



## Supreme Court of Illinois

September 14, 2023

### **ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT APPOINTS LEA GUTIERREZ AS ARDC ADMINISTRATOR**

The Illinois Supreme Court has appointed Illinois attorney Lea S. Gutierrez to serve as the new Administrator of the Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission (ARDC) effective October 23, 2023.

The ARDC is the Supreme Court agency that regulates lawyers in Illinois, and the Administrator is the ARDC's principal executive officer. Under the direction of the Supreme Court, the Administrator leads the ARDC in fulfilling its mission to safeguard the public and promote and protect the integrity of the legal profession through attorney registration, education, investigation, prosecution, and remedial action.

"Lea Gutierrez is an impressive attorney and public servant who will be coming back to take the helm of an organization she served so well for many years," said Justice David K. Overstreet, Supreme Court liaison to the ARDC. "I am confident she will lead effectively and in the outstanding tradition of her predecessors as Administrator of the ARDC."

Ms. Gutierrez takes over for Jerome E. Larkin, who is retiring after 16 years as ARDC Administrator.

Ms. Gutierrez is a graduate of Temple University's James E. Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia and formerly worked at the ARDC as its Director of Diversity and Inclusion and as a Litigation Manager. She returns to the agency after having led diversity and inclusion efforts at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and the American Lung Association.

"I am honored and grateful to be entrusted by the Illinois Supreme Court and ARDC Commissioners with the responsibilities of this pivotal role. I'm thrilled about the opportunity to again serve alongside the dedicated staff and volunteers as we work together to fulfill the Court's objectives in protecting the legal profession and the public," Ms. Gutierrez said. "I look forward to collaborating with staff and board members, and engaging with the broader legal community, as we endeavor to build upon the work of my predecessors and enhance the ARDC's efforts to support lawyers in practicing with the highest standards of ethics and professionalism."

Timothy L. Bertschy, the ARDC's Chairperson, said, "Our search for a new administrator was a thorough, months-long process. The ARDC Commissioners were assisted in the search by one of the leading executive search firms in the world. Over 75 candidates either applied or were contacted. Eleven of these candidates received at least one interview by the Commission's selection committee. Three rounds of interviews were conducted, eventually leading to our selection of Ms. Gutierrez. We were particularly impressed with Ms. Gutierrez, and we look forward to her leadership of the ARDC. Ms. Gutierrez will be the fifth ARDC administrator, the second woman to hold that office, and the first person of color to do so."

Outgoing Administrator Jerome Larkin praised the Court's appointment: "I had the privilege of working with Lea for 15 years at the ARDC. She excelled as a litigator, educator, and leader of our colleagues at the ARDC and of the profession at large. She led the ARDC in establishing and implementing effective DEI strategies. She has earned impressive professional certifications in organizational development and DEI management. I am confident that she will provide insightful and outstanding leadership as the ARDC continues to assist the Court in its regulation of the legal profession during an era of substantial change."

Since 1973, administrative responsibility for the registration and discipline of Illinois lawyers has been delegated by the Illinois Supreme Court to the ARDC. Registration practices and disciplinary proceedings are governed by rules adopted by the Illinois Supreme Court. The ARDC's operations are funded principally by an annual fee assessed against lawyers registered to practice in Illinois.

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