

# Robert F. Harris--BIOGRAPHY

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Robert F. Harris was appointed Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County by the Illinois Supreme Court on September 21, 2017 and serves in the First Municipal Division.

Prior to being appointed judge, Robert was appointed the first African-American Cook County Public Guardian by the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Honorable Timothy C. Evans, in 2004. He began with the Public Guardian's office as an entry level attorney rising through the ranks to become the Chief Deputy Public Guardian before his appointment as Public Guardian. The Office of the Cook County Public Guardian (OPG) is the only law office of its kind that combines the legal representation of abused and neglected children, children in divorce and custody cases, and adults (mostly elderly) with cognitive disabilities. OPG has over 100 lawyers who primarily litigate cases in the Juvenile, Probate, and Domestic Relations Divisions of the Circuit Court of Cook County. Before achieving his dream of being an attorney, Robert worked as a manufacturing, quality control, and sales engineer. On a local and national platform, Harris advocated for and served as an expert on issues regarding children and the elderly. As Public Guardian, he testified in 2015 before a U.S. Congressional Sub-Committee in its hearing, "Fighting Fraud Against the Elderly," regarding his office's successful recovery of more than \$40 million in assets stolen from the people it serves.

In 2017, the Illinois Supreme Court appointed him as Chairperson of the Illinois Judicial College Committee on Guardian *ad litem* Education. He also serves on the Chicago Bar Association Board of Managers, Chicago Bar Foundation Board of Directors, DePaul University College of Law's Schiller DuCanto and Fleck Family Law Center Advisory Board, and is a member of the Cook County Bar Association. He has served on the board of directors or worked with many other organizations such as the Southland Juvenile Justice Council, Aids Legal Council of Chicago, and LINK Unlimited. Robert was honored with the Chicago Bar Association's Earl Burris Dickerson Award (2017), Center for Law

and Social Work's Spirit Award (2016), National Association of Elder Law Attorneys John J. Regan Writing Award (2010), Cook County Bar Association's Ida B. Platt Award (2008), Reclaim a Youth Foundation of Illinois Humanitarian Award for Youth Advocacy (2005), and DePaul College of Law's Outstanding Contribution to Public Service Award (2006) and Outstanding Service to the Profession (2005). Robert is a graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign College of Engineering and DePaul University College of Law.