



▶ ▶ SINCE THE IBF TOOK OVER MANAGING ILLINOIS JUSTICECORPS, THE PROGRAM HAS GROWN FROM THREE COURTHOUSES TO 13, SPANS THE ENTIRE STATE, AND OPERATES IN ALL FIVE APPELLATE DISTRICTS. ILLINOIS JUSTICECORPS MEMBERS HAVE PROVIDED AN AVERAGE OF 9,550 INSTANCES OF ASSISTANCE TO ILLINOISANS EACH YEAR.



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By Deane B. Brown

Illinois Bar Foundation Thankful for a Generous Year

The “charitable heart of the ISBA” continues to support many legal-based needs throughout Illinois.

IT IS AN HONOR TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT of the Illinois Bar Foundation (IBF) this bar year. As you may know, the IBF’s mission is to support access to justice by giving grants to agencies across Illinois that help those with limited means obtain the justice they deserve. Equally important, the IBF gives grants to our fellow attorneys who have fallen on hard times.

On Oct. 18, 2019, the IBF held its biggest fundraiser of the year, the 21st Annual Gala, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago. The IBF raised more than \$680,000 at the Gala, enabling the IBF to continue funding Illinois-based grantee organizations that offer civil legal aid services, educate citizens on their legal rights and responsibilities, and promote *pro bono* work. During my six years on the IBF Board of Directors, the IBF has given more than \$1.8 million in grants to legal aid agencies throughout our state.

Because of the generosity of the sponsors and attendees of the Gala, the IBF can continue to give financial support to lawyers and their families in times of crisis through our Warren Lupel Lawyers Care Fund. During my tenure on the board, the IBF has provided nearly \$650,000 to 37 lawyers and their families in times of crisis.

Further, this year the IBF partnered with the University of Illinois Chicago’s John Marshall Law School and Loyola University School of Law to fund postgraduate legal fellowship positions at each school’s civil legal aid clinic.

On top of these achievements, the IBF continues to support Illinois JusticeCorps, which helps individuals without lawyers navigate the legal system. Since the IBF took over managing Illinois JusticeCorps, the program has grown from three courthouses to 13, spans the entire state, and operates in all five appellate districts. Illinois JusticeCorps members have provided an average of 9,550 instances of assistance to Illinoisans each year. Assistance includes acting as a docent by

helping people navigate the physical courthouse and providing substantive help understanding legal procedures and document filing.

At this year’s Gala, the IBF proudly honored Chicago attorney Bob Clifford of Clifford Law Offices with the IBF’s highest honor: the 2019 Distinguished Award for Excellence. Throughout his career, Mr. Clifford has been a strong advocate for justice. An iconic personal injury lawyer in Chicago, Mr. Clifford’s many successful verdicts for victims of personal injuries, medical malpractice, mass torts, consumer and healthcare fraud, and aviation and transportation disasters are well known and speak to his highly regarded talent as a trial lawyer. Equally impressive are his victories for public policy change. After 9/11, Mr. Clifford became chair of the ABA’s Task Force on Terrorism and the Law and helped the U.S. Justice Department write the regulations of the 9/11 Victims’ Compensation Fund. Following a fire in a Cook County government high-rise in which six people died, Mr. Clifford was instrumental in increasing physical fitness requirements in the Chicago Fire Department; changing how searches for victims in a high-rise fire are conducted; and for improving communications between firefighters inside and outside buildings. Most recently, Mr. Clifford was named lead counsel in the litigation of a federal district court case involving the crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 against Boeing and other defendants. The IBF honored Mr. Clifford for his steadfast commitment to helping others, changing public policy through the tort litigation system, his remarkable contributions to the legal community, and the magnitude of his philanthropy throughout his career.

On behalf of the IBF’s Board of Directors, I would like to thank all of those who sponsored and attended the Gala and who have generously contributed to the IBF through the years. 