



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

## Illinois Lawyer Population

The names of 83,881 lawyers are contained on the Master Roll of Attorneys. That number does not include the 2,323 attorneys who took their oath of office in late 2008. Overall, the lawyer population in Illinois increased 1.9% over 2007, continuing a trend of steady but modest growth in the Illinois lawyer population since 2001.

## The Graying of the Profession

The most noticeable change in the legal profession in Illinois is the continued increase in the number of lawyers in Illinois over the age of 50. The percentage of lawyers between the ages of 50 and 74 has risen from 22% to 39% over the last 15 years and is expected to increase over the next 5 to 10 years.

## The Impact of New MCLE Guidelines

For the first time with the 2009 registration year, Illinois lawyers were removed from the Master Roll of Attorneys for not complying with Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) requirements. Last year, approximately 52,000 lawyers were required to report their compliance to the MCLE Board. Of that number, 680 lawyers, a total of 1.3% of those lawyers in the first reporting group, were removed from the Master Roll for non-compliance.

## *Pro Bono* Legal Services

As part of the 2009 registration process, 13,929 Illinois lawyers indicated that they had provided *pro bono* legal services, totaling, in the aggregate, 2,192,345 *pro bono* legal service hours, including 1,102,907 hours of legal service provided directly to persons of limited means. In addition, Illinois attorneys reported making a total of \$14,779,088 in monetary contributions to organizations that provided legal services to people of limited means.

## Grievances and Formal Disciplinary Charges

During 2008, the Commission docketed 5,897 investigations into alleged attorney misconduct, a 1.5% decrease from the year before. As in years past, the top three areas of a grievance involve problems with the client-attorney relationship including allegations of neglect (44% of all investigations), failing to communicate (22%), and charging an excessive or improper fee (14%). Consistent with prior years, the top areas of practice most likely to lead to a grievance are criminal law, domestic relations, tort, and real estate.

## Disciplinary Sanctions

During 2008, the Supreme Court entered 135 sanctions against 131 lawyers (four lawyers were disciplined twice). The majority of lawyers sanctioned, 54.8%, practiced in Cook County. The county with the second highest percentage of sanctioned lawyers was DuPage (13.3%). More lawyers were disciplined for engaging in conduct involving fraud than any other offense. Of those disciplined, 82% were men; men account for 66% of the overall attorney population in this state. One-half of those sanctioned were between 50 and 74 in age.

## Client Protection Awards

The Supreme Court of Illinois established the Client Protection Program (CPP) to reimburse clients who lose money due to the dishonest conduct of lawyers who have been disciplined or have died. Effective March 31, 2009, the maximum available award has increased to \$75,000 per claim and \$750,000 per lawyer. Last year, the CPP approved 102 claims against 56 lawyers and paid a record \$1,029,220 to claimants

## ARDC Website

The ARDC web site ([WWW.IARDC.ORG](http://WWW.IARDC.ORG)) attracts up to 156,000 visitors each month and in 2008, visitors totaled 1.8 million. In addition, more than 36,000 lawyers took advantage of the online registration program for the 2009 registration year. The most visited website feature, the Lawyer Search function, had over 700,000 visitors last year, enabling people to search the Master Roll for certain basic public registration information, including business address and public disciplinary information about Illinois lawyers.

## Educational Programs

The ARDC continues to be a national leader in providing professional responsibility training and ethics seminars to the profession and the public. Last year, as a provider, it presented seminars wherein a total 5,000 lawyers received over 10,000 hours in MCLE credit without charge. In addition, ARDC Commissioners and staff participated in 165 MCLE programs sponsored by bar associations, law firms, government offices and other organizations thereby reaching an estimated 13,000 Illinois lawyers.

## Ethics Assistance to the Bar

The Commission's Ethics Inquiry Program, a telephone inquiry resource, continues to serve Illinois attorneys who seek help in resolving hypothetical, ethical dilemmas. Last year, the program handled about 4,000 inquiries, approximately 600 more than in 2007.

