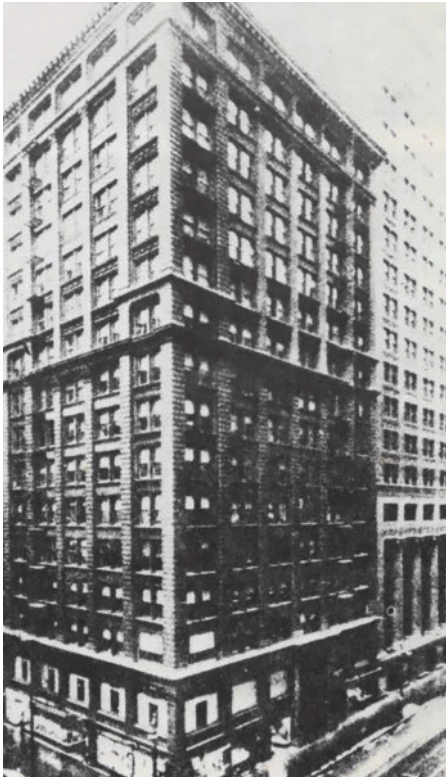




# CBA 150th Anniversary Celebration

## Moving Ahead, 1899-1924

By Kathryn C. Liss



Association headquarters at 105 West Monroe Street in 1908. Source: *The Chicago Bar Association*.

**A**s we celebrate the 150th anniversary of The Chicago Bar Association, the *Record* is publishing a historical recap in each bi-monthly issue throughout the bar year to commemorate significant events and achievements. Our first 25 years were highlighted in the July-August issue, starting with the founding in 1874. This issue recaps the CBA's second 25 years. Our sesquicentennial celebration will culminate with a gala event on May 10, 2024, at Union Station's Great Hall, featuring a special moment to consider our history, remember our responsibilities, and commit to our future. You can track all the celebratory plans at [www.chicagobar150.org](http://www.chicagobar150.org).

### Rapid Increase in Chicago Attorneys by 1900

Spurred by massive industrial growth in the late nineteenth century, the need for lawyers expanded to address the issues and opportunities that accompanied all the new businesses as Chicago welcomed the new century. Over the span of 50 years, the number of lawyers practicing in Chicago had grown from roughly 60 lawyers in 1850 to more than 4,300 in 1900. Additionally, the norm of solo practitioners and small firms began to evolve around the turn of the last century into what we now consider "big law." Larger firms were formed and continued to add new departments to address their corporate clients' growing legal needs. For example, in 1906, Holt, Cutting & Sidley had four lawyers, four clerks, and a staff of 10. This firm is now Sidley Austin LLP, with 21 offices and more than 2,300 lawyers worldwide.

### First Woman Elected Judge in Illinois

Judge Mary Margaret Bartelme was the first woman appointed Cook County Public Guardian in Illinois in 1897 and was appointed as a judge assistant in the Juvenile Court of Cook County in 1913 (see details in the July-August 2023 issue of the *CBA Record* regarding the CBA's role in creating this institution, the first of its kind not only in the United States, but in the world). In March 1913, Judge Bartelme convened a special Girls' Court in which she heard cases of delinquent and dependent girls, including sex workers. She encouraged a safe space in this closed court so the girls could talk freely about private matters with the all-female staff.



Mary Margaret Bartelme (right) served first as an aide to the judge of the Juvenile Court and in 1923 began a 10-year term as a Circuit Court judge. She was the first woman ever elected a judge in Illinois. Source: Kogan, Herman, *The First Century: The Chicago Bar Association 1874-1974*.

She subsequently established three "Mary Clubs" for girls to live at in lieu of state institutions if they could not live with their parents. The first two Mary Clubs established in 1914 and 1916 accepted white girls. The third and final Club started in 1921 and accepted girls of color. More than 2,000 girls lived in Mary Clubs over a span of 10 years.

In 1923, Judge Bartelme became the first woman elected judge to the Circuit Court of Cook County in Illinois and served for 10 years. She spent her entire legal career advocating tirelessly for children, particularly girls who were neglected.

### War Committee

Although the U.S. did not enter World War I until April 1917 (it began in 1914), a Preparedness Movement had

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A GREAT VICTORY

**A** FITTING CLOSE to the year's activities of the Association was the judicial election on June sixth. Never in recent years have its leadership and influence been manifested in the selection of judges to the extent accomplished in the recent campaign. While this result could not have been obtained without the support and co-operation of the party and other organizations and the newspapers, yet it must not be lost sight of that the coalition plan was originated and fostered by The Chicago Bar Association through its Committee on Candidates, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Amos C. Miller.

The Association has long aspired to leadership in the selection of our judges, for it is the lawyers of the Community who know best the qualifications of the candidates, and it is in their hands that the selection should be reposed.

By its successful fight in the June election, The Chicago Bar Association has advanced far toward the goal of leadership in this branch of its legitimate functions, and has won the right to expect the people to look to it for guidance in future judicial elections.

It is our hope that the day is not far off when the nominees of The Chicago Bar Association for the judicial office will be without opposition from any quarter, and will be assured of election.

**When the Association triumphed over the Thompson-London organization in the 1921 judicial election, the Record covered it in a front-page statement. Source: The Chicago Bar Association**

been active throughout the United States prior to entry. The movement's goal was to convince the country that American involvement in the war was necessary, and that ongoing military preparedness was needed. Chicago's Preparedness Day Parade, held in June 1916, featured a lawyer's division, spurred by a resolution from the CBA's Board of Managers calling on members to participate.

Also in 1916, a CBA War Committee was created with 25 initial members. Committee chair Henry R. Rathbone traveled to New York, Washington, DC, and other Eastern cities to collaborate with other similar committees to determine how bar association members could best provide service. The War Committee ultimately was divided into four subcommittees, which then drew upon the volunteer services of approximately 500 lawyers. The first subcommittee gave

free legal advice to all men in uniform as well as their dependents. Members also provided pro bono work on welfare cases referred by the American Red Cross and handled appeals and requests for exemption from service. Within the subcommittee's first year, volunteers addressed and finalized roughly 3,000 cases. The second subcommittee oversaw unfinished cases by attorneys who were serving in the military. The third subcommittee raised funds for families of lawyers serving in the military. The final subcommittee provided speakers for patriotic rallies and Liberty Loan campaigns.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD 1924-1925	
Total membership May 31, 1924..	3,492
Members deceased.....	28
Members resigned.....	49
Members expelled or suspended..	3
Members dropped for non-payment of dues.....	3
	83
	3,409
Reinstatements during 1924-25... 17	
New members during 1924-25... 432	440
Total membership May 31, 1925...	3,858

Source: *The Chicago Bar Association Record*, Vol. 8 May 1925

**First CBA Executive Director**

Clarence Denning was hired by the CBA in 1902 at age 23 and stayed with the CBA for 50 years. His first position was as an assistant to the librarian in charge of the CBA's 6,000 books occupying two rooms in the CBA's then-new location in the Chicago Title and Trust Building at Clark and Washington Streets. As an assistant librarian, he filled book orders, polished tables, and dusted books. Denning worked his way up, acquired a law degree from what was then known as John Marshall Law School, and became the CBA's first Executive Director (f/k/a Executive Secretary) in 1923. He was the



Clarence Denning served the Association for 50 years, many of them as executive secretary. Source: *The Chicago Bar Association*

first of only six Executive Directors in the CBA's history (Clarence Denning, 1923-1952; Richard Cain, 1952-1964; Jacques G. Fuller, 1965-1973; John F. McBride, 1974-1985; Terrence M. Murphy, 1985-2020; and Beth McMeen, 2020-Present).

Within the CBA's second 25 years, the CBA and legal community rapidly grew in response to the increased complexities of emergent Chicago businesses as well as the new communities which continued to populate our city. By 1924, the CBA's members soared to 3,492 (a gain of over 2,700 members since 1899). Despite some turbulent times during these years, the CBA and its members adapted and persevered, always advocating for justice, accessibility to justice for all, and service to our community. ■



Kathryn C. Liss (Katie) is the Assistant Dean and Director of Law Career Services and the Executive Director of the Schiller DuCanto & Fleck Family Law Center at DePaul University College of Law, CBA 2nd Vice President, and a member of the CBA Record Editorial Board.



THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION 150  
CHAMPIONING JUSTICE, BUILDING CONNECTIONS, AND MAKING AN IMPACT

**Did You Know?**

The CBA's first Annual Meeting was held on December 30, 1874, at the Grand Pacific Hotel. The speakers included the Association's First President William C. Goudy, Lyman Trumbull, Thomas Hoyne, and the United States Secretary of the Interior Orville Browning.

# Reflecting on My CBA Experience

Curated by Kathleen Dillon Narko, CBA Record Editorial Board Member

*Why do I belong to the CBA? It opens doors! The CBA serves as the social and professional hub of Chicagoland's legal community, embracing both law students and professionals.*

*After law school, meeting new people and keeping up with continuing legal education becomes increasingly challenging. The CBA bridges the post-graduation gap by offering a dynamic calendar of professional events and social functions that can help forge lifelong connections. It also offers in-person and on-demand CLE programs at little to no cost to members.*

*I found employment at an AmLaw100 law firm through the CBA. Let the CBA open doors for you, too!*

**Andre A. Hunter, Jr.**, Member since 2021, Director of the CBA Young Lawyers Section; Gordon Rees

*The CBA is one of the best organizations in Chicago's legal landscape. Throughout my career, I have connected with the industry's brightest attorneys thanks to the CBA's vast network and leadership opportunities. I have also stayed abreast of the law through easily accessible CLE programs and seminars that make the CBA an unparalleled legal resource.*

*Community service is paramount to the CBA, and its dedication to those in need of legal assistance is reflected in its pro bono initiatives and Lawyer Referral Service. I'm proud to be part of an organization committed to both the legal profession and those it serves.*

**Regina P. Etherton**, Member since 1984, Chair of the CBA Lawyer Referral Service; Regina P. Etherton & Associates, LLC

*The CBA has impacted my legal career in many ways. I became involved early on, editing YLS publications. I have met so many friends I now call family, and the CBA has provided me with leadership opportunities I might not have gained elsewhere. Plus, I have kept my substantive skills up to date through the Association's amazing continuing legal education offerings. I joined the CBA as a law student and have been YLS Chair, CBA President, and Chair of the Insurance Law Committee.*

**Daniel A. Cotter**, Member since 1995, 2015-2016 CBA; Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC

*Coming from out of state, unconnected to Chicago, let alone to its legal community, I began my legal career in 1968 at what was then a large firm. A few years later, I joined the in-house law department at the Quaker Oats Company.*

*At that time, I wanted to make sure that I would be able to return to private practice if "the Quaker thing" did not work out, so I joined and became quite active in the CBA, first in the YLS and then the broader association. While "the Quaker thing" actually did work out (I became General Counsel and stayed for 25 years), I was able, through the CBA, to interact with and get to know many of the city's finest lawyers, learn new legal skills, make life-long friends, and give back to the profession and the community.*

*I left Quaker just before it was acquired by Pepsi, and then spent nearly 10 years at Seyfarth Shaw. Later I was asked to become the General Counsel of the ABA, where I served for five years, and then briefly as the ABA's interim Executive Director during a transition period. I emerged from a brief retirement to serve once again as an interim Executive Director, this time for the Legal Aid Society of Chicago.*

*I have had a varied, satisfying legal career, all in Chicago. I attribute much of my success to the early support and education I received by being an active member of the CBA.*

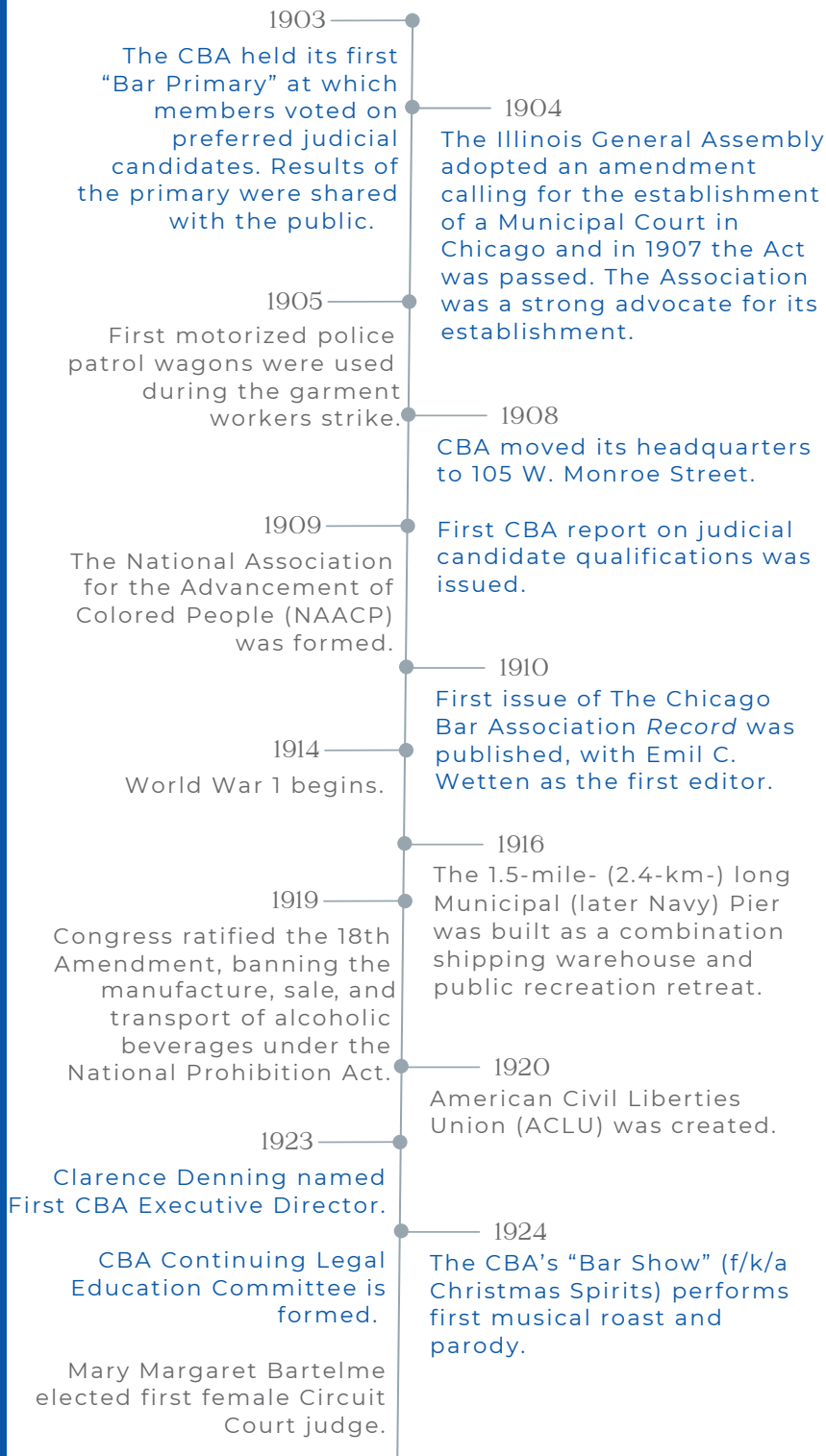
*Congratulations to the CBA on its 150th Anniversary! May it continue its good work for many years to come!*

**R. Thomas Howell, Jr.**, Member since 1968, 1974-1975 Young Lawyers Section Chair



1899-1924

# CBA HISTORY



## Committee on Defense of Prisoners

In 1912 the CBA created the Committee on Defense of Prisoners (a/k/a Committee on Defense of Poor Persons Accused of Crime) to curate a list of volunteer attorneys who would serve as defense attorneys for indigent defendants. This Committee predated the formation of the Cook County Public Defender's Office in 1930.



## A New Home

The CBA moved to the top floor of the 20-story Burnham building at the northwest corner of LaSalle and Randolph streets on June 4, 1924.

Complete CBA timeline available at [www.chicagobar150.org](http://www.chicagobar150.org)