



Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

**Release Date:**  
January 3, 2023

**Contact:** Julie Hodek, Public Information Officer  
United States District Court for  
the Northern District of Illinois  
219 S. Dearborn St., #2548  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-435-5693

**U.S. Magistrate Young B. Kim selected as Chief Magistrate Judge as Judge Sheila M. Finnegan steps down from Chief role**

*Chicago, Ill.* - Today Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer announced that U.S. Magistrate Judge Young B. Kim has been appointed as Chief Magistrate Judge. Judge Kim assumed his new duties as Chief Magistrate Judge, effective January 1, 2023, when current Chief Magistrate Judge Sheila M. Finnegan completed her term in that position.

“Congratulations to Magistrate Judge Kim on his appointment as Chief Magistrate Judge. With twelve years of dedicated service on our district’s magistrate judge bench and a distinguished career as a litigator and Administrative Law Judge, Judge Kim will serve our district well in his new role,” said Chief Judge Pallmeyer.

Judge Kim was born in South Korea. He earned his law degree from Loyola University Chicago School of Law and began his legal career as an Assistant Cook County Public Defender. He then served as a Law Clerk to former U.S. District Judge Charles R. Norgle of the Northern District of Illinois. After his clerkship, Judge Kim joined the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Chicago where he litigated both civil and criminal cases. In 2001, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission appointed Judge Kim to serve as an Administrative Law Judge. Nine years later, in January 2010, Judge Kim was appointed to the federal magistrate bench for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Judge Kim was one of the founding members of the Chicago Chapter of the Korean American Bar Association (KABA) in 1993. He was also a co-founder in 2000 of the monthly Pro Bono Legal Clinic run by KABA and the Korean American Community Services where he served as a clinic volunteer for nine years.

“On behalf of the Court, I extend heartfelt thanks to Judge Finnegan for her exceptional service to our district as Chief Magistrate Judge. I am grateful for her steady leadership and counsel during very challenging times for our Court and community,” said Chief Judge Pallmeyer.

Magistrate Judge Finnegan has served as Chief Magistrate Judge since January 2021. Judge Finnegan earned her law degree from the University of Chicago. Upon graduation from law school, she served as Law Clerk to Judge Milton I. Shadur, Northern District of Illinois. She then joined the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Illinois and was later appointed Chief of the Criminal Division. In 2000, Judge Finnegan joined Mayer Brown, LLP as a litigation partner and served as co-chair of the firm’s Chicago litigation practice until joining the District Court as a Magistrate Judge in May 2010. Judge Finnegan is also an Adjunct Professor of Trial Advocacy at Northwestern Law School.

In November 2022, the Court’s Executive Committee voted to replace the title “Presiding Magistrate Judge” with “Chief Magistrate Judge.” The name change does not modify any of the responsibilities or duties of the position; the change is instead adopted for consistency with magistrate judge title conventions in 34 other federal district courts, including many of the largest in the country.

Pursuant to the Court’s Internal Operating Procedures, the chief magistrate judge is appointed by the chief judge of the District Court for a term of two years. Chief magistrate judges coordinate the activities of the district’s magistrate judges, make duty assignments, monitor magistrate judge workloads, regularly meet with the chief district judge, and maintain liaison with the district judges and other court officers.

Magistrate judges perform a variety of duties for the court, including conducting preliminary proceedings in federal criminal cases and the trial and disposition of federal misdemeanor cases upon consent of the litigants. They conduct various pretrial matters and evidentiary proceedings upon referral from a district judge of the court and the trial and disposition of federal civil cases upon consent of the litigants.

##