

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 7, 2011**

**CHIEF JUSTICE KILBRIDE RECOMMENDS APPOINTMENT OF JAMES TUNGATE  
AS VICE-CHAIRPERSON TO CHARACTER AND FITNESS COMMITTEE**

Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride announced the appointment of Watseka attorney James L. Tungate as vice-chairperson 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. Tungate has served on the Character and Fitness Committee since 2005.

Mr. Tungate 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. Tungate has a varied and impressive background. He is a successful lawyer, an author, and a former educator, broadcaster and newsman.

He has served as president of Tungate Law Offices, Ltd., with offices in Watseka, Onarga and Cissna Park since 1998. He was partner with the law firm of Tungate and Tungate from 1979 to 1998. He has taught at Northwestern University School of Communications, Loyola University of New Orleans and Purdue University.

**MORE**

## **Tungate Named Vice-Chair of Character and Fitness Committee**

### **Add One**

He served as special assistant of the Iroquois County State's Attorney as a traffic and misdemeanor cases prosecutor from 1978-1979.

Prior to his legal career, Mr. Tungate was an announcer, disc jockey and news reporter for various commercial radio stations in Illinois, including WIOK in Bloomington-Normal and WMRO-AM & FM in Aurora.

He also worked for five years as a faculty member and chairman of the communications department at Loyola University of New Orleans. While there, Mr. Tungate was chairman of the Association of Jesuit College and Universities Committee on Communications and director of the Institute for Religious Communication.

A 1969 honors graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University, Mr. Tungate received his master of arts and doctorate degrees in 1970 and 1972, respectively, from Northwestern University. He received his *juris doctor* degree in 1979 from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Mr. Tungate has been very active in various legal and community groups and organizations, including serving as founder, dean and lecturer of "The People's Law School" since 2000, which is a free annual law class to the public. For 15 years, he served as director of the Iroquois County Chapter of the American Red Cross, also serving as its chairman of the board for three years. He had also served as fundraising co-chairman in Iroquois County for Prairie State Legal Services, founding member of the Mayor's Advisory Council of the City of Watseka and member of the Watseka and Onarga Chambers of Commerce.

Mr. Tungate's appointment as vice-chairperson fills the vacancy formerly held by Peoria attorney David L. Wentworth II. The appointment will terminate on December 31, 2012.

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