



Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
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**Magistrate Judge Sheila M. Finnegan Becomes Presiding Magistrate Judge for U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois**

*Chicago, Ill.* - Effective January 1, 2021, Magistrate Judge Sheila M. Finnegan assumed her new role of Presiding Magistrate Judge as Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox finished her term in that position.

"Congratulations to Magistrate Judge Finnegan on her appointment as Presiding Magistrate Judge. Judge Finnegan's distinguished background as a litigator and her more than 10 years of experience as a Magistrate Judge on our court prepare her well for this leadership position," said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

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.

"On behalf of our court, I thank Judge Cox for her exceptional service to our district as Presiding Magistrate Judge. I have greatly valued her wise counsel and insightful leadership. We are grateful that she will remain with the court as a U.S. Magistrate Judge," said Chief Judge Pallmeyer.

Magistrate Judge Cox served as Presiding Magistrate Judge since January 2020. Judge Cox was appointed to the position of Magistrate Judge in August 2007. Prior to her appointment, Judge

Cox was the president and owner of The Law Offices of Susan E. Cox, Ltd. Judge Cox's litigation background includes three years as law clerk to U.S. District Judge Wayne R. Andersen, eight years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and thirteen years of civil practice. Judge Cox also served as an impartial Due Process Hearing Officer for the Illinois State Board of Education from June 2005 until June 2007, and as a Federal Defender panel attorney from 2003 until her judicial appointment. Judge Cox was also appointed by the federal court to assist in monitoring employment actions of the City of Chicago and served in that capacity from August 2005 until her appointment to this court. Judge Cox earned her law degree from Boston University Law School.

Pursuant to the court's Internal Operating Procedures, the presiding magistrate judge is appointed by the chief judge of the District Court for a term of two years. Presiding 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. The presiding magistrate judge also serves as a member of the court's Executive Committee and Building Security Committee.

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.

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