

November 15, 2001

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **INSTALLATION CEREMONIES FOR NEW JUDGES IN WILL COUNTY**

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride will preside and administer the oath of office to four new Circuit Court judges in Will County who will be sworn in at ceremonies Friday in Joliet.

The four new judges, appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court, are Jeff Allen, program director and managing attorney of the Will County Legal Assistance Program for 25 years; Paula A. Gomora, an attorney for 14 years, the past 12 in Will County; Roman Okrei, an attorney since 1977 who has handled personal injury cases for both defendants and plaintiffs; and Thomas A. Thanas, city attorney for Naperville and former corporation counsel for the City of Joliet.

The ceremony will be held Friday, Nov. 16 at 11 a.m. at the Rialto Square Theater in Joliet.

James E. Egan, president of the Will County Bar Association, will welcome participants and guests in a group that will include Judge Rodney B. Lechwar, Chief Judge of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit; and the Circuit and Associate judges of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit.

Other speakers and participants will include attorney John Coleman; Robert Krockey, president of the Will County Legal Assistance Program; Pamela McGuire, Will County Clerk of the Circuit Court; attorney Laird M. Ozman; and Amie Sobkoviak, president of the Will County Women's Bar Association.

The four new judgeships in the Twelfth Circuit were mandated by state statute based on population growth in Will County as measured by the 2000 census. The Twelfth Circuit is made up entirely of Will County.

The four new judges were appointed by the Supreme Court following an extensive application and evaluation process which included review by an independent, bipartisan committee appointed by Justice Kilbride of the Third Judicial District.

**MORE**

Under the Illinois Constitution, the Supreme Court is granted authority to fill judicial vacancies during the interim between elections. Justice Kilbride has used an independent committee to aid him in making recommendations for judicial vacancies in the Third Judicial District since being sworn into office Dec. 4, 2000.