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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Waukegan, Illinois

## LAKE COUNTY COURTS CONTINUE TO LEAD IN FAMILY COURTS

Already a leader in courts across Illinois, the Lake County Circuit Court is making two new changes to better meet the changing needs of our community.

First, in appropriate cases where counsel represents both parties and the parties have agreed to the terms of their divorce settlement, the court may accept agreed-upon affidavits to “prove-up” or settle divorce cases. “Using affidavits eliminates the need for people going through a divorce to come to court and testify in person about what they have already agreed to, allowing them to instead spend their valuable time at work, taking care of their families, and moving on with their lives,” said Chief Judge Daniel B. Shanes. Notably, the court can still require that the settlement be presented in court with witnesses when either a party or the judge requests to do so.

In addition, recognizing the increasing number of family law and divorce cases involving individuals without legal representation, Chief Judge Shanes is pleased to announce the coming assignment of a second judge designated for those cases.

“The need has been compelling, with over 50% of all divorce and family cases having at least one party representing themselves and approximately one-third of both sides representing themselves. Providing access to justice to all parties in the Court preserves trust in our legal system. Equal access to the courts for Self-Represented Litigants is an issue of growing significance, and the fair administration of justice requires the Court to be accessible,” said Chief Judge Shanes. Judge Randie Bruno will spearhead this new docket, joining Judge Veronica O’Malley in focusing on family law cases involving individuals who do not have legal representation.

“Our courts in Lake County continue to innovate to meet the needs of our community. We continue to monitor the data to ensure the appropriate resources are the most appropriately and beneficially allocated,” said Chief Judge Shanes.

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