

# CBA 150th Anniversary Celebration

## The Middle Years, 1924-1949

By Daniel A. Cotter

**A**s we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the CBA, the *Record* is publishing a historical recap in each 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. The September-October issue covered the next 25 years, up to the golden anniversary. This article takes us from the Roaring Twenties to the Great Depression, and through World War II and its aftermath. Our sesquicentennial celebration will culminate in 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 [chicagobar150.org](http://chicagobar150.org).



*Robert E. Crowe poses for photographers when, as Cook County State's Attorney, he directed the prosecution of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb for the murder of Bobby Franks. Source: Kogan, Herman, *The First Century: The Chicago Bar Association 1874-1974*.*

### Leopold and Loeb

The so-called “trial of the century” took place in the summer of 1924. Two wealthy University of Chicago students, thinking

they had plotted to commit a murder that could not be solved, killed 14-year-old Bobby Franks. The Cook County State's Attorney, Robert E. Crowe, prosecuted the case against them; Leopold and Loeb were defended by CBA member Clarence Darrow. Crowe was a “Republican officeholder with whom the Association contended on various issues during the 1920s and later.” Darrow fought valiantly to show the inhumanity of the justice system, arguing for more than 12 hours. Ultimately, however, Leopold and Loeb were convicted.

### Helping the Indigent

In 1926, the CBA's Committee on the Defense of Prisoners developed a plan with Dean John H. Wigmore of the Northwestern Law School to assist indigent people with their defense in criminal matters. Given the large number of people in Cook County who could not afford legal representation, the system had been overwhelmed. The program was successful. In 1939, the Association established the Lawyer Reference Plan, the precursor to the current Lawyer Referral Service.



*In the judicial elections of early 1933, the Association made use of billboards, among many devices. Source: Kogan, Herman, *The First Century: The Chicago Bar Association 1874-1974*.*

### Clashing with Judges

In 1933, President Charles P. Megan and the Association campaigned against a slate

of judges running for election, dubbing them the “Moe and Crowe ticket.” Megan issued a statement saying judicial candidates must have the highest qualifications. Their efforts were to no avail, and the war with the bench continued. In 1936, the Board of Managers sent a judicial canon to Chicago judges at all levels, reminding them of the need to not campaign politically. Hearings were held but the stalemate continued into 1937, when the 43 judges who had quit or been expelled were invited back.

### Young Lawyers Committee

The Young Lawyers Section was not founded until years later, but in 1935, the Association formed the Younger Members Committee. It was established as a two-year trial and featured lower dues for younger members. In 1943 the Association established a rule that 20% of Committee members must be 36 years old or younger. Social events were the Committee's focus until the 1970s.

### A Home for Years

In 1936, property became available at 29 South LaSalle Street. The Board of Managers approved its purchase, and the site remained the Association's permanent headquarters for the next 55 years. (Current members still reminisce about the dining room, the cinnamon rolls served, and the benefits of the site as a gathering space.)

### The First Black Members

In 1943, four well-known Black attorneys applied for membership: Archibald J. Carey, Jr.; Earl B. Dickerson; Rufus Sampson, Jr.; and William Sylvester White. The Association denied the applications. Charles Lieberman, a young

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**The Association's new headquarters graced the cover of the May 1949 CBA Record.**

lawyer working with others, including Elmer Gertz and Leon M. Despres, sued in the Circuit Court of Cook County for records related to the denial, arguing that the matter should be taken up by the full membership. President J.F. Dammann received a letter from Gertz and promised he would see that Blacks were admitted to the Association. In November 1945, Dickerson became a member. The annual Earl B. Dickerson Awards were estab-

lished in his honor.

## Jobs After the War

Over 1,000 CBA members who were unable to serve during World War II volunteered to work on production lines in the city's war plants. Following the war, the Association helped lawyers find jobs, whether members or not. The Committee on Placement ran ads in the *Record*, and members received free stenographic services.

## Committee on Constitutional Revision

The Committee on Constitutional Revision was formed in 1947. It was instrumental in passing the 1950 "Gateway Amendment," which was designed to make it easier to amend the state's 1870 Constitution. Even with the Gateway Amendment, passing amendments through both the state legislature and the electorate still proved difficult. (Ultimately, a new Constitution was enacted in 1970.)

## Chicago Bar Foundation

A crowning achievement during this period was the creation of The Chicago Bar Foundation in 1948. Past President Floyd Thompson was the first donor, financing the distribution of 80 standardized jury instructions approved by the Association. The Foundation, currently under the leadership of long-time Executive Director Bob

Glaves, has ensured access to justice in Chicago for many years. Happy 75th Anniversary to the Foundation!

## The Chicago Law Firm Growth

Association Presidents during this period included many with ties to the current legal community: Carl R. Latham (1927-1928); William P. Sidley (1930-1931); Henry A. Gardner (1934-1935); Harry N. Gottlieb (1942-1943); and Floyd Thompson (1943-1944). Thompson served as an Illinois Supreme Court justice, and his firm eventually became Jenner & Block. He also appears to be the first person to serve as president of both The Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association.

## Continued Growth

This 25-year period, from the Great Depression through World War II and beyond, saw the Association continue to grow to over 5,700 members and to establish many of the committees and procedures that, with changes, continue to be part of our Association today. ■



*Daniel A. Cotter is Attorney and Counsel at Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC, a member of the CBA Record Editorial Board, and Past President of the CBA.*

## DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION

On Saturday night, May 7, we will celebrate our Diamond Jubilee at the Stevens Hotel Grand Ballroom. The entertainment committee has been working for months to make our Seventy-fifth birthday party a super colossal evening of frolic and fun. Some of the evening's events are still a secret, but we are promised no dull speeches.

The theme of the evening will be fun, and then more fun. It will be a real birthday party with entertainment galore. Our chorus is hard at work on songs that you will hum for many a day thereafter. The Sprowl boys claim they have finally thought up an *original* gag that will roll you in the aisles (2 to 1 the editor can find it or its grandfather in Joe Miller). The Stevens promises excellent food—not just another banquet menu.

All in all we gather that the party will be a combination of Christmas Spirits at its best plus something new and different. And speaking of Christmas Spirits, we are promised that among the musical numbers will be reprises of several of your all-time Christmas Spirits favorite songs.

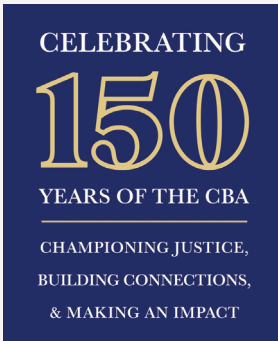
The only thing the entertainment committee has not hinted it will furnish are the beautiful girls. You are supposed to bring yours with you.

The Northerners Radio Program will feature the Jubilee on Tuesday, May 3, and there may be other radio programs during our Diamond Jubilee Week devoted in part to the Chicago Bar Association.

Don't forget you have an important date for Saturday night, May 7.

**As the 1940s ended, the Association celebrated its 75th Anniversary at The Stevens Hotel in downtown Chicago.**





# CBA 150th Anniversary Celebration

## A Look at Our Legislative History

By Larry Suffredin, CBA Legislative Counsel

When the Corporate Charter for the CBA was issued on May 27, 1874, the initial by-laws provided for a standing committee of five members dealing with “Amendment of the Law.” With that Committee, the CBA began a 150-year legislative journey that worked to amend state and local laws.

In 1877 the CBA proposed changes that shaped the Illinois Court system by creating an intermediate court, the Illinois Appellate Court. It expedited estate succession by creating a statewide Probate Court system. Since then, the CBA has advocated for a strong court system and an independent judiciary. The CBA also has led the fight for adequate pay for judges and attempted on several occasions to create a system of merit judicial selection instead of the current election system.

Through the years, many CBA members have been instrumental in leading the Illinois General Assembly and the Chicago City Council. Governors of Illinois include Otto Kerner, Richard Ogilvie, Daniel Walker, James Thompson, Rod Blagojevich, Pat Quinn, and JB Pritzker. Mayors of Chicago include Richard J. Daley, Michael Bilandic, Richard M. Daley, and Lori Lightfoot. Members have also served as leaders in the Illinois General Assembly. These include Illinois House Speakers William Redmond, Michael Madigan, Lee Daniels, and Emanuel “Chris” Welch; House Minority Leaders Tom Cross and Jim Durkin; Illinois Senate Presidents Thomas Hynes, Cecile Partee, Phil Rock, John Cullerton, and Don Harmon; and current Senate Minority Leader John Curran. In addition, George Burditt, Alan Greiman, Howard Carroll, Arthur Berman, Daniel Houlihan, Elgie Sims, Arthur Turner Jr, Elaine Nekritz, Jen-



nifer Gong-Gershowitz, Robert Martwick, and Billy Marovitz have held leadership positions in the General Assembly.

### Advocacy and Education

The CBA has seen elective bodies shift from a majority of lawyer members to a small percentage of elected members being lawyers in both the General Assembly and the Chicago City Council. This change has influenced the focus of the CBA. In the past, the CBA needed to have substantive discussions on the law with trained lawyers who held elective positions. Today, the CBA has added the role of educating elected officials who are not members of the legal profession as well as the public on how the law works before advocating for change. The CBA has used seminars, witness testimony, and individual meetings to help educate the Legislature and City Council on our position on various proposals.

Historically the CBA has been a leading

advocate for changes to over 80 major parts of Illinois law. These include participation in two Constitutional Conventions (1920 and 1969), and passage of one Illinois Constitution (1970). In addition, the CBA has been a proponent of a unified, fair, and available state and local court system, the merit selection of judges, and the creation of the first Juvenile Court. In fact, the CBA was the driving force in creating the nation’s first Juvenile and Family Court, a reform that has helped millions of children. The CBA continues to recommend changes to the operation of the Court.

CBA members have reshaped the law by advocating for the creation of several other innovations including civil and criminal law reform, the Condominium Act, improving adoption law, requiring arbitration and mediation services, rewriting trust laws, improving probate laws, rewriting the Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act, and expanding protections for children,

mentally challenged persons, seniors, and disabled individuals.

During the 1969 Constitutional Convention leading up to the passage of the 1970 Constitution the CBA was very active in advocating for the merit selection of judges and ending the election of judges. These efforts led to a binding referendum on judicial merit selection. Unfortunately, the referendum was defeated by 150,000 votes statewide. After the defeat, CBA member Robert Berstrom led a special committee that for many years continued our organization's advocacy for merit selection. Though many constitutional merit selection amendments have been introduced in the General Assembly since 1970, none have made it to the ballot for adoption.

### **Other Initiatives**

The CBA has always looked for ways to expand the availability of legal services. In the 1970s, two members, Howard Sorenson and Patrick Reilly, established a CBA-sponsored pre-paid legal service plan called "Equal Justice, Inc." that for a short time provided legal representation to many. Although the program ultimately failed to sustain itself, today The Chicago Bar Foundation develops programs and provides funding for many similar initiatives. The CBF is a valued partner with many legal assistance organizations and the Circuit Court of Cook County to ensure that those in need have proper legal representation. Through the years the CBF has developed programs dealing with mortgage foreclosure, eviction, consumer credit, divorce, immigration, and other areas where representation of underserved people was needed. The CBF has also been very active in Springfield pushing for legislative changes to help provide fair representation for all.

The initial committee of five became a standing Legislative Committee that has expanded to include 31 members who coordinate CBA positions on the thousands of bills introduced every year in the Illinois General Assembly. Since 1973, 26 CBA members have chaired the legislative committee. Each legislative position taken reflects the input of the membership

through consultation with the substantive law committees. After the Legislative Committee makes its recommendation, the CBA Board of Managers reviews and determines the official CBA position. The Board of Managers has taken positions on over 2,500 legislative initiatives in recent years. Recent Legislative Committee Chairs include Noah Graf, Tara Goodwin, Ben Orzeske, Helene Synder, Sharon Eise-man, Jim Stortzum, Tim Moran, Gerald Murray, Elizabeth Wells, James Sulzer, Bob Graves, David Hodgman, Michael Shevick, James Romanyak, Richard Chapman, Elinor Swiger, Russell Miller, Jack Joseph, James Cushing, Malcolm Kamin, and James Zartman.

During the 150 years of the CBA's existence, the practice of law has gone through many changes. The CBA has adapted to the changes by working with the Illinois General Assembly and the Chicago City Council to provide opportunities for all residents of Illinois and Chicago to have access to justice and the courts.

Some of the bills the CBA supported had an impact on how the courts interpret matters such as the repeal of the Torrens System and abolition of the Rule Against Perpetuities and the Rule in Shelley's Case. Other bills created new rights that involved families, children, the environment, public health, liens, human rights, real property, alternative dispute resolution, animal rights, mental health and developmental disabilities, aging, housing, insurance, business organization, business transactions, elections, employment, and education.

The CBA is a leader in helping lawyers stay healthy and serve their clients' needs better. The CBA was involved in creating the Lawyers' Assistance Program and in efforts to pass laws that encourage treatment, rather than punishment, for those suffering from mental health issues.

As the CBA looks to the next 150 years, the continued reform of the law and the changing ways justice can be served are among the challenges that will be met by new members who understand the effect that technology is having on the law and the administration of justice. ■

## **THE CBA HAS HELPED AMEND MANY ILLINOIS ACTS, INCLUDING:**

**Adult Protective Service Act**  
**Business Corporation Act**  
**Code of Civil Procedure**  
**Code of Criminal Procedure**  
**Consumer Fraud and  
Deceptive Business Practices Act**  
**Cook County Circuit  
Apportionment Act**  
**Crime Victims Compensation Act**  
**Election Code**  
**Environmental Protection Act**  
**Good Samaritan Act**  
**Illinois Civil Rights Act**  
**Illinois Domestic Violence Act**  
**Illinois Fairness in Lending Act**  
**Illinois Human Rights Act**  
**Illinois Living Will Act**  
**Illinois Marriage and  
Dissolution of Marriage Act**  
**Illinois Power of Attorney Act**  
**Illinois Security Act**  
**Illinois Trust Code**  
**Insurance Code**  
**Judicial Redistricting Act**  
**Landlord and Tenant Act**  
**Limited Liability Company Act**  
**Mental Health and  
Developmental Disability Code**  
**Probate Act**  
**Supreme Court Act**  
**Uniform Adult Guardianship  
and Protective Proceeding  
Jurisdiction Act**  
**Uniform Commercial Code**  
**Uniform Partnership Act**  
**Whistleblower Act**



# Reflecting on My CBA Experience

Curated by Kathleen Dillon Narko, CBA Record Editorial Board Member

*I've been a member of the CBA for more than six decades. Early on, to reach my goal of becoming a "real" Chicago Lawyer, I needed, in my eyes, three accomplishments: graduate law school, pass the bar, and join the CBA. Eventually, I was privileged to serve on the CBA Board of Managers. Throughout the years, I have witnessed how the CBA embraced diversity both in its membership and in its work in the legal and larger communities to promote freedom, opportunity, and justice for all.*

**Judge Marvin E. Aspen**, Member since 1959, former Board of Managers Member; United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

*The CBA has impacted my legal and professional career in so many ways. Membership allowed me to be a part of an organization with so many of the judges and lawyers that I respected, admired, and wanted to be like. Membership also allowed me to be of service to our profession over the past 39 years. One special moment where the CBA truly made a difference in my personal and professional life is when I became chair of the YLS Trial Practice Course. I believe it was in this role that I became more confident in my ability to be a leader and to contribute in a meaningful way to our profession.*

*As some will remember, a CBA task force developed the YLS Trial Practice Course. This course would ultimately become one of the most popular courses offered by the CBA. This opportunity would not have happened but for the kindness and generosity of CBA member Eileen Letts, who dedicated her time, talent, and treasure to the CBA and to mentoring newly licensed lawyers like myself.*

**Josie M. Gough**, Member since 1984, CBA Board of Managers; Burke Burns & Pinelli, Ltd.

*The CBA has had a profound impact on my legal career and my practice – more than any other membership, activity, event, or organization I've been involved with. It has, without question, enhanced my career and enriched my life. The contributions we have all made have, hopefully, improved our legal profession.*

*Throughout my years of membership, I've expanded my legal knowledge, which has grown my practice. I've also made countless meaningful relationships with other attorneys who have turned into friends, referral sources, law partners, and even clients. Anyone who is serious about their legal career should be an active member.*

*The CBA will keep evolving and changing by continuing to benefit its members and our beloved legal profession.*

**John C. Sciacotta**, Member since 1988, CBA First Vice President; Aronberg Goldgehn



*I belong to the CBA because the effective meaningful practice of law requires a community of professionals willing to work beyond their day-to-day practice for the betterment of the profession, our clients, and our city.*

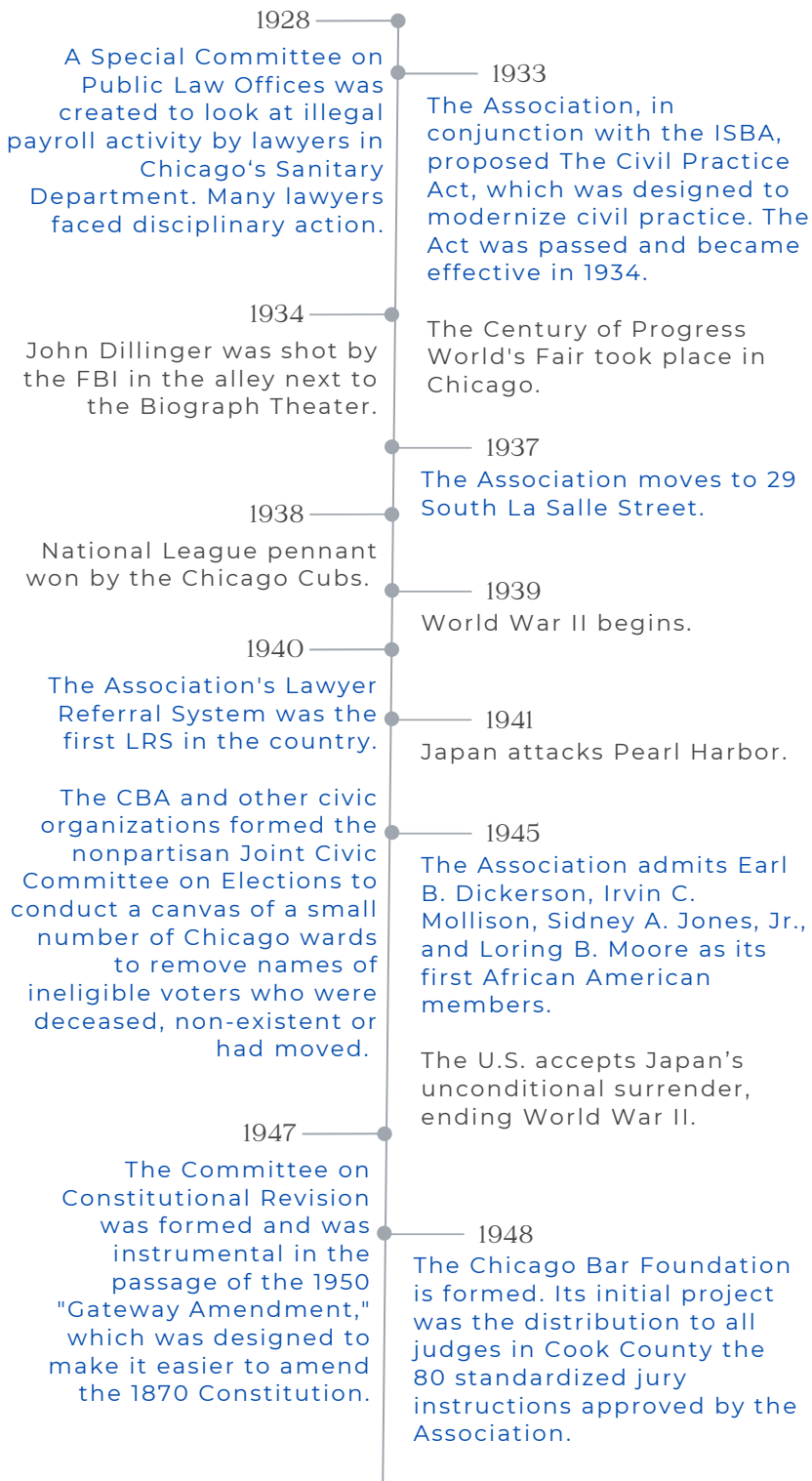
*A community capable and of bringing about such positive change and of maintaining the highest ideals of the profession requires organization, investment, and a shared mission. I have found that the CBA is just such a community. I look forward to continuing to support it.*

**Brian C. Haussmann**, Member since 2004, CBA Board of Managers; Tabet DiVito & Rothstein LLC

What are your reflections about the CBA? We want to hear from you! Whether you are a new member or decades into your legal career, we want you to share your thoughts. Send us 50-100 words addressing one of the following topics: Why do you belong to the CBA? How has the CBA impacted your legal career? Or describe the CBA of 2048, 25 years from now. Email your reflections to [CBARecord@chicagobar.org](mailto:CBARecord@chicagobar.org). Thank you!

1924-1949

# CBA HISTORY



## Criminal Court

In 1930, a new Criminal Courts Building was opened at 26th and California Avenue, far from the center of the city's legal community. The CBA proposed plans, without success, for transferring criminal trials and related proceedings to the Loop. *Source: Kogan, Herman, The First Century: The Chicago Bar Association 1874-1974.*



## A New Home

Association headquarters moved in 1937 to 29 S. LaSalle Street. The offices housed member activities until the early 1990s.

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