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ISBA Past President John O'Brien named vice president with Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund

John G. O'Brien, one of the most recognized attorneys in Illinois, has been named vice president and counsel at [Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc. \(ATG\)](#). O'Brien has resigned from the ATG Board of Directors to assume his new responsibilities; Chicago attorney Jonathan Sherry replaced him.

O'Brien, who has practiced law in Arlington Heights since 1972, was president of the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA) in 2009-10 and is past president and current chairman of the board of directors of the Illinois Real Estate Lawyers Association (IRELA), an organization he founded in 1994. IRELA, composed of real estate attorneys from all corners of Illinois, is the only bar association that represents the interests solely of real estate attorneys. ATG and IRELA have partnered over the years to advocate for real estate attorneys and the clients they serve.

Largely through O'Brien's advocacy efforts in the mid-90s, IRELA filed a lawsuit against a large Chicago-area realtor to prevent its agents from engaging in the unauthorized practice of law by their efforts to offer what amounted to legal advice to home buyers. IRELA won the lawsuit and continues, according to the ISBA, "to serve as a watchdog to prevent non-lawyers from offering what are essentially legal services to home buyers and sellers." The impact of this ruling is clear not only for attorneys but also for the clients they represent.

The ISBA also credits O'Brien with traveling throughout the state during his presidency, which took place during a period of high foreclosure rates in Illinois, to help homeowners hang on to their homes and, if foreclosure was inevitable, to help them understand the process.

Of his service to the Illinois bar, Peter Birnbaum, ATG president and chief executive officer, notes, "John is one of the most beloved lawyers in Illinois. Through his founding and chairing of IRELA and his presidency of the ISBA, he has built valuable relationships with law firms throughout the state. We believe that John can use those skills to bring significant value to ATG, not only from a marketing standpoint but also through the advocacy we provide lawyers on a daily basis."



John G. O'Brien

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