



Madison County Judge Sarah Smith certified as First Illinois National Guard Military Judge

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MADISON COUNTY - The Illinois Judges Association is proud to announce that Third Judicial Circuit Associate Judge Sarah D. Smith recently returned from three weeks in Charlottesville Virginia where she graduated from the 60th Military Judge Course at the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School. She was certified as a military judge by the Judge Advocate General of the United States Army and is the Illinois National Guard's first Military Judge under the Illinois Code of Military Justice. Smith was selected to attend the training by Maj. Gen. Richard Hayes, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.

Judge Smith serves as an Associate Judge in the State of Illinois judicial system. She presides in the Family Division in Madison County. As a member of the Third Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee, she chairs the veteran's subcommittee that provides legal services to local veterans. Additionally, Smith is a member of the Standing Committee on Military Affairs for the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA). She is a member of the Illinois Judges Association and has been nominated to serve on its Board of Directors for a three-year term.

"Judge Sarah Smith is a credit to the legal system and the judiciary and the Illinois Judges Association is proud to announce her certification as the first Illinois National Guard Military Judge," noted IJA President Israel Desierto.

A Military Judge presides over courts-martial of members of the Illinois Army National Guard who are charged with offenses under the Illinois Code of Military Justice (ICMJ), which parallels the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Military judges provide service members with judicial independence and impartiality. Certain types of court-martials can only be adjudicated by a military judge that is separate from the military command structure and therefore cannot be influenced in their decisions.

Judge Smith's military service did not begin in a courtroom. Smith enlisted in the military fresh out of high school as a light-vehicle/power generator mechanic. She used the GI Bill to pay for her undergraduate degree and law school. After successful completion of the bar exam she commissioned as an officer in the Illinois Army National Guard and currently has over twenty-two years of service in the United States Army. Judge Smith is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Illinois Army National Guard.

Smith does have significant experience as a prosecutor and defense counsel during her time as a military attorney. She was certified as a Special Victim's Investigator and has successfully prosecuted dozens of sexual assault and other complex cases. She was later appointed as Senior Defense Counsel. Prior to her appointment as Military Judge, Smith served as Command Judge Advocate for two Brigades over six years and most recently served as Deputy Staff Judge Advocate of the Illinois Army National Guard where she advised general officers and other senior level commanders on all military matters.

Smith was mobilized for the first time in 2005 in support of Hurricane Katrina. Her overseas experience includes service as the Chief of Operational and Administrative Law for the 35th Infantry Division in Kosovo and as Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Because of her vast military legal experience, Smith has spoken at

numerous key senior level engagements to include the Warsaw Ministry of Defense Legal Symposium, Warsaw Poland in 2011 and 2016, and at the United Nations Peace Symposium, New York, New York in 2011.

Judge Sarah Smith has earned multiple service awards, including the Bronze Star Medal; Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster; the Kosovo Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars; and the Joint Meritorious Unit Award; among others.

In addition to her courtroom duties and her military duties, Smith is an active veterans' rights advocate in her local community. . She is a member of the National Guard Association, the National Guard Association of Illinois, and the local American Legion. Most recently in April of this year she was elected Senior Vice Commander of VFW Post #5691. Smith lives in Edwardsville, with her husband, Major Michael B. Raschen, a three-tour combat veteran, and her three sons.

The Illinois Judges Association is a statewide organization of more than 1200 active and retired judges. To learn more about judges such as Judge Smith and the other judges in the state of Illinois, the public should go to www.ija.org.