

Paul Edward Bender, J.D., Underwriting Counsel for Fidelity National Title Group, Vice President Chicago Title Insurance Company

Paul E. Bender is a native of Lovington, Illinois. He has a B.A. from Millikin University, M.B.A. from University of Phoenix, and J.D. with Honors from Hamline University School of Law.

He is celebrating 35 years with Chicago Title starting in Peoria in 1979. He has been an examiner, underwriting counsel and managed direct operations in Champaign, Decatur and Bloomington. He has been in his current position since 2011 which includes underwriting for both downstate direct operations and the Fidelity Agency Group.

Mr. Bender is active in the Illinois Land Title Associations and is currently a Republican Precinct Committeeman, Normal, IL.

Timothy J. Howard, J.D., Howard & Howard

Mr. Howard concentrates his practice in business, commercial, real estate and trust litigation, and bankruptcy law. He is admitted to practice in the states of Illinois and Michigan as well as the United States District Court for the Northern, Central and Southern Districts of Illinois, the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Howard graduated with an A.B. in History from Princeton University in 1972. After teaching high school for one year, he attended the University of Notre Dame Law School, receiving his J.D. in 1976. He has been named to Illinois Super Lawyers® from 2007 to 2016.

Mr. Howard is a member of the American Bar Association, the American Agricultural Law Association and the American Bankruptcy Institute. He has chaired the Sections on Commercial, Banking & Bankruptcy Law and Federal Civil Practice of the Illinois State Bar Association and is President of the Peoria County Bar Association. Mr. Howard was a member of the Peoria County Board from 1982 through 1992 and a Trustee of the Greater Peoria Sanitary District from 1996 to 2008.

Mr. Howard's publications include: "Agricultural Financing in Illinois Under Article 9" in Secured Transactions (Ill. Inst. for Cont. Legal Ed., 2016); "The Dodd-Frank Act's Impact on Consumer Litigation," in Illinois Bar Journal, Vol. 100, No. 2 (February 2012); "Applying Equitable Marshaling When Only One Common Debtor Signs the Security Agreement," in Am. Bankr. Inst. Journal (May 2011); "Representing Tenants: When Landlords File for Bankruptcy" in Am. Bankr. Inst. Journal (March 2009), "What are 'Ordinary Business Terms' after BAPCPA?" in Am. Bankr. Inst. Journal (Sept. 2007); "Financing the Dealer" in Advising Illinois Financial Institutions (Ill. Inst. for Cont. Legal Ed., 2002) (Supp. 2006).

Mr. Howard has been active in several community organizations including the W.D. Boyce Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the Peoria Association of Retarded Citizens, the Heart of Illinois United Way and the Girl Scouts of America – Kickapoo Council (President 1996-98).

A. Clay Cox, J.D., Cox & Associates, LLC

A. Clay Cox is the managing partner in the law firm of Cox & Associates, LLC, practicing primarily in the areas of business organization law, including corporations, partnerships and limited liability companies, estate planning and probate, employee benefits and tax law.

He has a bachelor of science in accounting from the University of Missouri and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Illinois. In addition to being licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois, he has successfully passed the Illinois CPA examination.

Mr. Cox is a past member and chairman of the Employee Benefits Section Council of the Illinois State Bar Association. He has also authored a chapter on Employee Benefits and Bankruptcy for the Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education Employee Benefits Law publication. He has also been a speaker at several continuing legal education seminars. Mr. Cox also served on the panel of Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Trustees for the Central District of Illinois for approximately 25 years.

Mr. Cox has served the community as President of the McLean County Arts Council, Treasurer of the Bloomington/Normal YMCA and Secretary of the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation.

The Cox family includes his wife Kathleen and two grown sons, Christopher Cox and Patrick Cox who are both also attorneys working in his firm. He is also the grandfather of two grandsons Connor and Kellen Cox.

Frank Hoffman, J.D., Attorney at Law

Attorney Frank Hoffman received his Law Degree from Southern Illinois University in 1980. He has represented thousands of clients in various types of bankruptcy in his 36 years of practice. He is admitted to practice with the Federal District Court, Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and before the United States Supreme Court.

Jim Finegan, J.D., Finegan Law Firm

Attorney Jim Finegan was born on August 6, 1949. He attended the University of Illinois for undergraduate school and received his B.A. in 1969. He then attended Northwestern University for Law School and received his J.D. in 1972.

Jim Finegan moved to Bloomington, Illinois after graduating from Northwestern University College of Law to take a job as an attorney with a local law firm. Eventually, Mr. Finegan opened a practice of his own specializing in bankruptcy, real estate and civil litigation and is currently located directly across the street from the Law and Justice Center in downtown Bloomington.