

# IVI-IPO COOK COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT QUESTIONNAIRE – Page 1

DATE **January 12, 2004**

CANDIDATE FOR **Judge of the Circuit Court, 15<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit , The Honorable Joanne L. Lanigan vacancy**  
VACANCY **Joanne L. Lanigan**  
PARTY **Democrat**

NAME **Anna Helen Demacopoulos**

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER **Andreas Kosmas**

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED **1100**

NUMBER REQUIRED **500**

Elective or appointive public and/or party offices previously held including dates. **None**

Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

**Judge of the Circuit Court, 15<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit, A Vacancy, March 2002**

Principal business, educational, professional and civic activities of the past ten years.

**Assistant State's Attorney, Cook County State's Attorney's Office**  
**Adjunct Professor of Law, The John Marshall Law School,**  
**Consultant, United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistants**  
**Board Member, Hellenic Bar Association**  
**Legal Advisor, Hellenic American Police Association**  
**Past President, Association of Threat Assessment Professionals**

What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

**Please see attached resume**

Please detail your prior political activity, if any. Give positions held, dates, organizational memberships, role you played in political campaigns.

**Over the past several years I have been involved with political campaigns of friends who have run for judge. In March 2002 I also ran for Judge of the Circuit Court. At that time I was actively involved with Gubernatorial race in both the primary and general election of 2002. Since November of 2001 I have been a member of the Palos Township, Orland Township, Rich Township and Bremen township Regular Democratic Organization.**

As concisely as possible, state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally?

**It is important that our judiciary possess the necessary knowledge, integrity, and compassion to effectively administer justice in our court system. I believe that my distinguished background and accomplishments as an Assistant State's Attorney for 18 years, my commitment to educating and training young lawyers on trial techniques and ethics as a law professor, and my tireless effort in creating innovative programs that positively effect the criminal justice system makes me the most qualified candidate in this race, deserving of this organization's endorsement.**

**As an Assistant State's Attorney for over 18 years I have tried more that 55 jury trials and hundreds of bench trials. My cases have included the litigation in capital murder, insanity defenses, DNA profiling, and media sensitive issues. I take great pride in my reputation among prosecutors and defense attorneys as that of an exceptional trial lawyer and a prosecutor who has the courage to make the right decisions. For the last eleven years as a supervisor I have implemented programs that impact not only the criminal justice system but our communities as well.**

**The most recent reconstruction of the State of Illinois Capital Punishment system is a prime example why our judiciary must be comprised of competent, compassionate and experienced individuals. The Illinois Supreme Court and our State legislature have passed reforms in an effort to lead to a more reliable system. One such reform is the creation of the Capital Litigation Trial Bar which requires that both prosecutors and defense attorneys must be certified as Co-counsel of Lead-Counsel before they can litigate a potential capital case. I am on the only candidate on the ballot for the 15<sup>th</sup> Judicial subcircuit that is certified as Lead-Counsel of the Capital Litigation Trial Bar. Each of the other four candidates is not even certified as Co-Counsel.**

**My extensive teaching experience also demonstrates my desire to ensure that young lawyers are trained properly both in trial techniques and ethics.**

**One of my most important goals as a judge is to continue to seek out great mentors, and to be a role model for young lawyers. Mentoring has always been a way of life for me. I have appeared before some of the finest jurist in our county, and have learned a great deal about fairly administering justice. I have also personally witnessed the personal devastation of litigants when decisions are made due to ignorance of the law or a disregard for the pursuit of the truth.**

**On the day I was sworn in as a lawyer, my father said to me, "it is better to loose your eye than it is your good name.....you will be respected, by treating people with respect."**

**I take great pride in my reputation as a lawyer and will do the same if as a member of our judiciary.**

Please state any evaluation ratings you have ever received for any judicial office by any bar association. List the office and the date of the election for which the evaluation was made. Please use the following format:

Date	Position	Bar Association	Rating
<b>Spring 1999</b>	<b>Associate Judge</b>	<b>Asian American Bar Association</b>	<b>Qualified</b>
		<b>Black Women’s Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Chicago Bar Association</b>	<b>Qualified</b>
		<b>Chicago Council of Lawyers</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Cook County Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Illinois State Bar Association</b>	<b>Well Qualified</b>
		<b>Lesbian and Gay Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Women’s Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
<b>Spring 2002</b>	<b>Full Circuit Court 15<sup>th</sup> Subcircuit, Associate Judge</b>	<b>Asian American Bar Association</b>	<b>Qualified</b>
		<b>Black Women’s Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Chicago Bar Association</b>	<b>Qualified</b>
		<b>Chicago Council of Lawyers</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Cook County Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Illinois State Bar Association</b>	<b>Qualified</b>
		<b>Lesbian and Gay Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Women’s Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Decalogue Society</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Hispanic Lawyers</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
		<b>Puerto Rican Bar Association</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

## **IVI-IPO COOK COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT QUESTIONNAIRE – Page 1**

1. What do you believe are the major strengths and weaknesses of the Circuit Court? Would you change the manner in which the Circuit Court functions?

**The Cook County Circuit Court system is one of the largest criminal and civil justice systems in the world. Multiple agencies, such as Social Services, Adult probation, mediation, and arbitration are involved in the effective daily administration of justice. In an effort to be responsive to many of the litigants, these agencies employ members of the communities that they will serve. They are trained on issues such as cultural and social-economical difference. They employ bilingual employees or use interpreters in order to overcome language barriers. One of the strengths of the Circuit Court of Cook County is the diversity among the committed public servants who attempt to make our system accessible for every litigant on a daily basis.**

**Conversely, I believe that the lack of diversity among the judiciary is the Circuit Courts biggest weakness. Although the county has been divided into subcircuits in an effort to make the judiciary more diverse, it has failed miserably. It is important that the judiciary reflect the makeup of the community both racially and ethnically in order for the litigants to have confidence that the judiciary will be sensitive to their issues. Currently, I do not believe the make up of our judiciary is reflective of the community.**

2. How should the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court be chosen?

**I believe the current system in place for selecting the chief judge is appropriate. The unique qualifications for serving as Chief Judge can best be judged by the sitting judiciary. The general public would not have the experience or insight to know the unique qualifications necessary to serve as Chief Judge.**

3. How should judges be assigned to various divisions of the Court? If you are elected, to what division would you like to be assigned and why?

**I believe that the Presiding Judges of each division should be responsible for the assignments within their division. Each of us comes to a profession with unique experiences and some jobs are more suitable to our experiences than others. The judiciary is no different. This is a management issue best resolved by the Presiding Judges of the various divisions. I believe they should look at the judge's prior specialized practice of law as well as their personal background. What is important however is that we recognize that no one division of the Circuit Court is less important than any other. The litigants that appear are deserving of a competent judiciary in every division.**

4. What is your position on how judges are selected and/or elected? Please explain.

**The citizens of Cook County deserve a competent and impartial judiciary, free of the influence of local politicians. The current bipartisan electoral process is not working. Our court rooms are filled with incompetent judges who were elected based on strong political support and not qualifications. I would support a bifurcated merit/election system to replace the election of state judges.**

**I would support a system that would 1) amend the Illinois Constitution to establish a minimum experience requirement; 2) mandate screening by the various bar groups; 3) create a nominating committee; and 4) election by the citizens.**

**History shows that inexperienced judges make poor decisions. Therefore, amending the Illinois Constitution to require a minimum of 10 years experience is pivotal in attaining our goal of a competent judiciary.**

**Although the current evaluation process by the various bar groups has room for improvement, their actions are well intentioned. This process gives qualified talented candidates an opportunity to be recognized, while weeding out those who lack the qualifications and credentials. The various bar ratings would then be turned over to the independent nominating committee.**

**The independent nominating committee shall be comprised of full circuit judges, lawyers, and citizens. This committee would then evaluate each candidate who has submitted an application for candidacy. The committee would rely on an interview, independent investigation and the evaluation of the various bar groups. The committee would then issue a rating of “qualified” or “unqualified”. Those candidates who receive a qualified rating would be eligible to run for election. This process creates a pool of qualified candidates to elect.**

**Prior to my decision to run for judge in March 2002, I was adamant about a strict merit system selection process. After meeting many of the people in my sub-circuit however, my opinion has changed. It is clear to me that most people want to be educated about the credentials of judicial candidates but have never been given the opportunity. I think it is important that the voting public be given the opportunity to meet the candidates. I think it is equally important, however, that judicial elections be non-partisan. The mere appearance that a political party “controls” or has “access” to a judicial candidate undermines the impartiality of judges. Judicial ballots should not designate a political party affiliation.**

**This bifurcated system would ensure the voting public an educated choice of qualified candidates who are free of political pressure. With these procedures in place, there is a greater potential for a competent and impartial judiciary.**

5. As a circuit court judge, how would you balance any moral or ethical/philosophical disagreements that you may have with any existing statutes or legal precedents?

**A member of the judiciary must always make their decisions be based on the law and facts as they are presented in each case. It requires that they be impartial and not be influenced by bias, prejudices, or popular beliefs. It requires us to follow the law written by our Legislators and as reviewed by the Appellate courts. We are all human however, and developing good judgment comes with experience. Our personal decisions are based on individual moral and ethical standards. It defines who we are and by what standards we live. I believe that I can make decisions as a member of the judiciary independent of my personal, moral, and ethical beliefs. If I believe I cannot, I would recuse myself from the matter.**

6. If a sitting judge were indicted, should the judge remain on the bench, resign or take a leave of absence? Please explain.

**It is important that the general public have confidence in the integrity of our judiciary. We must also be mindful however that our criminal justice system is based on the premise that all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Respecting that cornerstone of our system we should not treat a judge who is a defendant any differently. I believe it would be appropriate to remove the judge from his/her judiciary duties until the resolution of the criminal matter.**

7. What are your views concerning mandatory sentencing for criminal offenses?

**It is the responsibility of the state legislators to enact the laws and the judiciary to follow them. If mandatory sentencing is reflective of the mandate of the people, then the judiciary must respect that. I believe that sentencing guidelines having a minimum and maximum allowing a judge to consider aggravating and mitigating factors allows for the possibility of rehabilitation as well as punishment.**

8. What are your views concerning treating minor adults for criminal offenses?

**Having worked in the adult criminal justice system for 18 years it is clear to me that punishment is just one way of altering behavior. Unfortunately our community is in a crisis with the increase of youth violence. National studies have shown that exposing youth to acceptable public behavior with positive reinforcement is more behavior altering than punishment. This philosophy however is very costly to our tax payers. Therefore I believe that if every attempt to alter a minor's criminal behavior has failed, punishment is the only alternative.**

9. What do you consider the important aspects of a judge's decision in handling a petition by a minor for a waiver of parental notice with the intent to have an abortion?

**As in any decision a judge must consider certain factors. I believe that the following factors should be considered.**

- 1. The circumstances under which the minor was impregnated.**
- 2. Who the alleged father is.**
- 3. The status of the minor as a ward of the state or with her parents.**
- 4. The physical condition of the minor**
- 5. The mental condition of the minor.**
- 6. The testimony of a treating physician of the minor**