



OBJECT ID	F2014.94
OBJECT NAME	Certificate, Achievement
DATE CREATED	December 7, 1964
MEDIUM	Ink
MATERIAL	Paper
ACCESS POINTS	Certificate gold red Ribbon Seal Secretary of State

#### OBJECT DESCRIPTION

Large certificate with black lettering and border, and red lines. Certificate was awarded to James K. Chelos by the Governor of Illinois, Otto Kerner, certifying Chelos "was duly elected an Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of the State of Illinois from the Cook County Judicial Circuit of said State, To have and to hold the said office, with all the rights and emoluments thereto legally pertaining, until the first Monday in December 1970." The certificate states the election as having occurred on Tuesday December 3, 1964. On December 7, 1964, the gold seal of the State of Illinois was affixed to the certificate and was signed by William K. Chamberlain (Secretary of State) and Otto Kerner (Governor of Illinois).

#### ORIGIN

This certificate commemorates the election of Chelos to the position of Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County. In 1964, the Democratic Party (which included Chelos) swept the bench. However, in 1964, the Chicago Bar association opposed the re-election of eight of the judges to the Circuit Courts.

The bar polled its members on questions relating to integrity, legal ability, judicial temperament, and diligence of judicial candidates. A passing grade was 70 percent. Chelos was among five other Democrats who were originally elected to the Municipal court and became associate judges of Circuit Court on January 1, 1964, under the terms of the 1962 amendment to the Illinois constitution. In 1964, there were ten vacancies on the Circuit court bench and for two associate judgeships. Chelos was one of the associate judges who previously served on the bench of the municipal courts under the old court system.

So the election of 1964, for the first time, sitting judges ran against the records and without opponents on the ballot with voters simply marking whether or not they favor the retention of an incumbent.



Born in Tripolis, Greece. Attended grammar and high school there and immigrate to the US in 1912. He graduated from the Chicago Law School, in Chicago, IL and was admitted to the Bar in June 1932 and engaged in the general practice of law in Chicago.

In 1933 he was appointed Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Chicago and held that position for over 19 years. He was elected an Associate Judge of the Municipal Court of Chicago in Nov. 1952 and 1958. He was elected an Associate Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1964. He was not only the first Greek-American judge, but the first Greek-American to be elected to public office.

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#### **CITATION**

Certificate, Achievement, December 7, 1964, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 05/05/26.

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