

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
CIRCUIT COURT
SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

JOHN S. LOWRY
Chief Judge



**WINNEBAGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61101
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For Immediate Release

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MEDIA RELEASE

**CIRCUIT JUDGE BRENDAN A. MAHER
SELECTED AS NEXT CHIEF JUDGE**

ROCKFORD, IL – The 17th Judicial Circuit has unanimously selected Circuit Judge Brendan A. Maher to serve as its next chief judge starting January 1, 2026.

“The Circuit has made an excellent selection,” said current Chief Judge John S. Lowry. “Judge Maher brings a breadth of experience and collaborative spirit to the role of chief judge and he has the full support of his colleagues.”

Judge Maher was appointed to the bench on August 2, 2010, by the Illinois Supreme Court and was thereafter elected to a full term in November 2012. Since that time, he has served the citizens of Boone and Winnebago Counties with dedication and distinction. He currently serves as Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division and oversees a felony criminal caseload in Winnebago County.

A graduate of Augustana College and Valparaiso University School of Law, Judge Maher began his career in private practice at WilliamsMcCarthy LLP, where he served from 1997 to 2008. He later served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, Western Division, before his appointment to the bench.

Judge Maher stated, “It is a distinct honor to be chosen by my colleagues to serve in this capacity. I look forward to continuing the 17th Judicial Circuit Court’s longstanding tradition of excellence, while further advancing efficiency and fostering enhanced collaboration across Boone and Winnebago Counties.”

The chief judge of a judicial circuit oversees the administrative functions of the court system and works with court stakeholders to ensure fair and efficient operations.

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