

WHO STARTED THE NH BAR FOUNDATION AND WHY?

For nearly 30 years, the New Hampshire Bar Foundation leadership and membership have dedicated themselves to increasing access to the justice system for all New Hampshire residents. Begun at a time when there were only 1506 New Hampshire Bar members (close to 6,000 today) such a mission could only be described as “visionary.” On March 25, 1977, Stanley Brown, former NHBA president, along with former NH Attorney General, Gordon M. Tiffany and three other former NHBA presidents, Fred W. Hall, Jr., Joseph M. Kerrigan, and N. Michael Plaut, convened in Brown’s Manchester office to “establish a voluntary corporation...the New Hampshire Bar Foundation” at 77 Market Street, Manchester, New Hampshire. The Articles of Incorporation stated the objects of the New Hampshire Bar Foundation are: “a) to advance the science of jurisprudence and improve and promote the administration of justice..., b) to receive outright or in trust gifts...to hold and manage under the terms and conditions imposed thereon..., and, c) to operate as a charitable and educational foundation...”

With these farsighted goals in mind, the first fundraising letters were mailed that year to past presidents of the NH Bar Association. With monies raised, the first Foundation grant of \$350 went to the New Hampshire State Law Library for the purpose of acquiring legal publications to be selected by the New Hampshire Supreme Court Justices.

Attorneys Hall and Kerrigan are the only two living members among the original founders. Attorney Hall remembers Gordon Tiffany as the one who initiated the process of establishing the Foundation. As he recalls, “Initially, the Foundation was a vehicle for fundraising, as is usually the case for establishing a foundation. The NH Bar was maturing and needed a new home. The Foundation purchased the building at 18 Centre Street in Concord to serve as the NH Bar Center. Jack Middleton was a great motivator behind this effort, in addition to being very instrumental in getting the IOLTA Program approved, which is extremely important for funding law services. The Foundation has really blossomed since then.” In 1999, Attorney Hall established the Justice William A. Grimes Award for Judicial Professionalism Fund.

In an interview with Joseph Kerrigan in 1995 for the Foundation's Legal History Project, Attorney Kerrigan spoke about his involvement in founding the New Hampshire Bar Foundation. He stated that, "[The Foundation] is a tremendously effective endeavor. It had financial overtones, of course, because the Foundation could handle money in a way that the Bar Association can't and so it was probably a necessary accessory in order to accomplish the direct aims of the Bar Association. And also, to get itself into a position where it can do much more than, you know, provide a home for the Bar Association. The Bar Foundation, I think, is one of the most effective social machines around the state at this point in time."

In 1982, New Hampshire became the second state in the nation to approve an IOLTA Program (Florida was the first), with revenues designated to the Foundation under NH Supreme Court Rule 50. Today, every state in the Union and the District of Columbia operates an IOLTA program. The Foundation's first IOLTA Grants were made in 1983 in the amount of \$123,000 to 9 programs. The Foundation's endowment and Justice Society Funds grew through bequests and other major gifts and has become another source for grant funding beyond IOLTA revenues. In 2006, the Foundation's Justice Grants and IOLTA Grants reached over \$1.5 million dollars and provided funding for 22 programs reaching every county in the state.

Next issue of *Bar News* will feature an in-depth look at the Foundation today.

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