



Charles
Rea

Daily Chronicle questionnaire: Charles R. Rea

Primary election: State's Attorney (Republican)

Age: 52

Bio: Private practice in DeKalb County since 1990; award-winning prosecutor in DuPage County from 1984-1990, the last four years I was assigned to the Felony Trial Division/Major Crimes Unit; tried over 220 cases; adjunct professor of criminal law, College of DuPage (1989-1990); graduate of Culver Military Academy, Wabash College and the John Marshall Law School; member at Hinckley First United Methodist Church; father of three daughters and a son.

Why are you seeking the office of State's Attorney?

I am very lucky. I have had a career of over 25 years doing what I wanted to do since I was a little boy, being a small town lawyer. While there are lots of jokes about our profession, it really is a wonderful career because we are able to help people solve problems every day. The State's Attorney is a position that takes this lofty goal a step further. The State's Attorney is sworn to do justice, representing not just one client's interests zealously, but the interests of all of the people. If the State's Attorney uses his (or her) statutory discretion wisely, in both civil and criminal matters, he (or she) can have a more beneficial impact on the community than any other single lawyer. As State's Attorney, a lawyer can actively improve the community, making it a better place to live, work and raise families for everyone.

What distinguishes you from the other candidate in this primary?

What distinguishes me is the depth and breadth of my experience in those areas, which are necessary to make an exceptional State's Attorney. As a prosecutor, I personally tried hundreds of cases, ranging from DUI to homicide. In the civil division, I represented several county departments. Since 1990, my private practice has been both criminal and civil. I am a court approved mediator. I am a past president of the Sandwich Jaycees and a past chairman of the administrative council of Hinckley First United Methodist Church. The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church has appointed me a board member of the Outdoor Retreat Ministries and certified me as a lay speaker and natural church development coach. When my children were younger, I was a certified youth sports coach. While I didn't do these things to run for office, they better prepare me to do the job.

If elected, what is your top priority?

My top priority as State's Attorney will be to make that office more efficient. Every assistant in the office will have two rules: do justice and be polite. Other than that, there will be no absolutes. You can only seek justice on a case-by-case basis and cannot state ahead of time what you will do in all instances. Yet there are a number of ways to make the office more efficient. Assistant state's attorneys should have discretion to evaluate their own cases. They should prepare and communicate with victims, witnesses and the police before court. This will save these individuals, their employers and their communities' money presently spent on wasted court time. Individual assistants will be assigned to particular cases, such as gang crimes, drug crimes, senior crimes, internet crimes and domestic violence. The State's Attorney will personally have a serious case load.

What, if any, changes need to be made to modernize the state's attorney's office?

I hesitate to call any changes modernization. There are many ideas, but they are not necessarily new. Whenever you begin to lead any organization, you should first review existing procedures. In addition to this review, I will: a) Install a second chance program for non-violent first offenders; b) Institute a juvenile justice council; c) Prioritize certain crimes and assign attorneys to specially handle them, including gangs, drugs, senior citizen and internet crimes and review current domestic violence procedures with the aid of trained professionals and lay people; d) Move forward with the use of new technologies such as the SCRAM device for DUI defendants; and e) Change felony review procedures so that on-call attorneys are not in court but by the phone. The State's Attorney has to be willing and able to be flexible.

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

The presiding judge establishes specialty courts. As State's Attorney, I will certainly consult with the presiding judge in other areas, including juvenile justice and mental health, where specialty services might be needed. DeKalb County Judges have a history of practical and efficient responses to the civil and criminal court needs of the public. The duty of the State's Attorney is to staff these courts, and ultimately, with 13 lawyers in the current State's Attorney office, there is more than enough staff to handle all of the court calls, while giving each assistant significant office time to properly prepare for their duties.