



Supreme Court of Illinois

Joseph R. Tybor
Director of Communications

222 North LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone (312) 793-2323
Mobile (312) 636-0479
Fax (312) 793-0871

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ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT FILLS TWO COOK COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT VACANCIES

The Illinois Supreme Court and Justice Mary Jane Theis announced Tuesday the appointment of attorneys Andrea M. Buford and Pamela McLean Meyerson as Cook County Circuit Judges.

Ms. Buford was appointed by the Court to fill the at-large vacancy created by the retirement of Pamela E. H. Veal. The appointment is effective May 17, 2013 and will terminate December 1, 2014, when the position is filled by the 2014 General Election.

In a separate order, the Supreme Court appointed Ms. Meyerson to fill the 11th sub-circuit vacancy created by the retirement of Susan McDunn. The appointment is effective June 7, 2013 and will terminate December 1, 2014, when the position is filled by the 2014 General Election.

Justice Theis recommended the appointments to the Supreme Court and used a bipartisan screening committee to assist her. Both candidates also received a recommended or higher rating by the Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening.

Justice Theis' judicial screening committee, announced on February 15, is made up of 13 lawyers and one non-lawyer. The committee is co-chaired by retired U.S. District Court Judge Wayne R. Andersen and retired Illinois Appellate Court Justice Michael J. Gallagher.

"Each of the two new judges will bring to that office, fidelity to the law, intelligence and, perhaps most importantly, considerable experience and empathy regarding the difficult circumstances of life that judges resolve every day," Judge Andersen said.

"The two successful candidates went through an extensive vetting process as proposed by Justice Theis," Judge Gallagher said. "We are confident that Ms. Buford and Ms. Meyerson will take their judicial responsibilities very seriously and will live up to the trust placed in them by Justice Theis, the Supreme Court, the Committee and ultimately by the citizens of Cook County."

Ms. Buford received *her juris doctor* degree from IIT-Chicago Kent College of Law in 1986. She has worked as managing member of Buford Law Office LLC since 2001. Prior to that, she was a named partner at the law firm of Buford Peters Ware & Zanzitis. She also worked as partner with the law firm of Jones Ware & Grenard. Throughout her legal career, she has represented Fortune 500 companies, insurance companies and municipalities in tort, commercial and employment law litigation.

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Ms. Buford has also served as a commissioner for the Illinois Court of Claims since 2007. While there, she has presided over many cases ranging from a multi-million dollar breach of fiduciary duty claim to a wrongful death claim.

Since 2009, Ms. Buford has served as a hearing officer for the Illinois State Board of Education. She has also served as an arbitrator for the Cook County Circuit Court and as a hearing officer for the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Ms. Buford has served as president of the Cook County Bar Association Foundation since 2008. She is also a member of the Cook County Bar Association, having served as its president in 1998.

The Cook County Bar Association Foundation serves Cook County citizens and provides legal services to the public. The Foundation has developed programs for those in need of legal assistance including its legal clinic, an annual community expo, mentoring and advocacy programs and offering scholarships to deserving law school students.

"I am deeply humbled by the confidence placed in me by Justice Theis and the Illinois Supreme Court," Ms. Buford said. "I pledge to earn the respect of the Court, lawyers and the public. Anyone appearing before me will leave knowing they received due process and the decision was reached fairly, impartially, and according to the laws of the State of Illinois."

Ms. Meyerson received her *juris doctor* degree from the University of Chicago Law School in 1983, having graduated in the top third of her class. After graduation, Ms. Meyerson worked for two years as an associate with the firm of Antonow & Fink, concentrating in commercial litigation. She also worked as an associate with the firm of Goldberg Kohn Ltd., for four years.

Since 1989, Ms. Meyerson has been a solo practitioner at the Law Office of Pamela McLean Meyerson in Oak Park. She concentrates her practice in civil litigation, business organization and election law. She has also handled cases involving breach of contract, shareholder relations, construction issues, real estate disputes, consumer fraud, fair housing and employment.

Ms. Meyerson is an arbitrator with the Cook County Mandatory Arbitration Program. Over the years she has heard hundreds of cases, often controlling the proceedings and ruling on objections as chair of the panel.

Since 2000, Ms. Meyerson has helped teach the Intensive Trial Practice Work at the University of Chicago's Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. The fall workshop uses practicing attorneys to give demonstrations, critique and advise students preparing cases for mock trial.

Throughout her legal career, Ms. Meyerson has done pro bono work. More recently, she has helped with criminal record expungement, foreclosure mediations and assisting *pro se* litigants in Cook County's Fourth Municipal District.

"I'm honored by the Supreme Court justices' confidence in me." Ms. Meyerson said. "I'm committed to showing that their confidence has been well-placed--by being a thoughtful, hard-working, fair and consistent judge."

Under the Illinois Constitution, the Supreme Court fills judicial vacancies by interim appointment until the next election. Traditionally, the three justices from the First Judicial District in Cook County rotate

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in recommending a candidate to the Court for the appointment.

The members of Justice Theis' committee are: the Hon. Wayne R. Andersen (ret.); the Hon. Michael J. Gallagher (ret.); the Hon. David H. Coar (ret.); Alison C. Conlon; Mary A. Dempsey; Jean M. Golden; Denise Kane; Elizabeth A. Kaveny; Michael D. Monico; Michael I Rothstein; Sr. Catherine M. Ryan; Francine Soliunas; Richard Waris; and Mark E. Wojcik.

The Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screenings is comprised of bar groups working collaboratively to improve the process of screening judicial candidates in Cook County. The participating bar groups are: the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Chicago Area; Black Women's Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago; Chicago Council of Lawyers; Cook County Bar Association; Decalogue Society of Lawyers; Hellenic Bar Association; Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois; Illinois State Bar Association; Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago; Puerto Rican Bar Association of Illinois and the Women's Bar Association of Illinois.

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**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, Director of Communications to the
Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323)**