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## Springfield Dispatch

### Foreman pursues diverse career

By John Flynn Rooney  
Law Bulletin staff writer

When Fred Foreman takes over as the 19th Judicial Circuit Court's chief judge on May 1, he plans to deal with the court's growth issues.

A year from now, the 19th Circuit, based in Waukegan, will add two new circuit judges, Foreman said. The 19th Circuit, which consists of Lake County, currently includes 13 circuit judges and 24 associate judges.

"We're currently coming up short on courtrooms and we're looking at different scheduling until we can deal with the long-term solution, where each judge has a courtroom," Foreman said.

Some judges use converted conference rooms for proceedings, he said.

Judges continue working with the Lake County Board and other county officials to address growth in the county, Foreman said.

Three additional branch courts began operations in Lake County during the past decade, Foreman said.

"We're looking at upgrading courtrooms here in Waukegan," Foreman said.

Earlier this month, the 19th Circuit's dozen other circuit judges unanimously elected Foreman as chief judge. He now presides over felony cases.

Current 19th Circuit Chief Judge Victoria A. Rossetti and Foreman are implementing an intensive case management system in the Criminal Division to expedite handling of felony cases. A new program involving arraignments will try to deduce the time it takes to transport prisoners from jail to the courthouse, Foreman said.

Lake County State's Attorney Michael J. Waller and Foreman met in the mid-1970s. Waller later worked as Foreman's top assistant in the state's attorney's office.

"As a judge, he is universally respected by both the prosecution and defense," Waller said.

He described Foreman as a good listener, patient, fair and treats everyone before him with respect.

In 2004, Foreman won election to a seat on the circuit court as a Republican. Prior to becoming a judge, Foreman's practice included high-profile criminal and civil cases.



**Fred Foreman**

Circuit judge

19th Judicial Circuit Court

**Elected:** 2004 and retained 2010.

**Career highlights:** Partner, Freeborn & Peters LLP, 1993-2004; U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, 1990-93; Lake County state's attorney, 1980-90; private practice, 1979-80; assistant Lake County state's attorney, 1976-79; and assistant Lake County public defender, 1974-76.

**Age:** 63.

**Law school:** The John Marshall Law School, 1974.

**Interests:** Spending time with family and travel.

Born in Oak Park, Foreman became the oldest child of Donald and Patricia Foreman's three children.

In the early 1950s, the family moved to his late grandparents' summer cottage in Wildwood. The two-bedroom, one bathroom home became winterized.

Foreman graduated from Warren Township High School and enrolled in the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he played football.

But a football injury forced him to leave the Air Force Academy and return to the Chicago area about six months later.

He then drove a Pepsi truck and took night classes at the currently named Harold Washington College in Chicago and at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

He later enrolled at Carroll University in Waukesha, Wis., where he again played football. Foreman, who stands 6 feet, 6 inches tall played on the offensive and defensive lines.

Foreman also met his wife, Stephanie, while attending Carroll University. He received his undergraduate degree from there in 1970.

While attending college, Foreman said he looked to “get into a profession where I could work on my own.”

He enrolled in The John Marshall Law School, where he attended night classes and worked as a court clerk for the law firm now known as Clausen, Miller P.C., for two years.

Foreman later took a job as an investigator with the Lake County public defender’s office. He used an Illinois Supreme Court Rule 711 license, which allows law students to argue cases under the supervision of a licensed lawyer.

Foreman received his law degree from

The John Marshall Law School in 1974. He became a licensed Illinois lawyer on Oct. 10, 1974.

He worked as an assistant Lake County public defender for two years ending in 1976. At that time, Foreman became an assistant Lake County state’s attorney.

He remained a prosecutor until 1979 when he went into private practice as a sole practitioner.

But that did not last long because Foreman won election as Lake County state’s attorney in 1980. He served three terms and personally prosecuted the death penalty case against Johnny Neal Jr.

In 1990, Foreman became head of the U.S. attorney’s office in Chicago. While there, he supervised the prosecution of organized crime, public corruption and terrorism matters.

After three years as the top local federal prosecutor, Foreman joined Freeborn & Peters LLP as a partner.

During his about 10 years with that firm, Foreman launched a government relations, regulatory and gaming practice group. Foreman also represented targets of grand jury investigations and served on the firm’s executive committee.

“I think his background having been both a prosecutor at the state and federal level as well as a practitioner in private practice gave him a balance that very few people have,” said Michael D. Freeborn, a partner with Freeborn & Peters. “He was

very highly sought after by industries like the gambling industry because of his integrity and his reputation.”

After working in private practice, Foreman said he wanted to pursue a judgeship and return to the courtroom full time.

From 2008 until 2010, Foreman served as presiding judge of the Felony Trial Division and supervised nine other judges. The judges in that division each handle about 1,000 cases pending at a time.

“I think the most challenging part of the job is dealing with the volume of cases and the complexity of some of the issues,” Foreman said.

Thomas A. Briscoe, a Waukegan criminal defense lawyer, represented clients before Foreman.

Foreman works hard and treats parties before him fairly, Briscoe said.

“Honesty, integrity and loyalty” are Foreman’s three main attributes, Briscoe said.

In his free time, Foreman enjoys spending time with his wife, three adult children and one grandchild. Foreman and his wife travel, including to a second home in Door County, Wis.

Foreman said he continues mowing the large lawns at both homes, using a tractor mower.

“I also get to think about a lot of cases while I’m on top of that tractor,” Foreman said.