

Court Information Release



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Northern District of Illinois Unveils Plaque Honoring Court's Former Magistrate Judges

CHICAGO, Ill. – Yesterday in a ceremony at the Federal Dirksen Building, the Northern District of Illinois dedicated a plaque honoring the federal district court's former magistrate judges.

Chief Judge Rubén Castillo and Presiding Magistrate Judge Geraldine Soat Brown unveiled the plaque donated and created by the Northern District of Illinois Court Historical Association.

"This signifies our thanks to the magistrate judges who have capably served the Northern District of Illinois. On behalf of the entire court, we give gratitude for your service and the personal sacrifices you have made to serve our court," said Judge Castillo.

"We stand on the shoulders of the people honored on this plaque and hold our positions in trust to the next generation of Magistrate Judges," said Judge Geraldine Brown.

Representing the former Magistrate Judges at the ceremony were Mr. Ken Ashman, representing his late father Hon. Martin Ashman; Hon. Edward Bobrick; Hon. Elaine Bucklo (current District Judge, Northern District of Illinois); Hon. Morton Denlow; Hon. Ronald Guzman (current District Judge, Northern District of Illinois); Hon. Arlander Keys; Hon. Ian Levin; Hon. P. Michael Mahoney; Hon. Nan Nolan and Hon. Rebecca Pallmeyer (current District Judge, Northern District of Illinois).

In 1968, the position of U.S. magistrate judge was established by Congress to replace the position of commissioner, a position that had served the federal judiciary since the 1790s. Since 1968, further legislation has expanded the role of magistrate judges and authorized them to handle a wider range of proceedings in federal civil and criminal cases.

"There has been an evolution of the role of Magistrate Judges. Those we honor today are the reason for that evolution," added Judge Brown.

A U.S. magistrate judge is a judicial officer of the district court and is appointed by majority vote of the active district judges of the court. A U.S. magistrate judge is appointed based upon the recommendations of a citizen's merit screening committee. U.S. magistrate judges exercise jurisdiction over matters assigned by statute as well as those delegated by district judges. A full-time magistrate judge serves a renewable eight year term.

The Northern District of Illinois has eleven active U.S. magistrate judges in Chicago and one in Rockford.

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