

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 26, 2011**

**CHIEF JUSTICE KILBRIDE RECOMMENDS APPOINTMENT OF KANKAKEE  
ATTORNEY DENNIS BARON TO CHARACTER AND FITNESS COMMITTEE**

Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride announced the appointment of Kankakee attorney Dennis J. Baron to the Court's Committee on Character and Fitness. The appointment was recently made by the Illinois Supreme Court on the recommendation of the Chief Justice.

The Committee on Character and Fitness is composed of lawyers who sit on panels and evaluate the moral character and general fitness of law school graduates and other applicants before they are issued a license by the Supreme Court to practice law in the state. The process includes review of a lengthy application and questionnaire and, if necessary, interviews and hearings with the applicant.

Mr. Baron is one of 15 panel members who evaluate applicants from the Third Judicial District, which is comprised of 21 Illinois counties straddling Interstate 80 from Indiana to Iowa. Those counties are: Bureau, Fulton, Grundy, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Kankakee, Knox, LaSalle, Marshall, McDonough, Mercer, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Tazewell, Warren, Whiteside and Will.

In November 2010, more than 2,200 applicants successfully completed the fitness evaluation process and were sworn-in as new attorneys in the state. Of those, 59 were from the Third Judicial District.

Mr. Baron has served as partner with the Kankakee law firm of Deck & Baron since 1999. From 1984-1999, he served as partner with the law firm of Petersen, Deck, Ruch & Baron in Kankakee. For three years, Mr. Baron was a solo practitioner.

Since 1987, Mr. Baron has served as the City of Kankakee's sixth ward alderman. He has been the city's budget committee chairman since 1991. He was commissioner of the Kankakee County Housing Authority from 1994-1997 and a past member of the City of Kankakee Plan Commission.

A 1973 high honors graduate of the University of Illinois, Mr. Baron received his *juris doctor* degree in 1977 from the University of Michigan Law School. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

Mr. Baron's appointment fills the vacancy formerly held by Manteno attorney William F. Smith, and will terminate on December 31, 2013.

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