

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2009

**SCREENING COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO REVIEW CANDIDATES FOR
JUDICIAL VACANCY IN FOURTEENTH CIRCUIT**

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride has appointed a special screening committee to review the credentials of candidates who applied to fill a judicial vacancy in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

Notice of the vacancy and the appointment process was posted at various courthouses in the 14th Circuit, which encompasses Henry, Whiteside, Rock Island and Mercer counties. The vacancy was created by the December 1, 2008 retirement of Circuit Judge Larry S. Vandersnick.

Justice Kilbride named 12 persons to the special screening committee. The community representatives are John Ahern, trustee on the Board of Trustees for Black Hawk College; Dr. Kim Armstrong, assistant dean, Black Hawk College; Joan Clark, director of program and resource development for Rock Island and Moline Townships; Jeanette Hunter, chief deputy clerk, Rock Island Circuit Clerk's office; Susan Noble, counselor at Challand Middle School in Sterling and former victim witness coordinator in Whiteside County; and Scott Verschoore, business manager of IBEW Local 145.

Members of the legal profession on the screening committee are Retired Justice Tobias G. Barry of the Third District Appellate Court; Chief Judge Jeffery W. O'Connor of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit; Timothy Bertschy, attorney, former president of the Illinois State Bar Association and a partner at Heyl, Royster, Volker & Allen, Peoria; Joseph A. Dailing, attorney, executive director, Illinois Coalition for Equal Justice, Rockford; Dwight L. Shoemaker, an attorney and president of the Mercer County Bar Association; and Lester S. Weinstine, attorney at law.

Justice Kilbride uses an extensive application, evaluation and interview process to make recommendations to the Supreme Court for judicial vacancies in the Third Judicial District. Justice Barry and Mr. Bertschy, co-chairs of the committee, have served on previous screening committees appointed by Justice Kilbride, and provide procedural continuity to the screening process, which is dominated by input from the communities in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

The appointment process used by Justice Kilbride also consists of background checks by police authorities and with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission; and a written survey of registered attorneys in the Fourteenth Circuit, conducted by the Illinois State Bar Association.

MORE

**Screening Committee Appointed
Add One**

Those wishing to send written comments about the candidates during the selection process may address them to: Sarah Kink-Tucker, Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Appointment Comments, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, 3101 Old Jacksonville Rd., Springfield, IL 62704. Comments must arrive by noon on **Friday, May 22**. Comments must include contact information such as name and address, and should be brief, preferably no more than 250 words.

Among qualities an applicant must possess are a demonstrated reputation for integrity and good character; a demonstrated commitment to equal justice under the law; outstanding legal ability and competence; and the appropriate demeanor and character demonstrating a judicial temperament required by the position of Circuit Court judge.

Those who submitted applications for the position are: retired Circuit Judge Joseph F. Beatty; Associate Judge James J. Mesich; attorneys Clarence Michael Darrow, Joseph F. Fackel, Peter C. Fieweger, Maritia Griffith, Patricia "Trish" A. Joyce, John L. McGehee, William S. McNeal, Nadine Palmgren, Jodi K. Plagenz, Eugene L. Stockton and Michael L. Wassell.

The person appointed to fill the vacancy will serve until the first Monday in December 2010, or until other order by the Illinois Supreme Court.

The Third Judicial District is comprised of 21 counties across the north central part of the state, stretching from Will, Kankakee and Iroquois counties in the east to Whiteside, Rock Island, Peoria, Mercer, Henderson and Hancock counties in the west.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323)