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Hartigan on path to ISBA presidency

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A Cook County Circuit Court judge has been elected third vice president of the Illinois State Bar Association, putting him on track to become the first sitting judge to lead the group in at least 40 years.

Judge Russell W. Hartigan, 67, has been actively involved in the ISBA since 1979.

"The crown jewel of my involvement is being president," he said.

Hartigan will take the ISBA helm in June 2017, following a three-year path of succession to the 32,000-member group's presidency — serving as third vice president this year, then second vice president and president-elect in the following years.

Hartigan defeated David B. Sosin, a partner at Sosin & Arnold Ltd. in Orland Park, by a count of 2,103 votes to 1,687.

William J. Haddad, a neutral with ADR Systems of America LLC, said Hartigan comes from humble roots and worked his way up through the legal profession.

The two became friends when they were first-graders at a parochial school in Oak Park.

"He brings that workman-like Chicago attitude to the Illinois

State Bar," Haddad said.

Hartigan currently serves as president of the West Suburban Bar Association. His term ends in December.

"I don't know if I'm a bar (group) junkie," he said. "I've just enjoyed my involvement over the years."

Hartigan has served several stints on the ISBA Assembly, the group's policy-making arm, since 1979. He also spent 12 years on the ISBA Board of Governors, the group's managing body.

Barry Locke, a partner at Hughes, Socol, Piers, Resnick & Dym Ltd. and a past West Suburban Bar Association president, called Hartigan "a dynamo."

"He's a tremendous worker," Locke said. "Whatever he does, he does well."

Prior to his appointment as a judge in 2010 and subsequent election, Hartigan worked as a lawyer in private practice for 34 years as a trial attorney in civil cases. He is a graduate of The John Marshall Law School.

Hartigan currently hears Law Division cases at the 5th Municipal District Court Building in Bridgeview.

Serving as a bar group leader while simultaneously presiding over cases doesn't present a major challenge, Hartigan said.



Russell W. Hartigan

"I think it's more of a challenge for people who are sole practitioners than somebody who is a judge," he said.

As for his plans as ISBA president, Hartigan said he wants to re-energize the group.

Specifically, Hartigan wants to generate more interest among lawyers in joining the association's 203-member assembly, especially in areas such as central Illinois.

"I'd like to make it a little more attractive to be a member of our assembly and engage in some meaningful dialogue of relevant issues at the assembly" meetings, Hartigan said.

He has also worked on getting younger lawyers involved in the ISBA. Those lawyers include his son, Michael R. Hartigan, a partner at Hartigan & O'Connor P.C., who is chairman of the association's Tort Section Council.

"I'm like the Pied Piper of bringing young people into the ISBA and getting them involved in section councils and committees," Hartigan said.

In other election results announced Tuesday by the ISBA:

- Winning three uncontested board of governors seats assigned to Cook County were Mark L. Karno, owner of Mark L. Karno & Associates; Stephen M. Komie, principal at Komie and Associates; and John L. Nisivaco, a partner at Boudreau & Nisivaco LLC.

- Anna P. Krolikowska, a partner at K & R Family Legal Services LLP in Northbrook, won an open board seat for Cook County lawyers under age 37, besting Dennis M. Lynch of Healy, Scanlon Law Firm.

- Jennifer Walsh Hammer, an associate at Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes P.C. in Springfield, faced no opposition for an open board seat for lawyers under age 37 outside of Cook County.