

COURT OF CLAIMS

The Court of Claims has exclusive jurisdiction to hear all claims regarding any contract with the State of Illinois; torts committed by agents of the state; time unjustly served by innocent persons in Illinois prisons; torts committed by escaped inmates of state-controlled institutions; and the recovery of funds deposited with the state pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Act. The Court of Claims administers assistance programs to compensate families of law enforcement officers, firefighters and Illinois National Guard members killed in the line of duty. The court also pays awards to innocent victims of violent crimes as authorized by the Crime Victims Compensation Act.

CHIEF JUSTICE

Robert J. Sprague was born Dec. 11, 1944, in St. Louis. He received his B.S. degree from St. Louis University and his J.D. degree, cum laude, from St. Louis University Law School. He has served as an Associate Circuit Judge and is a member of the Illinois and American Trial Lawyers' Associations. Judge Sprague was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2003 and practices law with the firm of Sprague & Urban. He and his wife, Patty, have three daughters and three grandchildren.



JUDGE

Peter J. Birnbaum was born July 28, 1957, in Chicago. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Iowa and his J.D. degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law. He has been employed by Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc., since 1981, serving as president and CEO since 1991. Judge Birnbaum has received the Distinguished Service Award from the Chicago-Kent College of Law and the Board of Governors Award from the Illinois State Bar Association. He and his wife, Juliet, have one daughter.



JUDGE

Norma F. Jann was born in LaSalle on Jan. 2, 1954. She received her B.A. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her J.D. degree from DePaul University College of Law. She served as a commissioner of the Court of Claims from 1987 until her appointment as a judge in 1991. Judge Jann is married to attorney Irwin G. Jann, and is counsel to Irwin G. Jann and Associates in Chicago.





JUDGE

James L. Kaplan was born Sept. 24, 1944. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Arizona and his J.D. degree from IIT/Chicago-Kent College of Law. He is a partner in the law firm of Kaplan & Sorosky, Ltd., in Chicago. Judge Kaplan currently serves as chair of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, commissioner of the Midwest Higher Education Compact and as an overseer for his law school. He and his wife, Allin, have three children.



JUDGE

RoseMarie Lipinski is a lifelong Chicagoan. She received her B.A. degree from St. Xavier College and her J.D. degree from Georgetown University Law Center. She was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2004. Judge Lipinski is married to former congressman William Lipinski. Their son is now a congressman from the 3rd District of Illinois, and their daughter is a law partner at SCGK. They have two grandsons.



JUDGE

Robert J. Steffen was born Nov. 27, 1965, in Elgin. He received his B.S. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his J.D. degree from The John Marshall Law School. He served as an assistant state's attorney in Kane County from 1992 to 2000. Judge Steffen was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2004 and practices law with the firm of Steffen, Kelly & Steffen in Elgin. He and his wife, Ketki, have two daughters and a son.



JUDGE

Donald J. Storino was born Feb. 1, 1947, in Oak Park. He received his A.B. degree, cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame and his J.D. degree from DePaul University College of Law. Judge Storino was appointed to the Court of Claims in 2004 and practices law with the firm of Storino, Ramello & Durkin. He and his wife, Patricia, have four sons and one grandchild.