



Supreme Court of Illinois

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This news release substitutes for the news release sent on October 28, 2014. It corrects the effective date of Judge McGraw's new chairmanship to January 1, 2015; includes background on outgoing Chair, Chief Judge Elizabeth Robb; and modifies certain quotations.

October 29, 2014

CHIEF JUDGE JOSEPH MCGRAW NEW CHAIR OF THE CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUDGES

The Illinois Supreme Court has announced that Chief Judge Joseph G. McGraw of the 17th Judicial Circuit has been named the new Chairman of the Conference of Chief Judges, effective January 1, 2015.

Judge McGraw will take over leadership from current Conference Chairman Chief Judge Elizabeth Robb of the 11th Judicial Circuit. He was chosen by his peers at a meeting of the Conference on October 24.

Judge Robb has served as Chief of the 11th Circuit which includes McLean, Ford, Livingston, Logan and Woodford counties. She has been a member of the Conference of Chief Judges since 2005. She was vice-chair of the group and became chair when former Chief Judge Gene Schwarm of the Fourth Judicial Circuit was appointed to the Illinois Appellate Court for the Fifth Judicial District in April 2014.

As Chief Judge in the 11th Circuit, she led the effort to bring cameras to the trial courtrooms in McLean County under the Supreme Court's pilot project for extended media coverage.

"To serve on the Conference for the past 10 years has been a wonderful opportunity for collegiality with your peers and to talk about the issues that are most important and will enhance the administration of justice in the Illinois courts," said Chief Judge Robb, who is retiring on December 31, 2014 after 22 years on the bench. "I am confident that Chief Judge McGraw will offer tremendous leadership to the Conference in the future."

Judge McGraw has served as the Conference's vice-chairman since April 2014 and has served as a member of the Conference since January 2012.

MORE

Chief Judge McGraw New Chairman of the Conference of Chief Judges Add One

The 17th Circuit consists of Boone and Winnebago counties in northern Illinois.

The elected chief judge from each judicial circuit serves as a member of the Conference of Chief Judges.

The Conference of Chief Judges was established by the authority of the Supreme Court. The Conference meets regularly, usually monthly, to discuss issues related to the administration of justice in the 24 circuit courts in Illinois. It also considers matters specifically referred to it by the Supreme Court. The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, under Director Michael J. Tardy, serves as secretary to the Conference.

"I especially want to thank Chief Judge Robb for her long and continued service to the Conference of Chief Judges as a member, vice chair and chair. Her service to the group has been exemplary," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Rita B. Garman, who also serves as Supreme Court liaison to the Conference. "Judge McGraw also has been very active and involved in the Conference. He has been among the first to volunteer in initiating new policies and programs and has provided great support to the Conference.

"He has done so with energy and I expect he will bring the same energy and leadership to the Conference of Chief Judges as its new chair."

Supreme Court Justice Robert R. Thomas, whose Second Judicial District includes the 17th Circuit, also had words of praise for Judge McGraw.

"He is a competent jurist and a man of integrity," said Justice Thomas. "He has consistently shown his administrative skills in leading the 17th Circuit to embrace several new programs over the years. He will be a fine leader for the chief judges of Illinois."

Judge McGraw currently serves as chairman of the Conference of Chief Judges' Committee on Extended Media Coverage, which has advised the Supreme Court on its continuing pilot project for cameras in Illinois trial courtrooms. He also was a presenter on the Supreme Court's Extended Media Coverage seminar at the 2014 Educational Conference. Chief Judge McGraw has diligently worked in his circuit in implementing the pilot project and the 17th Circuit has handled more media requests for camera coverage than any of the other 14 circuits that are participating in the pilot project.

A resident of Rockford, Chief Judge McGraw was born and raised in Kankakee, and graduated from Bishop McNamara High School in 1973, two years after Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride graduated from the same Catholic high school. Justice Kilbride represents the Third Judicial District, which includes Kankakee.

"He's an excellent choice to lead the chief judges of Illinois," Justice Kilbride said. "Judge McGraw has shown he is a natural leader through the innovations he has efficiently administered in the 17th Circuit, including leading the implementation of the Court's project on cameras in the courtroom.

"I'm sure he will bring the same initiative and leadership to the Conference of Chief Judges."

MORE

Chief Judge McGraw New Chairman of the Conference of Chief Judges Add Two

Chief Judge McGraw graduated from the University of Illinois with a B.A. degree in 1978. He received his *juris doctor* degree from Northern Illinois University College of Law in 1985. Judge McGraw was appointed as a Circuit Judge in 2002 and was elected in November of the same year. He had served as Presiding Judge in Boone County from 2002-2003, and has served as Presiding Judge of the Felony Division since 2004. Judge McGraw was elected to serve as Chief Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit in January 2012 and has held that position since.

"I am honored to have been chosen by my fellow chief judges from around the state as chairman of the Conference of Chief Judges," Chief Judge McGraw said. "I hope to continue the work of the Judicial Conference, with the Supreme Court, in advancing equal access to justice for all, and excellence and innovation in the circuit courts throughout the state."

Chief Judge McGraw is a regular instructor for the Illinois Appellate Prosecutor's Trial Advocacy Program, an active member of the Illinois Supreme Court Special Committees on Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) and Judicial Ethics, and a former faculty member of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Capital Litigation.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323 or Dawn Frison Cook, senior communications specialist to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870)