



# News Release

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FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge  
19th Judicial Circuit  
Lake County  
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

Date of Release: December 6, 2022  
Point of Contact: Kasey Dunn Morgan  
847-377-4500  
Telephone: 847-377-3818

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Waukegan, Illinois

## **RETENTION FOR THREE ELECTED CIRCUIT JUDGES AND OATHS OF OFFICE FOR TWO PREVIOUSLY APPOINTED CIRCUITS, THREE NEWLY ELECTED CIRCUITS, AND ONE APPELLATE COURT JUDGE**

On Monday, December 5, 2022, Chief Judge Mark L. Levitt welcomed both in-person and virtual guests, "This is very exciting for me, even though we cannot be present for Justice-elect Rochford's swearing-in with the Illinois Supreme Court this morning, we have Judge Kennedy moving on from the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit to the Illinois Appellate Court. And in addition to our retention Judges which are Judge Rossetti, Judge Ortiz, and me, we are welcoming new colleagues with Judge Ditton, Judge Joanem, and Judge Manak. And recognizing our colleagues who were appointed and are now affirmed by the voters, Judge Nerheim and Judge Mathews. Congratulation to everyone."

Retired Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Judge and recently retired Illinois Appellate Justice George Bridges administered Judge Christopher M. Kennedy's oath of office to the Illinois Appellate's 2nd District. Judge Kennedy was appointed to the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit as an associate judge on January 31, 2020. Before the Appellate election, Judge Kennedy served in branch court. Justice Bridges also administered oaths for elected and retained Circuit Judges Victoria A. Rossetti and Jorge L. Ortiz.

Deputy Chief Judge Daniel B. Shanes administered Chief Judge Mark L. Levitt's oath of office for retention before Chief Judge Levitt administered oaths for Illinois Supreme Court-appointed and voter affirmed Judges Reginald C. Mathews and Michael G. Nerheim, along with newly elected Judges Sharmila K. Manak, John L. Joanem, and R. Christopher Ditton.

Judge Sharmila K. Manak took her oath as Circuit Judge in the 3rd Sub-Circuit of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit. Judge Manak received her Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University in 1999 and her Doctor of Jurisprudence in 2002 from the John Marshall Law School. She previously served as a principal assistant public defender and a chief public defender for the Lake County Public Defender's Office and most recently as first assistant and chief deputy for the Lake County State's Attorney's Office.

Judge John L. Joanem took his oath as Circuit Judge in the 4th Sub-Circuit of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit. He filled the position previously held by Judge Diane E. Winter, who retired on January 21, 2022. Judge Joanem received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1988 and earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1991 from Pepperdine University School of Law. He previously served as a sole practitioner, a special public defender and a felony conflict public defender for the Lake County Public Defender's Office, and corporate counsel, city attorney and general counsel for the City of Waukegan.

Judge R. Christopher Ditton took his Oath as Circuit Judge in the 1st Sub-Circuit of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit. Judge Ditton received his Bachelor of Science degree from St. John's University in 1986 and his Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1991 from the John Marshall Law School. He previously

served as a sole practitioner, an Avon Township Trustee and Assessor, an attorney for Harter & Schottland, an attorney for the City of Chicago, of counsel with Mathai & Thorson, and an associate with Schiller, Ducanto & Fleck.

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