



Supreme Court of Illinois

December 23, 2015

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT APPOINTS MOLINE ATTORNEY AS CIRCUIT JUDGE IN THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Justice Thomas L. Kilbride and the Illinois Supreme Court have announced the appointment of Moline attorney Joseph F. Fackel as a Circuit Judge in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.

Mr. Fackel was appointed by the Court to fill the vacancy created by Circuit Judge F. Michael Meersman, who retired at close of business on November 30, 2015. His appointment takes effect January 4, 2016 and will terminate on December 5, 2016, when the position is filled by the 2016 General Election.

Justice Kilbride recommended Mr. Fackel's appointment to the Supreme Court after an extensive application, evaluation, and interview process that included the formation of a special judicial screening committee.

"It is an honor to complete my career as a judge in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit," Mr. Fackel said. "I thank Justice Kilbride and the Illinois Supreme Court."

Mr. Fackel will join the judiciary from Joseph F. Fackel Law Offices in Moline, where he engages in private practice. He handles general law matters, with an emphasis in personal injury, domestic relations, and commercial collections.

Prior to starting his own practice, Mr. Fackel worked as an associate at Bozeman, Neighbour, Patton & Noe and as an assistant state's attorney in Rock Island County. He also served as a Municipal Hearing Officer in Rock Island, Moline and East Moline.

Mr. Fackel received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business from Iowa State Teachers' College in 1960 and earned his *Juris Doctor* degree in 1963 from the University of Iowa College of Law. Following law school, Mr. Fackel graduated from Military Justice School at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and went on to work in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate and the CPT Advocate General's Corps in Ft. Bliss, Texas.

Under the Illinois Constitution, the Supreme Court has the authority to fill judicial vacancies. To fill this vacancy, Justice Kilbride opened an application process for everyone interested in the appointment. He also sought and received public comment about three applicants, including Mr. Fackel.

The evaluation process included background checks by law enforcement authorities and with the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, as well as a poll of attorneys in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit conducted by the Illinois State Bar Association. The attorneys were surveyed on their opinions of the applicants' integrity, temperament, legal ability, management skills, and other qualifications.

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Justice Kilbride also appointed an 11-person judicial screening committee made up of representatives from the community, including non-lawyers to evaluate all the applicants. The committee was chaired by Timothy Bertschy, attorney and managing partner at Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen in Peoria and former president of the Illinois State Bar Association.

"Our committee reviewed the qualifications of three candidates for this position," Chair Tim Bertschy said. "Mr. Fackel's background in particular offered many years of legal practice in varied areas of law, a knowledge of the local bar and judiciary, and prior experience in a quasi-judicial role as a hearing officer."

In addition to Mr. Bertschy, the members of the committee were: John Ames, attorney at Ames Law Offices in Orion; Chief Judge Walter Braud of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit; Darcy Callas, general counsel at Modern Woodmen of America in Rock Island; Joan Clark, retired program director for Rock Island–Moline Townships; U.S. District Judge Sara Darrow of the Central District of Illinois; Lawrence Lorensen, retired professor emeritus of government at Black Hawk College; Marcy O'Brien, detective at the Moline Police Department; Maureen Riggs, city attorney for the City of Moline; Scott Verschoore, business manager for IBEW Local Union #145; and Lester Weinstine, attorney with Law Offices of Lester S. Weinstine, P.C. in Morrison.

The Fourteenth Judicial Circuit includes Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Whiteside counties.

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