



News Release

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

JUDGE VALERIE BOETTLE CECKOWSKI ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Circuit Judge Valerie Boettle Ceckowski announced that she is retiring from the bench on January 29, 2021, after 24 years of service. “The majority of my career, both as a lawyer and a Judge, has centered around Juvenile Court. I believe this is the most important job in our judicial system. I am so lucky to have had the opportunity to work with judges, lawyers, probation officers, caseworkers, and staff dedicated to making a difference in the lives of our children and families in Lake County,” said Judge Boettle Ceckowski, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division.

Judge Boettle Ceckowski received a Bachelor of Science from Southern Illinois University in 1980 and earned her Juris Doctor from Southern Illinois University School of Law in 1983; she was then admitted to practice law in the State of Illinois. Judge Boettle Ceckowski began her career as a Lake County Assistant Public Defender. In 1989, she left that office to become a partner in private practice where she engaged in general law until her appointment to the bench as an Associate Judge on February 3, 1997.

On February 15, 2007, Judge Boettle Ceckowski was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court as a Circuit Judge for the Second Subcircuit of Nineteenth Judicial Circuit. She then retained her position after being nominated in the March 2008 primary and elected in the November 2008 general election.

“Judge Boettle Ceckowski has been an outstanding jurist and will be sorely missed. Her service has assisted and guided our Circuit and the people of Lake County. Her firm yet kind and understanding demeanor and knowledge of the law made her a well-respected judge to the public, attorneys, and her peers. Judge Boettle Ceckowski served in traffic court, criminal misdemeanor, DUI, felony, and was the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division. She has made a profound impact on countless lives and families in Lake County. We wish her the best in her retirement,” said Chief Judge Diane E. Winter.

MICHAEL G. NERHEIM APPOINTED CIRCUIT JUDGE

“I am pleased to announce that the Illinois Supreme Court has appointed Michael G. Nerheim as a Circuit Judge of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit,” said Chief Judge Diane E. Winter. “Mr. Nerheim is an excellent selection and possesses outstanding qualities of experience, fairness, and is highly respected in the legal community. He has had an illustrious career both in private practice and serving as the Lake County State’s Attorney for past eight years,” said Chief Judge Diane E. Winter.

Mr. Nerheim will fill the position presently held by the Honorable Valerie Boettle Ceckowski who will retire from office as Circuit Judge, Second Subcircuit, effective January 29, 2021. The Supreme Court appointment is effective February 1, 2021, until December 5, 2022. To maintain his position as Circuit Judge after December 5, 2022, Mr. Nerheim will have to be nominated in the March 2022 primary and elected in the November 2022 general election.

“I would like to thank Justice Michael Burke and all of the members of the Illinois Supreme Court for placing their faith and confidence in me. I am truly honored and looking forward to serving the people of Lake County again in this new role. Judge Boettle Ceckowski has set the bar for how to serve with honor and compassion. I am humbled to follow her and wish her all the best in her retirement,” said Mr. Nerheim.

Mr. Nerheim earned his Bachelor of Science in criminal justice and psychology from Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota, and his Juris Doctor, Cum Laude from the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. He began his legal career in 1999 as a Lake County Assistant State’s Attorney and eventually went into private practice. With his experience and perspective on both sides of the law, Mr. Nerheim has more than 20 years of practice, including complex prosecution, civil litigation, criminal defense, and municipal law. In 2014 and 2018, Mr. Nerheim was awarded State’s Attorney of the Year by the Illinois State Crime Commission. As a life-long Lake County resident, he is deeply involved in the community.

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