



Hon. Levander "Van" Smith, Jr.

Judge Smith was a licensed, practicing attorney for 26 years. Most of that time has been dedicated to public service through state and county governments in both civil defense and criminal prosecution in child protection and juvenile justice, domestic relations, probate and worker's compensation. Although Judge Smith began his legal career in child welfare law in the early 90's in Cook County, he later moved to Southern IL to assume several familial obligations and work for a family law firm. Conveniently, Judge Smith became licensed in Missouri where he worked as a prosecutor and Asst. Attorney General (8 years, total). Judge Smith then continued his legal career in 6 Southern IL county courthouses by returning to the IL Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) as a Supervisory Regional Counsel for over 4 years until DCFS returned him to Cook County where he was Litigation Counsel and was later promoted to Asst. Deputy General Counsel. Judge Smith's legal career as an attorney includes numerous bench trials, appellate practice, administrative hearings, heavy deposition practice, and extensive motion practice, as well as legal research and writing.

Judge Smith has been found Qualified or Recommended by all bar associations that have rated him as an attorney for judicial office. He was also in Cook County's first-ever run-off for Associate Judge in 2018. On February 8, 2019, Judge Smith was appointed to a county-wide vacancy as Circuit Court Judge. He spent approximately 1-1/2 months in First Municipal's Traffic Division before being transferred to the County Division's Domestic Violence Court where he presides over a civil courtroom.

Judge Smith is a member of the Board of Directors of the Cook County Bar Association (CCBA) and was the first-ever chair of the CCBA's newly-established LGBTQ Section, 2016-2017 to which he remains a member. Additionally, in April 2018, Judge Smith was appointed to the Lesbian & Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC) Board of Directors and is a member of the International Association of LGBTQ Judges. He is also a member of the Illinois Judicial Council, Alliance of Illinois Judges and Illinois Judicial Association.

Judge Smith is the parent of one adult one son who was adopted at age 6. Judge Smith is also an active community member in the Chicago Bar Association's Lend-A-Hand Tutoring Program for Englewood students, the NAACP Westside Branch and the Oak Park/River Forest Food Pantry. He has also evaluated high school students in a South Suburban Mock Trial Contest and has also spoken as a visiting judge to South Suburban High School students on Law Day, 2019.