



# Supreme Court of Illinois

Joseph R. Tybor  
Director of Communications

222 North LaSalle Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
Telephone (312) 793-2323  
Mobile (312) 636-0479  
Fax (312) 793-0871

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## **SUPREME COURT NAMES HON. DEBRA B. WALKER AS CHAIR AND HON. RICHARD L. TOGNARELLI AS VICE-CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM**

The Illinois Supreme Court recently announced the appointment of Cook County Circuit Judge Debra B. Walker to serve as chair and Third Judicial Circuit Judge Richard L. Tognarelli to serve as vice-chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism. Additionally, Springfield attorney William F. Moran III was appointed as a member of the Commission.

The appointments were effective January 1, 2013.

"Judge Walker has served the Commission on Professionalism with dedication and distinction for over a decade," said Justice Robert R. Thomas, who serves as Supreme Court liaison to the Commission. "She has a demonstrated commitment to implementing the ideals that the Commission on Professionalism was created to promote and advance in the legal community: civility, ethics, increasing diversity and encouraging pro bono service. These qualities will make Judge Walker an excellent Chair of the Commission and steward of its important work."

Judge Walker, who succeeds Gordon B. Nash as chair of the Commission, has served as a member of the Commission on Professionalism since its inception in 2005 and was appointed by Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow as a member of the predecessor body, the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Civility. Elected to the bench in November 2008, Judge Walker currently sits in the Domestic Relations Division. She was previously a partner at the Chicago law firm of Clausen Miller, P.C., concentrating in defending professional liability matters.

Judge Walker obtained her juris doctor degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in 1987.

In addition to being a member of the Commission on Professionalism, Judge Walker also serves as a commissioner on the Illinois Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission. She is past president of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, and in October, 2012, was inducted as president of the Illinois Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the Illinois State Bar Association. She is the second female president in the organization's 61-year history.

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## **Supreme Court Names New Chair and Vice-Chair of Commission on Professionalism Add One**

“I am honored to be working with the very best of our profession serving the Court in this critical work,” Judge Walker said. “I am delighted to lead the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, and am grateful to the Court for the confidence it has placed in me. Working closely with our Commissioners and the Court, I look forward to continuing our efforts to promote professionalism, including with our statewide mentoring program.”

Gordon Nash, who served as Chair of the Commission on Professionalism from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2012, will remain a Commissioner through the expiration of his term on December 31, 2014. He worked closely with Judge Walker, who was Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee of the Commission for the past three years. “Deb has been an invaluable resource in providing good sound judgment to myself and the Commission over the past many years,” Mr. Nash said. “I have no doubt that she will be an outstanding Chair, using her considerable expertise to implement the goals of the Commission.”

The Supreme Court also appointed Third Judicial Circuit Judge Richard L. Tognarelli of Edwardsville as vice-chair of the Commission.

Judge Tognarelli also has served as a member of the Commission on Professionalism since its creation and also serves as a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Planning & Oversight Committee for the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program. He was appointed an Associate Judge in January 2002, and elected a Circuit Judge in November 2008. Currently he is Chief Judge of the Criminal Division and supervises Drug, Mental Health and Veteran’s Courts. Prior to his election as a Circuit Judge, he served in the Family, Traffic & Misdemeanor, and Civil Divisions.

Judge Tognarelli received his law degree from Saint Louis University in 1974. He was in private practice in the Collinsville area for 27 years before his appointment to the bench.

In addition to the elevation of Judge Walker and Judge Tognarelli to chair and vice-chair of the Commission, the Supreme Court appointed Springfield attorney William F. Moran, III as a member of the Commission on Professionalism. Mr. Moran is a partner at the firm of Stratton, Giganti, Stone, Moran & Radkey where he concentrates his practice in the areas of Administrative Law, including the representation of attorneys before the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission and other professionals before the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation.

Mr. Moran received his juris doctor degree in 1985 from Southern Illinois University School of Law.

The Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism was established in 2005 to promote among the lawyers and judges of Illinois the principles of integrity, professionalism and civility; to foster commitment to the elimination of bias and divisiveness within the legal and judicial systems; and to ensure that those systems provide equitable, effective and efficient resolution of problems and disputes for the people of Illinois.

To further these goals, the Commission collaborates with lawyers, law firms, bar associations, law schools and the judiciary throughout Illinois on a number of creative and ambitious initiatives.

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## **Supreme Court Names New Chair and Vice-Chair of Commission on Professionalism Add Two**

One such collaboration is the Commission's statewide Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program which it launched in late 2011.

This voluntary, structured, year-long program emphasizes the importance of professional conduct and provides an opportunity for experienced lawyers to provide professional guidance and to share practical knowledge and skills with new lawyers during the critical transition from law student to legal practitioner. Just over a year old, the program involves approximately 900 attorneys across Illinois as it continues to grow and has become a model for other states.

Additionally, the Commission collaborates with all Illinois law schools on professionalism programs for incoming first year law students, develops and approves continuing legal education courses on professionalism issues, promotes pro bono and diversity initiatives and works with judicial circuits to design and implement professionalism programs.

There are 15 Commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Supreme Court. In addition, the Director of the Minimum Continuing Legal Education Program and the Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission serve as *ex-officio* members of the Commission. The Commissioners serve without compensation for three-year terms. All funds expended by the Commission are from annual fees paid by Illinois attorneys with no tax dollars used to support the work of the Commission.

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**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323)**