



WELCOME

This short booklet is to introduce you to the Illinois judicial system and to give you a better understanding of the work it does each day.

Inside, we have provided you with:

- a short overview of the Illinois court system,
- a brief history of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit,
- a description of the various courts and court services of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, and
- a synopsis of how a case comes to trial.

Through our courts we have chosen to settle our differences and maintain order through the application of law rather than force. The work we do in them is a living example of that noble purpose.

Most of the proceedings conducted in our courtrooms are open to the public. Each of us encourages you to visit them in order to learn more about our judicial system.

The Judges of the
Eighteenth Judicial Circuit



THE HISTORY OF THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

The county courthouse is an American tradition that serves as the focal point of local American government. When DuPage County was created in 1839, Naperville, DuPage's oldest community, was selected to serve as the county's first seat of government and the site of its first courthouse.



In 1848, the construction of the railroad through Wheaton prompted a movement to change the county seat. Two hotly contested elections were held on this issue, one in 1857 and a second in 1867. Although Naperville won the election in 1857, Wheaton prevailed by a mere 29 votes in 1867. On election day, emotions ran so high that one man was killed in a rock throwing incident.

Following the election, the citizens of Wheaton immediately began constructing a new courthouse. Naperville, however, contested the election results and obtained an injunction restraining county business in Wheaton until the issue could be decided by the Illinois legislature. Wheaton answered with a similar injunction restraining county business in Naperville. As a result, county business came to a halt.

This impossible situation came to a head in December when a group of 100 Wheaton residents slipped into the Naperville at night and carried away all but 6 volumes of county

books to Wheaton. The remaining 6 volumes were recovered in the street by Naperville residents who put them in the hands of the Cook County Recorder for safe keeping, only to have them destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire.

Soon after this raid, the Illinois legislature sided with Wheaton, and Wheaton and its new courthouse officially became the new county seat. That building served the county until 1896.

In that year, plans were approved for a new



red granite and brick structure. That building served the residents of DuPage County until 1952 when a two story addition and jail were added.

DuPage County experienced phenomenal growth during the post-war years. By

the ninetieth anniversary of the courthouse, the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit had become the second largest court system in Illinois and it was apparent the facility could no longer adequately serve the needs of the county.

On November 2, 1990, the present courthouse was dedicated. Occupying over 300,000 square feet, it serves the people of DuPage County today.

