



ALLEGHENY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

Serving the Pittsburgh Legal Community

400 Koppers Building, 436 Seventh Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
www.ACBA.org • 412-261-6161

NEWS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Brian Knavish

*Director of Marketing, Media Relations
and Strategic Partnerships*

bknavish@acba.org | 412-402-6620

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ACBA Executive Director David Blaner Receives Bolton Award for Outstanding Bar Leadership

Award is Highest Honor Given by National Association of Bar Executives

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County Bar Association Executive Director David A. Blaner received the prestigious Bolton Award for Outstanding Bar Leadership on Aug. 5 at the National Association of Bar Executives Annual Meeting in Chicago.

The Bolton Award, the highest accolade awarded by NABE, is presented biennially to a bar association executive who “epitomizes the highest standard of professional excellence.”

“I’m beyond humbled by this honor,” Blaner said. “Working at the ACBA isn’t just a job, it’s a career. To be recognized by your peers for a career’s worth of blood, sweat and tears is a feeling that’s truly tough to put into words. I was speechless when I found out I was to be honored, but then to actually receive the award in a room full of colleagues and bar association presidents from across the country was emotional and surreal.”

Blaner has worked for the ACBA – the largest legal trade organization in the Pittsburgh region with approximately 5,500 members – since 1991, including serving as its Executive Director since 2000. He’s only the second executive director in the 152-year history of the ACBA.

“Receiving the Bolton Award is a prestigious honor not only for Dave, but for the entire Pittsburgh Legal Community,” said ACBA President Erica Laughlin. “Dave is a tremendous leader, relentless worker, trusted advisor and good friend who is extremely dedicated to all members of the ACBA. While Dave would certainly never seek out this type of recognition, it is well-deserved. His decades of service to the ACBA have helped shape the careers of countless lawyers and better our profession. The Allegheny County Bar Association is lucky to have him.”

Under his leadership, the ACBA has grown in every conceivable way, from the number of members served to the services provided to its impact on the profession and the community.

Today, the ACBA boasts more than 70 Committees, Divisions and Sections – sub-groupings of the bar association dedicated to specific practice areas, diversity initiative, public service pursuits, bar association governance and more.

Blaner oversees a \$3.9 million annual operating budget and 28 employees. In 1992, Blaner led the development of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation, the charitable affiliate of the ACBA, that now has a staff of 38 employees and a \$3.6 million operating budget.

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While working hard to operate and grow the ACBA, Blaner has always found time for involvement in the legal community at the regional and national levels through NABE, a national organization made up of some 600 bar associations.

An active member of NABE since 1991, Blaner has participated in various leadership roles with the organization over the past 26 years. He served as president from 2013 to 2014 and remains active on the Chief Staff Executive and Sponsorship committees.

Blaner has served as Peer-to-Peer Advisor for the American Bar Association Division of Bar Services, led board planning retreats and reviewed operations – including providing recommendations to strengthen finances, human resources, governance, membership benefits and services and non-dues revenue – for bar associations across the country.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Blaner joined a contingent of other bar association leaders and spent weeks in Louisiana assisting the New Orleans Bar Association with rebuilding its organization.

The Bolton Award is reflective of that commitment to the larger legal community. It is named in honor of Fred Bolton, Executive Director and Secretary of the Pennsylvania Bar Association from 1966 to 1977. Active members of NABE may be nominated by their peers; candidates are then evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Professionalism, character and integrity
- Vision and leadership
- Service to the legal profession
- Managerial ability
- Development of bar staff
- Providing cutting-edge programs for members
- Improvements in the administration of justice
- Entrepreneurship and creativity
- Warmth, friendliness and camaraderie
- Service within NABE generally

“Dave is the bar association professional we all want to be,” said NABE President Ellen Miller. “His leadership at the Allegheny Bar and his willingness to mentor and support new bar executives demonstrates his thoughtfulness for our work and shows the kind of impact we can have. I can’t think of a more deserving colleague to receive the Bolton.”

Blaner and his wife, Kelley, live in Moon Twp. Their two grown children, Zach and Lexie, live in Chicago.

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About the ACBA

Chartered in 1870 and headquartered in downtown Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Bar Association is a professional organization with approximately 5,500 member attorneys, judges, district justices, legal administrators and paralegals.