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Hartigan enjoys his newest role

Former civil trial attorney offers much compassion and courtesy as a judge

BY JOHN FLYNN ROONEY
Law Bulletin staff writer

For Cook County Circuit Judge Russell W. Hartigan staying active in bar groups while a judge remains important.

Hartigan, who sits in the 5th Municipal District in Bridgeview, serves on the Illinois State Bar Association Board of Governors and also remains a member of the Illinois Bar Foundation.

"My passion has always been with the ISBA," he said. "I've given my all to the ISBA."

He said he became involved in the ISBA to keep current with the law while a practicing lawyer in small and midsize law firms. He also writes articles for a ISBA newsletter and speaks at Continuing Legal Education seminars about Illinois Supreme Court 213.

Hartigan, who graduated from The John Marshall Law School in 1976, remains in line to become president of the West Suburban Bar Association next year.

Cook County Circuit Judge William J. Haddad got to know Hartigan as fellow first-graders at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School in Oak Park.

He called his close friend Hartigan hard-working on "everything he does from his work on the alumni board at John Marshall (Law School), to the board of governors at the Illinois State Bar Association to his ascended seat as president of the West Suburban Bar Association."

Hartigan "appreciates lawyers and judges," Haddad said. "He embraces the whole profession."

Hartigan, 66, grew up in Chicago's Austin neighborhood and Oak Park, along with his sister. Their parents stressed education and participating in athletics, he said.

After graduating from DePaul University with a bachelor's degree in commerce, he initially pursued a Master of Business Administration at DePaul.

But, at that time, a couple of his friends, including Haddad, attended law school and he saw how interested they became in that profession.

"I found what (his friends in law school) were saying to be more exciting and interesting," he said.

He enrolled in law school in 1972 and took night classes. During his last two years of law school, he taught business law and history at Marist High School. He also coached football there.

After completing law school and gaining his Illinois law license in 1976, Hartigan worked for two years as an associate at Schippers, Betar, Lamendella & O'Brien on civil cases and white-collar defense matters.

From 1977 to 1981, he worked as an associate at Garbutt and Jacobson Associated, an insurance defense firm.

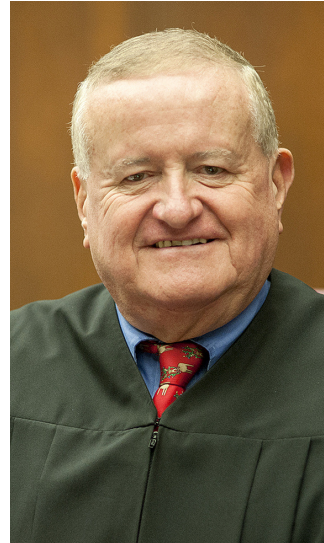
He formed a partnership in 1981 with Edmund J. Scanlan and primarily represented plaintiffs in personal-injury cases.

He later worked as a name partner at several other law firms, including Hartigan & O'Connor PC.

He took about 60 jury cases to verdict in state and federal court and argued before the Illinois Supreme Court and 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He worked as an arbitrator and mediator.

When asked about his interest in becoming a judge, Hartigan said he wanted to preside over jury trials. He said of working on alternative dispute resolution matters, "I got to enjoy it and wanted to extend it further" as a judge.

In October 2010, then-Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice



Russell W. Hartigan

Circuit Judge, Cook County Circuit Court

- **Appointed:** 2010; elected 2012.
- **Career:** Associate, Schippers, Betar, Lamendella & O'Brien, 1976-1977; associate, Garbutt and Jacobson Associated, 1977-81; partner, Scanlan & Hartigan, 1981-1988; partner, Goggin, Cutler, Hull & Hartigan, 1988-1989; partner, Russell Hartigan & Associates, 1989-1996; partner Hartigan & Cuisinier, 1996-2008; and partner, Hartigan & O'Connor PC., 2008-2010.
- **Age:** 66.
- **Law school:** The John Marshall Law School, 1976.
- **Interests:** Spending time with his wife, Susan, children and grandchildren; playing handball and golf; and attending DePaul University basketball and Chicago Bears games.

Thomas R. Fitzgerald recommended Hartigan's appointment to the circuit court to the full high court.

Hartigan ran unopposed in the primary and general elections for a circuit court vacancy earlier this year. He started serving a six-year term on Dec. 3.

Initially, he served for nearly 18 months in Traffic Court. During that time, he also worked on some 1st Municipal District civil cases.

In March, he began the assign-

ment in the 5th Municipal District, where he hears traffic, misdemeanor and civil matters.

"I've tried enough cases in my lifetime where I feel comfortable in courtroom surroundings," he said. "Being on both sides of the aisle, plaintiff and defendant, I think that's helpful as well."

Lawyer Nicholas J. Faklis, a partner at Faklis & Tallis, represented clients in several criminal and driving under the influence cases before Hartigan.

Faklis said he's comfortable appearing before him "because he 'not only knows the law, he also understands the law."

"He understands the human nature of the law. Sometimes people make mistakes and sometimes people have reasons for their conduct and he understands them."

Faklis praised his demeanor, saying the judge doesn't raise his voice in court. Hartigan also takes the bench on time and calls cases promptly, he said.

"He's very conscious of your time," Faklis said.

Hartigan said, "You have to have a certain amount of compassion for people and also understand practicing attorneys and some of the things they are going through right now. You have to be flexible in that regard."

Christopher E. Lawler, a partner at Hilbert, Lawler & Power Ltd., represented a defendant in a personal-injury case before Hartigan earlier this year.

He praised the judge's demeanor and called him even-keeled.

"Based on his experience as a litigator, he was able to delve right into the issues and decided the questions that were objected to, I thought in a very fair and equitable way," Lawler said. "I was not always pleased with the outcome of his ruling, but I knew it was fair."

Hartigan said he eventually hopes to serve in the Law Division or Chancery Division because he practiced in those courts.

Faklis said Hartigan "belongs in a court that has complex litigation. He can handle a Chancery Division or a Law Division case right now."

Hartigan's outside pursuits, include working as a referee at high school and college football games.

"It keeps your mind sharp," he said. "I enjoy the rapport, most of the time, with the coaches and the players."

jrrooney@lbpc.com