The Passing of a Hoosier Legal Trailblazer

Roderick “Rod” Morgan

With the close of Black History Month during the month of February, I wanted to take a moment to highlight the life of a true trailblazer and inspirational leader in the Indiana legal community who we lost in early February. Roderick “Rod” Morgan passed away on February 2 at 75 after a long and distinguished legal career. I first got to know Rod during his tenure as President of the Indiana State Bar Association from 2009-2010. Rod was the first African American to serve as ISBA President, and he helped pave the way for future leaders of color to follow his lead. This professional accomplishment was groundbreaking, especially since the organization had formerly excluded African Americans from membership.

Rod’s bar leadership was only one facet of his many accomplishments which began early in his life. Rod graduated from Arsenal Technical High School in 1966, where he was Captain of the football team, sang in the choir, and won several academic accolades. After being nominated by Senator Bayh, he attended the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY. Rod was also a leader at West Point, where he was the 23rd African American to graduate (1970), earning a Bachelor’s degree in engineering. Rod went on to graduate from Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C. and graduated in 1978.

Rod’s professional journey would span Panama, New York, Washington, D.C., Germany, Maryland, and Indiana. He immediately became a Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer after graduating from law school, first as a defense counsel and then in Germany as a prosecutor. His JAG experience also included a three-year stint as an associate professor of law at West Point. Rod finished his Army career as an Army judge advocate general at Fort Meade, Maryland, where he practiced medical malpractice defense. He earned an Honorable Discharge with numerous commendations and citations. Rod returned to his native Indianapolis and was admitted to the Indiana Bar in 1992. He began working at Bose McKinney & Evans and eventually transitioned to Bingham McHale.

Throughout his professional career, Rod was a criminal, civil, and administrative litigator. Rod’s accomplishments and honors are numerous and are a testament to his dedication, leadership, and respect that he had throughout the Indiana legal profession. Rod’s groundbreaking contributions to improving our profession will long be remembered. Thank you, Rod, for all you have done to improve our profession and make it better for all Hoosiers. You will be missed.

-Chuck
Save the Date & Register for the 2023 Indiana Civics Summit

Register now for the Foundation's Civics Summit. This inaugural day-long collaborative, learning, and networking event is a can't miss opportunity to interact with Indiana Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, Indiana Education Secretary Dr. Katie Jenner, and hear from the Council of Foreign Relations President, diplomat, and author Dr. Richard Haass! Seats are limited and we do not want you to miss this discussion on the impact Civics has on Indiana. Click here to access event and registration information.

Civic Summit Sponsorships Available

The Foundation is offering multiple sponsorship opportunities supporting the April 13 Civics Summit. The highly-anticipated Summit will draw a cross section of business, education, legal, non-profit, and government leaders. Now is the time to secure your organization's place as a Civic Summit sponsor by contacting Director of Development Kim Berry.

Civil Legal Assistance

Scholarship Opportunities

The Phelps & Fara Scholarship assists a law student enrolled at the IU McKinney School of Law with an interest in family law. Applications are open now through March 31, and can be found here.

The Hon. Cale J. Holder Scholarship was established in 1984 in memory of Judge Holder and is awarded annually based on dedication to the administration of law, financial need, desire to be a practicing trial lawyer, capacity for leadership, academic achievement, and military service record if any. Law students enrolled at the IU McKinney School of Law are invited to apply here through March 31.

These scholarships are made possible thanks to the generous donors supporting the Phelps & Fara Law Fund and the Hon. Cale J. Holder Scholarship Fund held by the Indiana Bar Foundation. If you are interested in supporting law students through these scholarships, please visit inbarfoundation.org to make a donation.

Kiosk Deployment Continuing

The Marshall County Court System is among Foundation partners hosting an IndianaLegalHelp.org kiosk, located on the basement floor of the courthouse located in Plymouth. The Marshall County kiosk is one of 150 being deployed around the state. The Foundation is grateful to our partners for their ongoing support. (Thank you to Marshall Circuit Judge Curtis D. Painter for the photo).

IndianaLegalHelp.org and Kiosks Part of National Conference Presentation

Foundation Senior Counsel Marilyn Smith presented on Monday, February 13, at the Conference of Chief Justices Midyear Conference in Austin, Texas. Marilyn was part of a panel discussion on “Court Reform and Innovation” which provided guidance to chief justices from around the nation on promoting the use of innovative practices in their own states. Marilyn highlighted the Indiana LegalHelp.org kiosk program and ongoing data collection initiatives of the Coalition for Court Access designed to better understand and address the needs of self-represented litigants.
High School Mock Trial State Finalists Are Set; Volunteer Judges Needed

The field is set for the Indiana High School Mock Trial State Finals. Teams will compete March 11-12 at the Indianapolis - Marion County Community Justice Campus. More than 500 students from across the state competed in regionals held in South Bend, Evansville, Indianapolis, and Hammond. Congratulations to our State Finalists and all students, families, educators, coaches, mentors, and volunteers for supporting Mock Trial. Teams competing in Mock Trial State Finals can be found here.

Volunteer Judges are needed for the March 11-12 Indiana Bar Foundation High School Mock Trial State Finals. Judges are needed for the evening shift on March 11 and the morning shift on March 12. Please find the registration link here. Contact Civic Education Specialists Joseph O'Connor or Isaac Harper with any questions. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Foundation Receives Prestigious Recognition for Civic Education Efforts

The Foundation received the Indiana Council for the Social Studies Stan Harris Citizens Award during the organization's February 24 Annual Conference. The award is presented to groups or individuals in Indiana in recognition of service promoting social studies principles. Stan Harris was a Castle High School Government teacher and We the People sponsor in Newburgh. He led his classes to win We the People competitions eight times from 1989 to 2002. In retirement, he was State Coordinator for the We the People program. Mr. Harris passed away unexpectedly in January, 2010, and this award honors his commitment to active citizenship.

Foundation Director of Civic Education Tim Kalgreen was a presenter during the conference, discussing the Foundation's Civic Education program.

(Pictured L-R): Beth Brandon, ICSS President, Foundation Dir of Civic Education Tim Kalgreen, Foundation Board Chair Caryn Glawe, and ICSS President-Elect Chris McGrew.

Summer Internship Opportunities Available

The Foundation offers summer internship opportunities for college students. Interns spend time with executive leadership, civic education, civil legal assistance, development, and communications functions within the Foundation. This is an excellent hands-on learning experience for students interested in the legal profession, education, fundraising, or public relations. Interested? Know someone who might benefit from interning with the Indiana Bar Foundation? Please contact Development Specialist Megan Clarke-Richter with questions or to express an interest in our internship program.

News Brief

Foundation President Discusses Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Foundation President & CEO Charles Dunlap participated in the
February 24 Indiana State Bar Association's "Conversations: Creating Pipelines to Legal Education" program. Dunlap, local attorney, and Indianapolis Arsenal Tech High School Mock Trial Advisor Norris Cunningham discussed diversity, equity, and inclusion. Dunlap discussed the Foundation's Mock Trial Diversity Initiative and plans to expand the program. Tech Mock Trial team members spoke to the more than 150 individuals attending the program. Former Foundation Board Member and retired Indiana Supreme Court Justice Steven David and Angka Hinshaw, Senior Counsel, Amundsen Davis LLC, host the Conversations program.