

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 24, 2008

SUPREME COURT CREATES SPECIAL PANEL ON ILLINOIS EVIDENCE

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Monday the formation of a Special Committee on Illinois Evidence with the aim of codifying existing evidentiary law so that it is available in a single source.

The Special Committee, appointed by the Supreme Court, is composed of a blue ribbon roster of judges, practitioners, law professors and state legislators, including newly elected Senate President John J. Cullerton, and Illinois Republican House Leader Tom Cross. It also includes as an advisor, Michael Graham, professor of law at the University of Miami School of Law and author of Cleary & Graham's "The Handbook of Illinois Evidence."

The establishment of the Special Committee has been a stated goal of Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald since his installation as Chief in September.

"The function of this project is to codify existing law, which is presently contained in state statutes, Supreme Court rules and the common law," said Chief Justice Fitzgerald. "Having the rules of evidence in a single location would be of enormous value to the practitioner.

"We're delighted with the Committee we have formed and we're honored to have Michael Graham as part of the project. He is a true evidence scholar."

The chairperson of the Committee is Donald C. Hudson, Chief Circuit Judge of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit, who has been assigned to the Illinois Appellate Court, Second District, effective January 8, 2009. The vice-chair is Illinois Appellate Judge Warren D. Wolfson of the First District Appellate Court.

Other members of the 18-person committee include:

Illinois Appellate Judge Robert L. Carter of the Third District; Gino L. DiVito, retired Illinois appellate judge and partner in the Chicago law firm of Tabet, DiVito & Rothstein LLC; Cook County Circuit Judge Nathaniel R. Howse Jr.; Circuit Judge Heidi Ladd of Champaign County in the Sixth Judicial Circuit; Eileen Letts of the Chicago law firm Greene and Letts; Shannon M. McNulty of Clifford Law Offices in Chicago;

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Robert Neiryneck of the law firm Costigan & Woolrab PC in Bloomington; Associate Judge Dennis J. Porter in the Criminal Division of the Cook County Circuit Court; Michael Scodro, Solicitor General, Illinois Attorney General's Office; Todd Smith of the Chicago law firm of Power Rogers & Smith; Brian K. Trentman, private attorney, public defender and former state's attorney for Washington County; and Michael J. Warner of Michael J. Warner & Associates in Rock Island.

Ralph Ruebner, professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at The John Marshall Law School, is also a committee member and will serve as its Reporter.

Senate President Cullerton has served as co-chairperson of the Senate Judiciary Civil Law Committee and is a member of the Senate Judiciary Criminal Law Committee. Republican House Leader Cross is a former member of the House Judiciary II Criminal Law Committee.

The Special Committee on Illinois Evidence will hold an organizing meeting in the near future.

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