

FROM THE DESK OF: CHIEF JUDGE JAY W. UKENA

Last update: June 27, 2018

My term as Chief Judge of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit began on January 2, 2018. I am humbled to have been elected by my fellow circuit judges to serve as chief judge. I will strive to follow the excellent example set by my predecessors, Judge Jorge L. Ortiz, Judge John T. Phillips, Judge Fred L. Foreman, Judge Victoria A. Rossetti and Judge James K. Booras, who were the chief judges that I have served under. I will be working with the County Board to continue to build a good relationship, so we can partner together to make both Lake County government and the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit even stronger.

In Lake County, changes are taking place. At the end of 2017, three outstanding judges retired. The Honorable, Margaret J. Mullen, The Honorable Nancy Schuster Waites and The Honorable Brian P. Hughes. I thank them for their service to the citizens of Lake County and wish them well in the next chapter of their lives. Since then, we have added 4 new judges to the Lake County's Judiciary from a list of truly exceptional candidates, which will infuse new blood, talent and a fresh perspective that will allow us to keep the fighting Nineteenth the best in the state. The following changes have also occurred, Judge Diane E. Winter has taken the role of the new Deputy Chief Judge. Judge Charles W. Smith is the new Presiding Judge of the Family Division and Judge Victoria A. Rossetti is the Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division. All other presiding judges remain in place and they are... Judge Thomas M. Schippers, Presiding Judge of the Civil Division, Judge Daniel B. Shanes, Presiding Judge of Felony, Judge Mark L. Levitt, Presiding Judge of Misdemeanor/Traffic, Judge Valerie Cekowski, Supervising Judge of Juvenile and Judge Christopher R. Stride, Supervising Judge of Specialty Courts. I'm look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to keep the 19th Circuit the strongest circuit in Illinois and to continue to serve the citizens of Lake County.

Construction of the Criminal Court Tower is anticipated to be completed before the end of the summer. We look forward to implementing technology upgrades in our court while also continuing initiatives to improve access to justice. I invite you to view our Report of the Judiciary to learn about the continuing changes taking place in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit.