



## News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### CIRCUIT JUDGES ANNOUNCE RETIREMENT

Chief Judge Jorge L. Ortiz announced today that two circuit judges of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit have decided to retire from the bench and begin another chapter in their lives. Circuit Judge John T. Phillips, who just completed his second term as Chief Judge on January 3, 2016, and Circuit Judge George Bridges will both retire effective January 25<sup>th</sup> with each having served the County of Lake for over twenty years.

"I have heard from several of our revered retired judges that you will know when it's time to go, and they were indeed correct. That time has come," said John Phillips, in an email that was sent to other judges and associates on New Year's Eve.

Judge George Bridges waited until Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, at a circuit judges meeting to make his announcement that he, too, would be joining his good friend and colleague, John Phillips, and leave on January 25, 2016. Judge Bridges said, "I have been so proud to serve as a judge in this county. After almost 21 years on the bench, I know that now I am called to do other things."

"Both judges have been outstanding jurists and will be sorely missed," said new Chief Judge Jorge Ortiz. "Their knowledge, wisdom, trial expertise, and management skills will be difficult to replace. I thank them for their many years of service and I wish them well."

John Phillips is a 1969 graduate of Coe College and graduated from the University of Iowa School of Law with distinction in 1972. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a Judge Advocate before entering into the private practice of law in Grayslake where he became a partner in the firm of Churchill, Baumgartner and Phillips Ltd. Appointed as an associate judge in 1993, he served in that role until 2006 when he was elected Circuit Judge. He has served in every division of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, but is best known for presiding over the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit's treatment courts from 2005 until 2014, which include Drug Court, Mental Health Court and Veterans Court. He was an inaugural member and continues to serve on the Special Supreme Court Advisory Committee for Justice and Mental Health Planning of the Illinois Supreme Court. Judge Phillips was elected Chief Judge from January 6, 2014 to January 4, 2015 and re-elected as Chief Judge to serve from January 5, 2015 to January 3, 2016.

His plans in the near future include some international traveling and spending more time with his family.

Judge George Bridges has been on the bench since March 1995. He earned a B.A. degree with honors in 1982 from National Lewis University in Evanston and received his Juris Doctor in 1987 from Chicago-Kent College of Law. In 1988 he accepted the position as Police Chief of the City of Waukegan where he served from 1988-1990 and again from 1993 until his appointment as associate judge in 1995. In 2006, the Justices of the Illinois Supreme Court appointed Judge George Bridges to the position of Circuit Court Judge, and in 2014 he was elected Circuit Judge. Between time spent in law enforcement and his appointment to the bench, he worked as an assistant state's attorney for Lake County. Judge Bridges has taught as an Adjunct Instructor for both the Columbia College of Missouri and the College of Lake County. Judge Bridges is currently the Co-Chair of the Illinois Supreme Court Seminar Series Committee and a member of the Supreme Court Committee on Education. Judge Bridges has heard all types of cases; however, he has spent most of his time assigned in the criminal division handling felony cases.

Judge Bridges plans to remain involved in the community, spend time with his wife, grandchildren and, most importantly, with his Lord.

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