

## **Trial Lawyer, Law Firm Partner Mulroy Opts for Bench**

*By Stephen Anderson*

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It is a rare day in Chicago when a distinguished trial lawyer and major law firm partner opts out of practice and into a seat on the bench. Monday, Feb. 26, was one of those days.

“I always wanted to be a judge,” Thomas R. Mulroy Jr. told colleagues who gathered that evening at a reception on the 51st floor of the building where he was a partner in McGuireWoods for the past four years.

He had been sworn in earlier as a circuit judge by his friend, Supreme Court Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald.

Amid the tributes given Mulroy at the reception were some judicial tips from Chief Judge James F. Holdermann of U.S. District Court.

“Take your coat off before you put on the robe,” Holderman advised, “and learn how to speak sitting down” – not an easy accomplishment for a longtime barrister.

Distinguished lawyering runs in the Mulroy family. His father, Thomas R. Mulroy, was senior counsel of Hopkins & Sutter and president of the 7th Circuit Bar Association and Chicago Crime Commission.

His son, Thomas R. Mulroy III, a trial lawyer at Hinshaw & Culbertson, last year was picked by Law Bulletin Publishing Co. as “One of 40 Illinois Lawyers Under 40 to Watch.”

In the 35 years since he graduated from the Loyola University School of Law, Thomas Mulroy Jr. already has had more trial court experience than many judges.

An assistant U.S. attorney for the first four years, he joined Jenner & Block in 1976 and handled such complex cases as *In Re Chicago Flood Litigation*. He also chaired the firm's Intellectual Property Department and finance committee.

He ran his own law firm from 2001 until he joined McGuireWoods in 2003 as head of the litigation practice.

Mulroy has tried 60 jury trials in federal and state courts in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and eight other states, including California. Issues ranged from the environment to patent infringement, products liability and white collar criminal defense.

But Mulroy always found time to share his legal acumen in leadership roles with the not-for-profit sector, including two years each as a member of the Illinois Bar Foundation board and the Legal Assistance Foundation board.

An Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission panel member from 1976 to 1989, he was special counsel to the ARDC in 1990. He chaired the American Bar Association Civil Procedure and Evidence Committee and served on Loyola's Trial Practice Advisory Board.

Mulroy has been an adjunct professor of trial practice at Loyola since 1983, and he also has taught at the Northwestern University School of Law and DePaul University College of Law.

In 2005, he created a Thomas R. Mulroy Prize for Excellence in Appellate Advocacy at Loyola that is awarded each spring to an outstanding student in evidence sections.

As a judge, Mulroy will have to curtail most of his *pro bono* activity, but the bench has gained a jurist with vast experience in diverse areas of the law. Whatever his assignment, litigants will find a judge who listens carefully, understands the issues and rules fairly.