Happy New Year! With your help and support, the Indiana Bar Foundation had a very exciting year in 2023, and I look forward to building on those accomplishments in 2024. We are starting the year with several exciting new civics initiatives in January alone.

**A New Civics Chapter for Indiana: Civic Education Course for Indiana's 6th Graders**
In the spirit of cultivating informed and engaged citizens, we are thrilled that after many years of effort and work by so many civics supporters, tens of thousands of Hoosier 6th graders are beginning a full civics semester this month. We are proud that Indiana is one of seven states prioritizing the importance of civics in middle school, requiring a full semester course. To support the work of our Hoosier educators teaching this new class, the Foundation has recently launched a series of teaching resources aligned to the new Indiana educational standards adopted for the new civics course incorporating the We the People civics curriculum. If you haven’t had a chance to look at the resources, I encourage you to visit the Foundation’s website, and please let any educators know that these new resources are available to them at no cost. Here is a [direct link](#) to the resource page.

**New State and Local Government Resource**
This month, we are also delighted to announce the release of a valuable Indiana-specific state and local government resource. This new resource was developed through a partnership between the Foundation and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, and we anticipate having this additional resource released later this month. With this new publication, we aim to empower our educators, community members, and everyday Hoosiers with information crucial for understanding and participating in local governance effectively. The resource will cover topics such as:
- State and local government structure
- Civic responsibilities and voting procedures
- Accessing local government services
- Engaging with elected officials
- Opportunities for community involvement
We believe that an informed community is an empowered community, and this resource will serve as a valuable tool for all those eager to participate in shaping the future of our great state.

**Updated Indiana Civic Health Index Release**
Another exciting development to start 2024 is the release of the updated Indiana Civic Health Index in late January. The Foundation, in partnership with several partners from the Indiana Civics Coalition, will present...
an updated "civics report card" for Indiana containing new data about Hoosiers' involvement in several areas of civic engagement, including elections, volunteering, and other community engagement. Stay tuned for more information about the public release of this new report, which is the latest edition of the Foundation's decade-plus of work examining Indiana's civic health.

Thanks again for a great 2023, and I look forward to making much more progress in 2024 as we work together to improve civic education and legal assistance for all Hoosiers!

Civil Legal Assistance

Civil Legal Assistance Team Working with Partners to Improve Pro Bono Engagement
As part of the Foundation’s work supporting Indiana’s Coalition for Court Access (CCA), Abbie Bush and Marilyn Smith led a full-day, interactive session with the Pro Bono Engagement Project Team to review insights provided by organizations that coordinate pro bono and attorneys who reflected on their best pro bono experience. The Project Team was formed by the CCA Pro Bono Work Group and has been tasked with exploring ways to expand and deepen pro bono engagement in Indiana.

Marilyn Smith Featured in Indiana Lawyer Article
Retired Foundation Senior Counsel Marilyn Smith was featured in a December 11 Indiana Lawyer article. The story chronicles Marilyn's personal passion for civil legal aid and the incredible contributions she has made as a leader, advocate, and respected ally, adept at creating partnerships within the state, working with the Indiana State Bar Association and the Indiana Supreme Court. If you missed the story, please read it here.

Civic Education

Volunteer Judges Needed as Mock Trial Competition Begins in February
The Foundation is looking ahead to Mock Trial competitions beginning next month. An essential part of the mock trial competition is volunteer judges. Please consider judging by registering using the linked form. You do not need a law degree to judge; you just need an interest in helping students better understand this aspect of our government. Please share
this information with anyone in your network who may have an interest in judging.

Competition dates and locations are the following:
- February 17 Indianapolis & South Bend regionals
- February 24 Hammond & Evansville regionals
- March 16-17 Indiana State Competition in Indianapolis

There are multiple time slots available for each competition date and site.
If you have any questions please contact Isaac Harper, iharper@inbarfoundation.org; 317-608-6505.

Sixth Grade Civics Standards Resources Available
The Foundation has released a comprehensive series of free resources to provide ready-to-use academic standard-aligned classroom materials for Indiana educators teaching the new required semester of sixth-grade civics. Materials include PowerPoint presentations, student handouts, reading materials, worksheets, activities, vocabulary guides, and more. Access the resource pages here.

Hamilton Southeastern Wins State High School We the People Championship
Hamilton Southeastern High School finished first in the We the People State Finals held on December 13 in Indianapolis. The class is taught by Janet Chandler with assistance from Alana Kane. Additional information, including comments from keynote speaker Justice Christopher M. Goff, and the full results are available here.

Fishers Junior High School Captures Middle School We The People State Championship
Fishers Junior High School was crowned the 2023 Indiana Bar Foundation Middle School State Champion on December 12. The We the People classteachers are Heather Butz and Tony Sturgeon. The win capped a day dedicated to all things civics. Students witnessed a Naturalization Ceremony and heard an inspiring message from Indiana's Secretary of Education, Dr. Katie Jenner. Learn more about the competition here.

Giving & Recognition
January always brings thoughts of fresh starts and resolutions. This year, the Foundation is excited to build on
your wonderful support in 2023 — and work toward our 75th Anniversary in 2025. We will continue to honor our Keystone Society Members, event supporters and sponsors, and all whose generosity makes the Foundation’s work possible. This year you will hear more about expanded donor benefits, plus a new President’s Circle for donors who wish to plan major gifts over multiple years. Maybe you have a planned gift in mind or want to volunteer. Whatever your interest or level of giving, please know we are happy to talk or meet anytime! Happy New Year — We look forward to a fantastic 2024 together. Contact Director of Development Kim Berry for any reason or just to chat!

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**News Briefs**

The Foundation congratulates board member and Court of Appeals Judge Elizabeth Tavitas on being named one of the nation’s 60 courageous judges by the National Judicial College. She is one of 60 judges chosen from past and present courts in the United States and abroad who have demonstrated courage in upholding the rule of law and providing justice for all. The honorees were selected from nominations by NJC alumni and staff. Please read this Indiana Lawyer article for additional information.

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**Foundation Seeks Candidates for Civil Legal Assistance Manager Position**

The Indiana Bar Foundation is seeking candidates for the position of Civil Legal Assistance Manager. Learn more about the position here and feel free to share with individuals you think would be interested and qualified for this exciting opportunity!

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**Please Take Civic Education & Career Readiness Survey**

Please take a moment to review this short research questionnaire from Ball State University’s Center for Economic and Civic Learning. The survey asks employers in Indiana to study what civic identities, skills, and dispositions are valued and wanted by employers. The survey can be accessed here and should take 10-15 minutes to complete. Thank you!
We the People Alumni Awards Program
While all We the People Alumni are top tier, do you know of an alumnus who stands out? One honoree from both categories will be selected.

- **Outstanding Young Alumni Award**—To recognize an alum who has distinguished themselves through service to their community, country, or society at large. For alums, 18–34 years of age are eligible at the time of nomination.

- **Cincinnatus Award**—Created to honor an alumnus/a who has provided extraordinary service to the world and who represents the ideals of virtuous service to benefit the common good. For alumni over 35 years of age.

Learn more, including how to nominate, through this link.

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Get to Know: Abbie Bush

New staff and expanding programs reflect the Foundation's continued growth. We are proud of our team and want to introduce them to you! Please take a moment to Get to Know Abbie Bush.