



Supreme Court of Illinois

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CHIEF JUSTICE RITA B. GARMAN OF THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT

The elevation of Justice Rita B. Garman to become Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court will be marked by an installation ceremony Monday, October 28 at the Vermilion County Courthouse in Danville.

Justice Garman will become the 119th Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, the second woman in Illinois to be Chief Justice and the second woman to head one of the three branches of government in Illinois.

"I am honored and humbled to have been chosen by my colleagues to serve as Chief Justice," Justice Garman said. "This office has been held by many great jurists, several of whom I have served with and count among my friends. I welcome the challenges and the responsibility that go with the role of Chief Justice because I know that I can count on the support of my colleagues at all levels of the judiciary and the members of the Illinois bar."

Justice Garman was elected to the Court from the Fourth Judicial District, which is made up of 30 counties that stretch across central Illinois from west to east.

Her selection as Chief Justice on the seven-member Court culminates her long service to the people of Illinois. There are more than 950 judges in Illinois, and Justice Garman has served in the judiciary longer than all of them--except one.

Justice Garman was raised in Oswego in Kendall County and exhibited scholarship throughout her academic career. She was class valedictorian at Oswego High School and accumulated several honors at the University of Illinois where she enrolled in a six-year Commerce and Law program. One of a handful of women in the College of Commerce, she received her bachelor's degree in economics with highest honors, was a Top 10 graduate and was named to the Bronze Tablet.

She received her J.D. degree with distinction from the University of Iowa College of Law.

She began her legal career with the Vermilion County Legal Aid Society. She later served as an assistant state's attorney for Vermilion County, trying criminal and juvenile cases. She also engaged in private practice in Danville.

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Justice Garman Installation as Chief Add One

Her judicial career began at the age of 30 as an associate judge in Vermilion County in 1974. She was elected a Circuit judge in the 5th Judicial Circuit in 1986, and served as Presiding Circuit judge in Vermilion County from 1987 to 1998, when she was assigned to the Illinois Appellate Court, Fourth District. She was elected to the Appellate Court the following year.

Justice Garman was appointed to the Supreme Court, effective February 1, 2001, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of former Chief Justice Ben Miller. She was elected to the Supreme Court for a 10-year term in 2002 and retained for a second term in 2012. When she began serving on the Supreme Court, she joined the late Chief Justice Mary Ann McMorrow, who was the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court and the first woman to serve as its Chief.

In addition to being the longest-serving woman judge in Illinois, Justice Garman will be the first Chief Justice to have served in virtually every judicial capacity: Associate Judge, Circuit Judge, Presiding Circuit Judge, Appellate Justice, Presiding Appellate Justice, Supreme Court Justice and soon-to-be Chief Justice.

Since she has been on the Supreme Court, Justice Garman has written and participated in hundreds of opinions; and has been an active participant in the Court's many administrative functions.

She recommended that the Supreme Court establish a Special Committee on Child Custody Issues to ensure that the best interests of children is the prime focus of all custody cases, and that all child custody proceedings be scheduled and heard on an expedited basis. Justice Garman still serves as Supreme Court liaison to the special committee.

She also serves as Supreme Court liaison to the Conference of Chief Circuit Judges, the Committee on Judicial Performance Evaluation and the Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission.

Justice Garman is a member of the Vermilion County Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Iowa State Bar Association, the East Central Illinois Women's Bar Association, the Central Illinois Women's Bar Association, and the Lincoln-Douglas Inn of Court. She also is a member of the Illinois Judges Association, which awarded her a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007 and the inaugural Harold Sullivan Award for Judicial Excellence in 2011.

As Chief Justice, Justice Garman will serve as the chief administrative officer of the statewide judicial system with supervisory authority over the more than 900 judges in the state.

Among other duties, the Chief Justice controls and schedules the Supreme Court's agenda for consideration in conference by the Court. The Chief Justice serves as chairperson of the Executive Committee of the constitutionally mandated Illinois Judicial Conference. The Conference sets and sponsors much of the judicial education agenda for Illinois judges.

The Chief Justice also serves as the public face of the Court, appearing at many functions as the representative of the Court.

Because of space and security considerations, attendance is by invitation only.

MORE

**Justice Garman Installation as Chief
Add Two**

Print and broadcast media wishing to attend the installation ceremony should contact Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323 or Dawn Frison Cook, senior communications specialist to the Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870. The program will begin promptly at 11 a.m. Broadcast media are to have their equipment set up before that time.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323 or Dawn Frison Cook, senior communications specialist to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870)