

Chief Judge Ruben Castillo Joining Akerman in Chicago

Akerman LLP announced that Ruben Castillo, former chief judge for the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, will join the firm's Chicago office as an equity partner in the Litigation Practice Group upon his retirement from the bench on Sept. 30.

Castillo will chair Akerman Bench, the firm said in a release.

As a first chair litigator, Castillo will focus his practice on corporate investigations, white collar criminal defense, private arbitration and mediation work for litigants. He will lead Akerman Bench, one of the nation's largest moot court panels of former appellate and trial court judges, seasoned appellate lawyers, and former state and federal law clerks, who provide guidance and feedback for optimal oral argument preparation.

Castillo was nominated to the bench by President Bill Clinton and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1994, becoming the first Latino federal judge in Illinois. He served as vice chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission from 1999 to 2010. In July 2013, Castillo began his service as chief judge, becoming the first Latino to hold this position in the district. In 2008, he was considered a possible candidate by President Barack Obama for the United States Supreme Court.

Prior to serving on the bench, Castillo was regional counsel to the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. He also practiced in private law for two law firms in Chicago, including serving as first-chair litigator, and served as Assistant United States Attorney in the Special Criminal Prosecutions Division for the United States Attorney's Office – Northern District of Illinois.

For more than 20 years, Castillo has taught trial advocacy at Northwestern University School of Law, with law students recognizing him with five teaching awards.

Castillo earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Loyola University Chicago in 1976 and his law degree from Northwestern University School of Law in 1979.