

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 10, 2011

SCREENING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED TO REVIEW CANDIDATES FOR JUDICIAL VACANCY IN THIRTEENTH CIRCUIT

Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride announced the names of a special screening committee who were appointed to review the credentials of the eight candidates who applied to fill a judicial vacancy in the 13th Judicial Circuit.

The vacancy was created by the December 6, 2010 retirement of Judge James A. Lanuti and is temporarily being filled by Judge James Brusatte who left retirement to fill the position in the interim.

Chief Justice Kilbride named 17 persons to the special screening committee. The community representatives are: Maria Balestri, teacher, Dimmick Consolidated School District, LaSalle; Glenn Frederickson, retired Major, Illinois State Police and retired Chief of Police, Peru; Jerry Halterman, president/owner, HR Imaging; Mary Beth Morelli, speech/language pathologist, Ottawa Elementary Schools; Deb Nelson, principal, LaSalle-Peru High School; Sara Olson, teacher, Nettle Creek Elementary School, Morris; Patti Smith, retired Director of Economic Development, Illinois River Area Chamber of Commerce; Greg Vaccaro, partner, Apple Press; and Wilma June Wilcoxon, office manager, Laborers' Local Union 393, Marseilles.

Judges and lawyers on the screening committee are: Retired Justice Tobias G. Barry of the Third District Appellate Court; Chief Judge Howard C. Ryan, Jr. of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit; Timothy Bertschy, attorney, former president of the Illinois State Bar Association and a partner at Heyl, Royster, Volker & Allen, Peoria; Jock Brown, president, Ottawa 1st National Bank; Bernard L. Engels, attorney and partner in the firm of Whitmore and Engels, Mendota; Rebecca M. Leynaud, attorney and a partner in the law firm of Leynaud and Leynaud, Peru; Christina Cantlin-VanWiggeren, attorney with The Cantlin Law Firm; and Michelle Vescogni, attorney with Vescogni Law Offices and President of the LaSalle County Bar Association.

Under the Illinois Constitution, the Supreme Court holds the authority to fill judicial vacancies. Chief Justice Kilbride uses an extensive application, evaluation and interview process to make recommendations to the Supreme Court for judicial vacancies in the Third Judicial District.

Justice Barry and Mr. Bertschy, co-chairs of the committee, have served on previous screening committees appointed by Chief Justice Kilbride, and provide procedural continuity to the screening process.

MORE

**Chief Justice Kilbride Announced Screening Committee
Add One**

Chief Justice Kilbride has publicly asked for and taken applications for Judge Lanuti's vacancy, and eight persons have applied. They are: Richard J. Black, Jeanne M. Fitzpatrick, Troy D. Holland, Anita L. Kopko, Sheryl H. Kuzma, Richard James Lannon, Joseph R. Navarro, and Melissa M. Olivero.

Chief Justice Kilbride has sought written comments about the candidates from the community as part of the evaluation process. The evaluation process will also include background checks by police authorities and with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission. A survey of all attorneys residing in the 13th Circuit was conducted by the Illinois State Bar Association. The attorneys were asked their opinions of the applicants' integrity, temperament, legal ability, management skills and other professional qualifications.

The person appointed to fill the vacancy will serve until December 3, 2012, when the position will be filled by the 2012 General Election.

The 13th Judicial Circuit is comprised of Bureau, Grundy and LaSalle counties.

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**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois
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