



John  
Farrell

## Daily Chronicle questionnaire: John E. Farrell

**Primary race:** State's Attorney (Democrat)

**Age:** 58

**Bio:** Currently serving as DeKalb County State's Attorney; previously served as DeKalb County Chief Civil Assistant; over 20 years experience prosecuting at the federal, state of Illinois and DeKalb County levels; more than 100 felony jury trial convictions; lead attorney in the largest State of Illinois settlement against the tobacco industry; received undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa Honors Program in political science and Juris Doctor Degree with Distinction for the University of Iowa Law School.

### Why are you seeking the Office of State's Attorney?

When I came to the DeKalb County State's Attorney office as the Chief Civil Assistant, I was extremely impressed with the staff. I now have served at the federal, state of Illinois and DeKalb County levels as a prosecutor, and this staff is second to no other. I am honored to currently lead this office as your State's Attorney. I am surrounded by quality individuals that are incredibly talented, hard working and willing to accept the interest of the citizens as their No. 1 priority. I like to consider myself a man of principles. That being said, I can not turn away from my passion to bring the very best to DeKalb County residents. As your State's Attorney, I must remain ahead of the game when it comes to local issues and continue to protect taxpayers in civil matters, children and elderly from abuse, and all citizens from criminal activities.

### What distinguishes you from the other candidates in this primary?

Experience and a consuming passion for this work. My career began in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. I tried over 75 felony jury trials, including 30 murder cases, and became supervisor of more than 40 attorneys in 10 years of service. I moved to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago where I prosecuted public corruption, complex financial fraud, and drug cases. I served as Deputy Chief of the Organized Crime Drug Task Force. I served as Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice for the State of Illinois, supervising all criminal prosecutors in that Office. I have spent nearly five years working in the DeKalb County State's Attorney office as Chief Civil Assistant and currently as the State's Attorney. I have respect for this community. I share DeKalb County's values and understand how to move forward ... building on the successes we enjoy and leading in the challenges that we face.

### If elected, what is your top priority?

It can not be overstated that we must continue to protect taxpayers in civil matters, children and elderly from abuse, and all citizens from criminal activities. Gang activity used to be on the horizon for our communities. We must and will address the increasing presence of gang activity. There are warning signs in our courts, on our streets, and in our schools. We must approach the problem on multiple fronts. We will work with law enforcement to increase information sharing, training and multiagency investigative efforts. We have dedicated one of our most experienced prosecutors to handling all gang-related cases and investigations. We also must address the issues facing our young people who are vulnerable to recruitment. I am dedicated to reviving the Juvenile Justice Council. We must move quickly with dedicated stakeholders from our community, the court, the probation department and our schools and social service agencies.

### What, if any, changes need to be made to modernize the State's Attorney's Office?

This question cuts with a two-edged sword. It is difficult to speak in terms of space issues when the economy is a No. 1 issue for taxpayers. Our office is crunched for file storage and office space. We must diligently pursue ways to reduce paper files. We must be willing to measure cost effective means to move forward with currently affordable technologies that not only eliminate the burdens of paper files but also speed up the process of recovering information through a highly developed data base. The ini-

tial investments are always a hard sell. I intend to coordinate with collar counties on cost effective measures that have proven to be efficient. We also have a marvelous resource at Northern Illinois University. Our office has the luxury of hosting NIU law school interns. It is essential to pursue modern technologies that are commonly used by our developing young minds.

**The county has drug court. Is there any other specialty court that should be established?**

Drug court has proven to be a successful, innovative program in our county. Great efforts went into studying the need and the model, and carefully implementing the program after gaining the support of the stakeholders involved in drug cases in our court system. We all know that the mental health system in Illinois is in a state of shambles. We are housing individuals in our jail for criminal activity that is clearly related to mental health issues. Our jails are overcrowded. We find ourselves sending individuals to the custody of other counties at the taxpayers' expense. I believe we should open discussions and conduct a study regarding the need for a mental health court in our county. We must make sure that the taxpayers' money is being wisely spent and invested.