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ISBA Board of Governors will honor 3 lawyers

Three Illinois attorneys been designated to receive ISBA Board of Governors Awards during the Annual Meeting at the Abbey on Lake Geneva.

The recipients are John Marshall, Law School Prof. Mark E. Wojcik, Jennifer T. Nijman of Winston & Strawn, Chicago, and George F. Mahoney, Silverman & Cross, Joliet.

Board of Governors Awards recognize lawyers of exemplary service that advances the administration of justice and the goals of profession and bar association.

Mark Wojcik

Mark Wojcik's educational contributions as director of Global Legal Studies at John Marshall culminated with his recent promotion to a full professorship. During the past year within the ISBA, he has demonstrated untiring energy, worldwide vision and sensitivity to individual choices.

Wojcik's leadership of the ISBA International and Immigration Law Section Council was augmented by service on the Special Committee on the General Agreement on the Trade Services (GATS), which is studying the impact of international reciprocity on the rules of practice in Illinois and other states.

He conducted meetings with legal officials of other nations, including Japanese Ministry of Justice and the England-Wales Bar, relative to their practice qualifications and examination processes.

An active member of the Human Rights Section Council, Wojcik contributed articles to its newsletter on topics such as the nature of human rights policy and sexual orientation requirements of the Illinois Human Rights Act. He is also a member of the Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Wojcik played a key role in organizing and presenting an ISBA-sponsored program during the Chicago Humanities Festival last fall. He was a moderator of the panel, "Iraq: Constituting a Nation," that included vice president of the Iraq Forum for Democracy. He was participated in planning ISBA Law Ed Series seminars, and he spoke during programs on "Basics of Legislative Process" and "Out at Work: Cutting Edge Issues for Employers and Employees" where he was a program coordinator.

Wojcik also spoke to students at several law schools about opportunities in international and human rights practice and recruited future members of the state bar association.

He is editor of ABA International Law News and vice chair of the International Health Law Committee, immediate past chair of the Association of American Law Schools Section of North

American Cooperation, and director of an International Law Institute course for lawyers for whom English is a second language.

Jennifer Nijman

A past president of the Chicago Bar Association, Jennifer Nijman joined ISBA past president Timothy L. Bertschy as co-chairs of a steering committee for the first updated legal needs study in 15 years.

Their work product, titled “Legal Aid Safety Net: A Report on Legal Needs of Low-Income Illinoisans,” was presented at a February news conference in Chicago after countless hours of development by committee members.

“What many people may not realize in civil cases, unlike criminal ones, people don’t automatically have the right to counsel,” Nijman said. “Thjis is true even though the potential consequences of some civil problems are extremely serious.”

Nijman and Bertschy pointed out that poor people in Illinois face about a million civil legal matters each year without legal assistance, and there is and equivalent of one legal aid attorney for every 4,752 problems encountered by low-income individuals and families.

“This project is a stellar example of what bar associations working together can do to benefit the legal community and public at large,” said ISBA Second Vice President Irene F. Bahr, who nominated Nijman for the Board of Governors Award.

Incoming chair of Illinois Coalition for Equal Justice, Nijman serves on the boards of Public Interest Law Initiative and the Center for Conflict Resolution.

George Mahoney

ISBA President Ole Bly Pace III nominated George Mahoney for both his long-standing, exemplary contributions to the ISBA and his major role in planning and implementing the Conference on the Future of the Legal Profession that was conducted in December.

“Mahoney chaired the talented committee that conceived, planned and conducted the successful conference,” Pace said. Its resulting recommendations will help prepare the ISBA to serve its members better throughout the state.

Also a member of the Committee on Legislation and vice chair of the Committee on Judicial Evaluations Outside Cook County, Mahoney serves on the Illinois Bar Foundation board. He is a former member of the ISBA assembly.