



THE CHICAGO BAR FOUNDATION
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Law Firms Embrace Need to Step Up Support for Pro Bono and Legal Aid,
Form Leadership Circle to Embody Best Practices**

CHICAGO, February 1, 2008 –More than 20 of Chicago's leading law firms, recognizing the unique importance for our legal community of ensuring access to the justice in the Chicago area, have become charter members of the new Chicago Bar Foundation Law Firm Leadership Circle.

The new Leadership Circle embodies best practices for law firms on pro bono, firm giving and related issues involving access to justice. "The Law Firm Leadership Circle and accompanying Statement of Principles underscore both the integral role that law firms in Chicago have in ensuring equal access to our justice system and the critical importance of solid leadership from the top management of the firms," explains Robert E. Deignan, partner, Baker & McKenzie and chair of The Chicago Bar Foundation Managing Partners Advisory Committee.

In joining the Law Firm Leadership Circle, firms are committing to support pro bono and legal aid by:

- Encouraging each of their attorneys to complete at least 35 hours of pro bono work each year;
- Donating \$300 or more per attorney in the firm's Chicago office to legal aid organizations each year;
- Participating in the annual CBF Investing in Justice Campaign;
- Advocating for adequate legal aid funding at the federal, state and local levels;
- Providing in-kind marketing, training and administrative support for legal aid agencies to the extent practicable; and
- Striving to support public interest law fellowships, rotations and internships.

Firms at the Gold and Platinum levels have made even more ambitious commitments towards these goals. “Our partners always have considered pro bono work an important part of our professional responsibility, and we thought this new initiative fit our profile perfectly,” said Nathan P. Eimer, a founding partner of Eimer Stahl Klevorn and Solberg LLP, which was the first firm to sign on as a member of the Leadership Circle.

One of the centerpieces of the Leadership Circle is the CBF’s annual *Investing in Justice Campaign*, which is being chaired this year by Dan K. Webb, Chairman of Winston & Strawn. As part of their Leadership Circle commitment, each of the member firms will participate in the *Campaign*, which is designed to bring Chicago’s legal community together to build the capacity of our overburdened pro bono and legal aid system.

“Just as corporations in other sectors of business focus their charitable efforts on issues uniquely important to them, the Law Firm Leadership Circle reflects the unique importance to the legal community of ensuring equal access to justice,” says Bob Glaves, executive director of The Chicago Bar Foundation.

Currently there are fewer than 300 civil legal aid attorneys to serve more than one million low-income residents in the Chicago area. As a result, more than half of the less fortunate Chicagoans in need of critical legal assistance are turned away and forced to handle complex legal problems on their own because pro bono and legal aid organizations do not have the capacity to serve them..

“We applaud The Chicago Bar Foundation for its vision in establishing this program. We look forward to continuing to work with the CBF and their partner legal aid organizations to help ensure that legal services are provided to the vulnerable residents of our community who most need the protection of our justice system,” adds Greg Galopoulos, managing partner for Jenner & Block LLP.

“While we all are asked to support a number of worthy causes throughout the year, the justice system is our ‘home turf’ as lawyers, and Chicago law firms have the power to make a real difference,” added Deignan.

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The CBF anticipates that dozens of Chicago law firms will join the Law Firm Leadership Circle over time. Charter members include the following firms:

Baker & McKenzie LLP**
Barack Ferrazzano Kirschbaum & Nagelberg LLP
Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione*
Clifford Law Offices**
Competition Law Group LLC**
DLA Piper**
Eimer Stahl Klevorn & Solberg LLP**
Jenner & Block LLP**
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
Kirkland & Ellis LLP**
Mayer Brown LLP**
McDermott Will & Emery LLP
Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg LLP*
Reed Smith Sachnoff & Weaver
Schiller DuCanto & Fleck
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Sidley & Austin LLP**
Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP*
Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP
Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP
Winston & Strawn LLP*

* Gold Commitment

** Platinum Commitment

*As the charitable arm of The Chicago Bar Association, **The Chicago Bar Foundation (CBF)** rallies our legal community around a cause that is uniquely important to lawyers and legal professionals: ensuring that everyone in the Chicago area has access to our justice system, particularly the low-income and disadvantaged Chicagoans who most need the protections of our civil legal system.*

The CBF plays a distinct and vital role in the community by taking a system-wide approach to tackling this issue. Through grants, advocacy and other programs, the CBF:

- *Advances the work of our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations;*
- *Enables dedicated lawyers to pursue careers in legal aid and help pro bono attorneys most effectively supplement their efforts; and*
- *Makes the courts and legal system more user-friendly and accessible for all.*

The CBF's work is made possible by the generous support of more than 150 law firms and corporations and thousands of individual donors. For more information about the CBF, please call Bob Glaves 312-554-1205 or email at bglaves@chicagobar.org.

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