

Chief Judge Raymond A. Cavanaugh, Ninth Circuit receives Shonkwiler/Evans Award

Judge Raymond A. Cavanaugh has devoted much of his professional career to serving the people of the Ninth Judicial Circuit. His extensive experience in both the legal and judicial fields has provided him with a strong foundation for his service as Chief Judge.



Judge Cavanaugh graduated from Yorkwood High School in Monmouth, Illinois, in 1983. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1986 and earned his Juris Doctor from John Marshall Law School in 1990.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Cavanaugh served as Warren County Public Defender, Warren County State's Attorney, and Henderson County State's Attorney. He served as State's Attorney beginning in 2002, until his appointment as an Associate Judge in 2010. In 2016, he was elected Circuit Judge and has continued to serve in that position.

Judge Cavanaugh's commitment to the Ninth Judicial Circuit extends well beyond the courtroom. He has been a long-time presenter at EdCon and has consistently supported the education and professional development of judges and court personnel. He was instrumental in the establishment of both the Warren County and Henderson County Drug Courts, helping expand the Circuit's ability to provide treatment-focused alternatives within the judicial system.

During his tenure as Chief Judge, Judge Cavanaugh demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that the courts of all six counties were adequately staffed and able to meet the needs of their communities. Following the appointment of Judge Vancil to the Appellate Court, Judge Cavanaugh successfully sought and obtained a permissive Associate Judgeship from the Illinois Supreme Court to help maintain adequate judicial coverage throughout the six-county Circuit.

Judge Cavanaugh also regularly presided over all six counties of the Ninth Judicial Circuit, demonstrating his willingness to travel and serve wherever his judicial leadership and experience were needed. His hands-on approach and understanding of the unique needs of each county helped strengthen the Circuit as a whole.

Throughout his tenure as Chief Judge, Judge Cavanaugh has been a dedicated advocate for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, its judges, court staff, and the communities it serves. His leadership, commitment to education, and efforts to expand access to specialized court programs and maintain judicial coverage have left a lasting mark on the Circuit.