

Hon. CLARE E. MCWILLIAMS (Ret.)
CLARE@JUDGEMCWILLIAMS.COM



Judge – Circuit Court of Cook County

- 2013-July 2023 Supervising Judge Cook County **Asbestos Docket**; managing and organizing a large volume (expedited) toxic tort calendar; presiding over motions, pre-trial and settlement conferences; post judgment matters, and jury trials pertaining to mesothelioma, lung cancer, asbestosis and asbestos related talc litigation.
- 2007-Present Law Division - Jury Section; presiding over 100+ jury trials in the personal injury tort division, including medical negligence actions, trucking and automobile cases; large scale construction and other catastrophic injury cases. Presided over commercial calendar litigation including contract, insurance and legal malpractice cases, motions and jury trials.
- 2004-2007 Municipal District One & Two – civil and criminal cases including forcible entry and detainer, personal injury, contract, traffic, collection.

Partner – Law Offices of Belz & McWilliams

- 1988-2004 General litigation practice, including personal injury, criminal, probate, domestic relations, commercial, contract and chancery law.

Education

University of Illinois-Chicago Law School, *Juris Doctorate* 1988
Eastern Illinois University, *Bachelor of Arts*, Criminal Justice and Sociology 1983

Publications & Seminars

Panelist, CBA in Ireland, Irish and US Law, A Discussion with Bench and Bar, 2023;

Panelist, “Ethics and Perspectives from the Bench” **Perrin National Asbestos Conference**, 2023;

Panelist, “The Anatomy of a Trucking Case,” **ISBA Tort Law Section**, 2022;

Speaker, “Now & Later: Trial Court Strategy for Appeals,” **CBA Trial Practice Committee**, 2021; **American College of Trial Lawyers/Chicago Bar Association**, 2022;

Speaker, “Medical Negligence: Hot Topic Issues for Your Next Trial,” **ISBA CLE seminar**, 2021;

Panelist, “Judicial Perspective,” The Anatomy of a Trucking Case, **ISBA Tort Law Section**, 2021;

Panelist, “COVID 19 & The Judicial Perspective” **Perrin National Asbestos Conference**, 2021

Speaker, “Jury Selection – Advanced Topics,” **State of Illinois Judicial Education Conference**, 2020;

Panelist, “A View from the Bench,” National Attorneys General Training & Research Institute, **NAGTRI Academy**, 2020;

Panelist, “Pre–Trial Negotiations and Closing Arguments,” Trial & Practice Tips Seminar, **Illinois Trial Lawyers Association**, 2020;

Panelist, Trial Practice & Tips Judicial Panel, **Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Women’s Caucus**, 2020;

Speaker, “Wellness in the Legal Profession” Webinar, **Perrin National Asbestos Conferences**, 2020

Panelist, “Virtual Jury Trials,” 11th Annual Symposium with the Judges, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2020;

Speaker, “Decisions Made by the Plaintiff and Defense Lawyers in Trucking Cases: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” How to Win Trucking Cases 2019, **360 Advocacy Las Vegas Conference**, 2019;

Speaker, “Your Future, Your Choice,” **Diversity Scholarship Foundation/Illinois Judges Association**, 2019;

Speaker, “Judicial Perspective,” Trial & Practice Tips Seminar, **Illinois Trial Lawyers Association**, 2019;

Speaker “Ethics & Civility in the Courtroom,” **Perrin National Asbestos Conference**, 2019;

Speaker, “The Good, Bad and Ugly – Professionalism & Ethics In and Out of Court,” **Perrin Conferences** webinar, 2019;

Panelist, “The Judges Speak: Civil Court Litigation Do’s and Don’ts,” National Business Institute seminar, 2018;

Panelist, “Jurisdictional Update: Illinois, Missouri & Pennsylvania,” Cutting–Edge Issues in Asbestos Litigation, **Perrin National Asbestos Conferences**, 2018;

Panelist, “The Case for Civility,” 24th Annual National Institute on Aviation Litigation, **American Bar Association**, 2018;

Panelist, “Civil Evidence Foundations in Social Media,” **Illinois Judicial Education Conference**, 2018;

Speaker, “Anatomy of a Medical Malpractice Trial,” **CBA Young Lawyers Section**, 2018;

Speaker, “The Case for Civility,” **CBA CLE seminar**, 2018;

Panelist, “Trial Presentation,” 9th Annual Symposium with the Judges, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2018;

Presenter, “Judicial Perspective: What’s Effective in the Courtroom,” ISBA Wrongful Death, Survival, and **Catastrophic Injury Cases program**, 2017;

Panelist, **Chicago Bar Association in London**, UK Law versus US Law, a Discussion, 2017;

Panelist, “From the Bench: A Judicial Roundtable Discussion on Mass Toxic Tort Litigation,” **Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel Annual Spring Symposium**, 2017;

Program coordinator and participant, “View from the Bench,” ISBA “**Anatomy of a Medical Negligence Trial**” **MCLE seminar**, 2017;

Panelist, “Asbestos Litigation – A National Overview & Outlook, Judicial Roundtable” **Perrin National Asbestos Conferences**, 2017;

Participant, “Perspective from the Bench – What Plaintiffs Lawyers Miss,” **Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Education Fund**, 2017;

Participant, “Motion Practice in the Law Division,” **CBA CLE program**, 2016;

Participant, “Judicial Perspective,” **Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Education Fund MCLE Damages Seminar**, 2016;

Participant, “Case Management Challenges,” 7th Annual Symposium with the Judges, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2016;

Speaker, “Motions In Limine, Motions for Directed Verdict and Post-Trial Motions,” Motion Practice in Cook County Circuit Court’s Law Division, **CBA CLE seminar**, 2015;

Panelist, “Words from the Bench: Recurring Issues in the Courtroom,” **Defense Research Institute**, Toxic Torts & Environmental Law seminar, 2015;

Speaker, “The Case for Civility,” CBA CLE seminar, 2015;

Panelist, “Meeting Judicial Expectations,” Annual Symposium with the Judges, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2014;

Speaker, Pincus Professional Education, Circuit Court Boot Camp, 2012, 2013;

Participant, Comparative Trial Advocacy Program, John Marshall Law School, 2012;

Panelist, “Social Media, Ethics and You: #ugottaluvit,” Illinois Judges Association 41st Annual Convention, 2012; Panelist, “What Civil Court Judges Want You to Know,” **National Business Institute judicial forum and seminar**, 2013;

Panelist, “Presenting Your Case,” Annual Symposium with the Judges, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2013;

Panelist, “As Judges See It: Top Mistakes Attorneys Make in Civil Litigation,” **National Business Institute Judicial Forum**, 2012;

Speaker, “Motions in Limine, Jury Selection and Other Trial Tips,” Strategies for Success at Trial, **CBA CLE**, 2011; Panelist, “The Benefits & Risks of Post-Trial Juror Interviews,” Juror Deliberation & Jury Management Conference, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2011; Speaker, “Medical Bills, Records and Authentication,” **ISBA Allerton Conference**, 2011; co-chair and presenter, “Bringing the Courtroom to the Classroom,” **Illinois Judges Association**, June 2011–present;

Faculty/participant, “The Impact of Social Media: Who’s Really My Jury?” Judges Symposium: Advice from the Bench, **Law Bulletin Seminars**, 2011;

Speaker, “Motion Practice in the Law Division,” **CBA**, 2010;

Speaker, “Plaintiff’s Testimony on Direct Examination” and “Cross Examination of the Plaintiff,” Anatomy of a Trial, **ISBA Tort Law Section program**, 2010;

Panelist, “Starting Your Own Practice,” **John Marshall Law School and the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism**, 2010;

Speaker, “Motions in Limine/Post Judgment Motions,” **CBA CLE**, 2009;

Speaker, “Technology & the Law,” **National Business Institute CLE program**, 2009;

Panelist, **Development of the Law of Ireland**, John Marshall Law School, 2009;

Presenter, “Seven Reasons to Leave the Party,” **IJA drug and alcohol abuse program**, 2009–2019;

Author, “I Strike, You Strike, We All Strike When We Back-Strike,” **CBA Record**, June 2011;

Author, “High-low, high-low, it’s off to court we go! The basics of high-low agreements,” **ISBA Tort Trends**, May 2019; Re-published **NYU School of Law - Civil Jury Project.**;

Author, “Elections in Cuba” **CBA Record**, 2011;

Awards

2023 Libertatum Award, **Illinois Judges Association**

2022 Celt of the Year, **Celtic Legal Society**, Chicago, IL

2019, Judicial Service Award, **Northwest Suburban Bar Association**

2018, Mary Heftel Hooton Award, **Women’s Bar Association of Illinois**

2017, Hall of Distinction, **John Marshall Law School**

2015, Judge of the Year, **American Board of Trial Advocates Illinois Chapter**

2012, Presidential Service Award, **Illinois Judges Association**

Organizations

Chicago Bar Association: Chair Civil Trial Practice Committee, 2021-Present; Board of Managers, 2020-2022; Chicago Bar Association Nominating Committee, 2023;

Women’s Bar Association of Illinois; Northwest Suburban Bar Association;

Illinois State Bar Association, Civil Tort Committee 2018-2023;

Illinois Judges Association: member, Board of Directors, Chair, In-School Programs Committee (2010-2012)(2017–18), Creator, “Your Future, Your Choice” program for High School Students

Teaching

Judicial College Faculty member, appointed by Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Education for Biannual Illinois Judicial College Conferences, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022

Faculty Advisor, NYU School of Law, Civil Jury Project, 2015-2020

Adjunct Professor, University of Illinois-Chicago Law School Advanced Trial Program;
Evidence Boot Camp 2010-2012