

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin

Serving the profession since 1854

March 25, 2021

Family lawyers create Boyd scholarship for Black law students

By Jessie M. Molloy
jmolloy@lawbulletinmedia.com

Hoping to attract more Black law students to careers in family law, a local bar group has announced a scholarship named after a Cook County associate judge who's served for decades in the Domestic Relations Division.

The Illinois chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers announced the creation of the William Stewart Boyd Scholarship for African American Law Students this week.

Boyd has served on the Cook County bench in the Domestic Relations Division since 1998. As a lawyer, he practiced family law for 17 years.

The annual \$5,000 scholarship will be made available to Black students enrolled at an Illinois law school who show interest in family law.

AAML-IL President Adam Kibort, a partner at Grund & Leavitt, called family law a field "in need of diversification."

"Having diversity and having lawyers practicing in the area who understand the people they're advocating for helps us all understand people better and helps them receive more equitable outcomes," Kibort said. "There is a lack of representation of people of color in family law, and we thought we should do something to change that."

In the AAML's announcement, the organization explained that Boyd represents "all the positive attributes of a judge."

"He is without a doubt one of the most, if not the most, well-regarded judges in the division, and we could think of no one with a pedigree or CV who would be bettered honored by this scholarship," Kibort said.

Boyd, in a written statement shared by the AAML, said he is moved by the honor.

"I've always just tried to do my job. For people to appreciate my work to this extent — that's just unbelievable," he said. "I was speechless when I learned about receiving such an honor

while I'm still alive! Coming at this juncture, an honor like this really lifts my spirit."

Kibort said discussions about the scholarship plan came in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests sparked last year by the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police during an arrest.

"We wanted to support the Black Lives Matter movement, and our national organization put out a statement at the time, but we wanted to do more than provide lip service to the issue," Kibort said. "We wanted to plant seeds for long-term change and do something for the individuals who are the targets of systematic racism."

Applications for the scholarship are open, and incoming first-year law students have until Sept. 1 to apply. The academy plans to present the winner of the scholarship at a ceremony with Boyd in the fall.

The AAML also hopes to engage with the winners at programs throughout the year and get them time with Judge Boyd.

"Some of the details are still in process, but he will likely have one-on-one meetings with them and provide them with introductions and meetings with other attorneys in the field," Kibort said.

The scholarship committee is chaired by James Quigley, a partner at Beermann LLP.

"This scholarship will provide ways for the recipients to connect with family law attorneys in our organization who are always looking for law clerks, and thus to gain actual experience in family law," Quigley said in a written statement. "Ten years down the line, we will have ten recipients who are practicing family law and mentoring the next generation. So, it grows from there. That's the legacy we hope to create with the Boyd scholarship."

©2021 by Law Bulletin Media. Content on this site is protected by the copyright laws of the United States. The copyright laws prohibit any copying, redistributing, or retransmitting of any copyright-protected material. The content is NOT WARRANTED as to quality, accuracy or completeness, but is believed to be accurate at the time of compilation. Websites for other organizations are referenced at this site; however, the Law Bulletin Media does not endorse or imply endorsement as to the content of these websites. By using this site you agree to the [Terms, Conditions and Disclaimer](#). Law Bulletin Media values its customers and has a [Privacy Policy](#) for users of this website.