILBRIDE ANNOUNCES MOLINE ATTORNEY TO FILL JUDICIAL VACANCY

Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride announced Thursday that the Illinois Supreme Court has appointed Linnea E. Thompson, an attorney for more than 30 years, to fill a vacancy in the 14th Judicial Circuit.

Chief Justice Kilbride recommended Ms. Thompson's appointment to the Supreme Court after an extensive application, evaluation and interview process which included formation of a special judicial screening committee.

"I am honored and humbled by the confidence which has been placed in me to fill this judicial vacancy," said Ms. Thompson. "I pledge to work tirelessly to insure that all who appear before me will be treated fairly and with respect. I wish to thank the community leaders who served on the judicial evaluation committee and particularly Chief Justice Kilbride and the Illinois Supreme Court.

"I would be remiss if I did not mention my fellow attorneys who also applied for this judicial vacancy. They continue to be held in high respect by me. And, today, I can't help but think of my parents, and the attorneys and judges who have served as my mentors who are no longer here."

Ms. Thompson earned her *juris doctor* from Washington University School of Law in St. Louis in 1979 and has since engaged in the general practice of law, primarily in the Quad Cities area, ever since.

"We were impressed with Ms. Thompson's legal reputation, breadth of experience and commitment to her community. She is a Moline native, and has worked in the community as a lawyer for over 30 years. Highly regarded by her fellow attorneys, she has won awards for pro bono service and has served also as a community college teacher, arbitrator and president of the local American Legion auxiliary," said Timothy Bertschy, former president of the Illinois State Bar Association, partner with the Peoria firm of Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen and co-chair of a special committee which evaluated the candidates.

"Ms. Thompson knows her community and its issues. She is well suited to serve the 14th Judicial Circuit in this new role," said Bertschy.

Since 1990, Ms. Thompson has practiced with her own law firm. From 1982 to 1990 she was associated with Blade, Thompson & Sale and its predecessor firms in Moline.

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After obtaining her law license in 1979, she worked as a staff attorney with Mid America Law Offices and practiced law for about a year in her own office.

She has been active in community, bar and charitable activities; and has been a strong supporter of providing and obtaining legal services for the poor.

She was named Volunteer Lawyer of the Year of Rock Island County in 1994 and 1996. She has served as co-chair of the Leadership Committee for Campaign for Legal Service of Prairie State Legal Services, a legal aid services corporation, and is still a member of the Committee. Ms. Thompson also serves on Prairie State's Board of Directors. She is a member of the American Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Rock Island County Bar Association in which she served on the Board of Managers, and the Phi Delta Phi legal fraternity.

Ms. Thompson's community service goes beyond bar associations and legal services work. She is past president of American Legion Auxiliary, Moline Unit 246 and a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Rock Island. She has been an adjunct professor, teaching business law, at Black Hawk College, in Moline.

Ms. Thompson will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Charles Stengel.

In making his recommendation, Chief Justice Kilbride opened an application process for everyone interested in the appointment. Nine attorneys applied. Chief Justice Kilbride also sought and received written comments about the candidates from the community. The evaluation process also included criminal and financial background checks by police authorities and a disciplinary background check by the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

The Illinois State Bar Association conducted a survey of all attorneys residing in the 14th Judicial Circuit. The attorneys were surveyed on their opinions of the applicants' integrity, temperament, legal ability, management skills and other professional qualifications.

Chief Justice Kilbride also appointed a 14-person judicial screening committee made up of representatives from the community, including non-lawyers to evaluate all the applicants.

In addition to Mr. Bertschy, the members of the committee were: John Ames, attorney, Ames Law Offices; Dr. Kim Armstrong, assistant dean of student support services, Black Hawk College; Joan Clark, retired program director of Rock Island-Moline townships; the Honorable Sara Darrow, U.S. District Court judge for the Central District of Illinois; Jeanette Hunter, chief deputy, Rock Island County Circuit Clerk's Office; Lawrence Lorensen, professor emeritus of government, Black Hawk College, and former mayor of Moline; Susan Noble, retired school counselor for Sterling public schools; Detective Marcella O'Brien of the Moline Police Department and a member of the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police; Chief Judge Jeffrey W. O'Connor of the 14th Judicial Circuit; Diane Reinsch, attorney and partner at Lane & Waterman LLP; Maureen Riggs, Moline city attorney; Scott Verschoore, business manager/financial secretary of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 145; and Lester Weinstine, attorney and senior partner, Weinstine & Wiebenga.