

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SPRINGFIELD -- The Supreme Court of Illinois appointed Tuesday Belleville attorney James K. Donovan Circuit Court judge of the 20th Judicial Circuit.

Mr. Donovan, 48, fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Roger M. Scrivner who stepped down Dec. 1, 2000.

It marks a return to the bench for Mr. Donovan who served as a judge from 1983 to 1994, when he decided to return to the private practice of law with the firm, Cueto, Williams and Donovan Ltd.

“He’s extremely well qualified to serve on the bench,” said Chief Justice Moses W. Harrison II. “He served as an associate Circuit Judge from 1983 to 1987 and a full Circuit Judge from 1987 to 1994, and was well respected by his colleagues and attorneys during all those years. He is an experienced practitioner of the law and has served as a faculty member of several judicial education committees.

“We are very honored to have him on the bench again.”

After serving as an associate judge in the 20th Judicial Circuit from 1983 to 1987, Mr. Donovan was appointed by the Supreme Court to fill a vacancy as a Circuit Court judge in November of 1987. He was elected to a six-year term in November 1988, but decided not to run for retention and returned to the private practice of law in 1994 with an emphasis in personal injury and federal and state criminal law.

When he ran for election in 1987, Mr. Donovan was recommended by more than 87 percent of the lawyers polled in an Illinois State Bar Association evaluation survey.

As a Circuit judge in St. Clair County, Mr. Donovan was assigned to the felony and law division, presiding over jury and non-jury cases.

He is a licensed attorney in both Illinois and Missouri, and admitted to practice in federal courts, including the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Donovan received his law degree in 1977 from St. Louis University School of Law, after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

He started in the general practice of law in 1977 and also worked as an assistant state’s attorney and public defender in St. Clair County, trying some 40 jury trials for both offices.

Mr. Donovan also is experienced in the automation of court systems, having assisted such an effort in St. Clair County. He was chairperson of the Automation and Technology Committee of the Illinois Judicial Conference and vice chairperson of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on the Electronic Transfer of Data.

He has been a continuing member of the Bench and Bar Section Council of the Illinois State Bar Association and was its chair from 1992-93.

He is a member of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, a member and past president of the St. Clair County Bar Association, a member and former director of the Illinois Judges Association; and a member of the East St. Louis Bar Association, the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, the American Trial Lawyers Association and the Missouri Bar Association.

In 1991, Mr. Donovan was named Alumnus of the Year from the Administration of Justice Department at SIU in Carbondale.

Mr. Donovan, a lifelong resident of St. Clair County, has been married to Angelia (Blackman) Donovan for nearly 20 years and the couple has three children.