

Responses of John J. Tharp, Jr.
Nominee to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois
to the Written Questions of Senator Amy Klobuchar

- 1. If you had to describe it, how would you characterize your judicial philosophy? How do you see the role of the judge in our constitutional system?**

Response: A judge should adhere to, and promote respect for, the rule of law. To do so, the judge must apply the law, not create it, and must do so impartially and efficiently, with integrity, an even temperament, and respect for all who come before the court.

- 2. What assurances can you give that litigants coming into your courtroom will be treated fairly regardless of their political beliefs or whether they are rich or poor, defendant or plaintiff?**

Response: First, I believe I have developed a reputation of integrity in my legal community, which attests to my honesty and fairness, even in the role of zealous advocate for clients. Second, during my professional career, I have represented a wide spectrum of clients, as both plaintiffs and defendants, in many different types of cases, so I would not come to the bench with only one perspective on justice. And third, I believe I have demonstrated a commitment to public service that reflects my concern with making a contribution to the public good—a goal that is inconsistent with the notion of applying the law with bias and favoritism.

- 3. In your opinion, how strongly should judges bind themselves to the doctrine of stare decisis? How does the commitment to stare decisis vary depending on the court?**

Response: I believe that all judges should be committed to the doctrine of stare decisis and are obligated to apply binding precedent regardless of whether they personally agree with that precedent. Fidelity to the doctrine of stare decisis is critical to the integrity of the judicial system, so I do not believe that the commitment to stare decisis should vary from court to court.