



Supreme Court of Illinois

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REPORTER OF DECISIONS HAS RETIRED AFTER NEARLY THREE DECADES OF SERVICE TO THE SUPREME COURT

Brian Ervin began working for the Supreme Court in 1986, when finalizing the Court's opinions required using a typewriter, correction fluid and a copier. At that time, after opinions were announced, they were published in bound volumes that were expensive and not readily accessible.

Today, through the efforts of Mr. Ervin, who has served as Reporter of Decisions for nearly three decades, the Court's reporting process has been brought into the digital age through the adoption of a public domain citation system and the creation of a court website that provides access to opinions.

In addition, Mr. Ervin authored three editions of the "Style Manual" that provides uniformity and consistency to opinions of the Supreme and Appellate Courts. He also edited opinions and managed the distribution, filing and publication of several thousand opinions.

When the Supreme Court convenes on January 13 for its January Term, it will mark the first time in 27 years that Mr. Ervin will not be present in his role as Reporter of Decisions. He has retired effective January 1, 2014.

"Brian has served the Court with distinction and with the highest level of professionalism over the past 27 years," Supreme Court Chief Justice Rita B. Garman said. "His breadth of knowledge of the law and the history of the judicial branch, combined with his great skill as an editor, is evident in the outstanding work that he has done. I, and all of my colleagues, rely on his expertise and his eye for detail.

"Brian, along with his staff, serves a vital role in the administration of justice in the Illinois courts. For example, during his tenure, Brian Ervin has assisted the Court in bringing Illinois court opinions not only to the legal community, but also to the public, through the use of electronic technology.

"We welcome his successor; but make no mistake, he will certainly be missed."

One of the highlights of Mr. Ervin's stellar service to the Court was the transition from the traditional form of citing legal opinions to the use of a public domain citation system. In 2011, the Court announced the change, which replaced the former case citations that were linked to specific published volumes called case reporters, with its own system of unique identifiers. Under the old system, court opinions were

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Reporter of Decisions Retires Add One

published only in bound volumes and the citation was the key to locating an opinion in a particular volume. The system was cumbersome and expensive.

Under the new public domain citation system, each case is identified by a unique number assigned by the Reporter of Decisions. The opinion may be accessed online by using this number, eliminating the expense of publishing the case reporters. As a result, not only have Illinois taxpayers been saved thousands of dollars a year, attorneys and members of the public have ready access to judicial opinions at www.illinoiscourts.gov.

Mr. Ervin also took a leading role in the creation of this website. In 1996, he asked the Supreme Court for permission to post its opinions on an internet site to serve as a mechanism for the public to have access to it. That limited use internet site was the forerunner to the Court's comprehensive judicial branch website that debuted in 2001.

"Conferencing with the Illinois Supreme Court and being a part of the Justices' debate over the most important public policy issues of our times would be the highlight of any lawyer's career," Mr. Ervin said.

"Owing to the good graces of the Court, though, I had that pleasure for over 27 years. For that, and for the chance to work with the wonderful staff of the Reporter's Office and throughout the judiciary, I am truly grateful."

Mr. Ervin graduated from Southern Illinois University–Carbondale in 1980 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. He received his juris doctor degree in 1983 from Southern Illinois University School of Law. He is admitted to practice in Illinois, Wisconsin, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois, and the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin.

He was engaged in the private practice of law from 1983-1984 and served as an assistant Illinois Attorney General in the Opinions Division for two years prior to his joining the staff of the Reporter of Decisions office as Assistant Reporter of Decisions in 1986. A year later, Mr. Ervin was appointed by the Court to serve as its Reporter of Decisions.

The Supreme Court announced Thursday that Urbana resident Amy L. Tomaszewski has been appointed by the Court to serve as Mr. Ervin's replacement. Her appointment is effective January 6, 2014.

Ms. Tomaszewski graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Penn State University in University Park, Penn. She earned her Master of Science degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois in 2006. She received her juris doctor degree, *cum laude*, in 2005 from the University of Illinois College of Law where she taught legal writing as well as other courses at the College of Law. She is a member of the American Association of Law Libraries.

The Reporter of Decisions is appointed by the Supreme Court and serves at the pleasure of the Court. The Reporter of Decisions is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the activities of the office, including publishing and distributing opinions of the Supreme and Appellate Courts. The office also reviews and edits Supreme Court opinions and rules before they are filed or published and advises the Court on style and citation rules.

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