

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 26, 2012**

**Thirty-seven Illinois Law Firms Top  
Equality Illinois Corporate Responsibility Survey**

Equality Illinois today issues its seventh annual Raising the Bar report, recognizing 37 Illinois law firms for leading the way in providing a safe and fair work environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees and engaging with the LGBT community.

This annual look at corporate responsibility, built from our survey of the 150 largest firms doing business in the state of Illinois, which can be found at [http://issuu.com/eqil/docs/raising\\_the\\_bar](http://issuu.com/eqil/docs/raising_the_bar), focuses exclusively on law firms.

“We believe that lawyers, as defenders of the law, need to be at the forefront of equal work environments for LGBT individuals,” said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state’s oldest and largest LGBT Advocacy Organization.

In addition, Equality Illinois today announces the publication of the Law Firm Best Practices Manual with comprehensive policy recommendations to help firms foster an LGBT-friendly environment. The manual can be found at [http://issuu.com/eqil/docs/law\\_firm\\_best\\_practices](http://issuu.com/eqil/docs/law_firm_best_practices).

The law firms will be honored at the annual Lawyers for Diversity reception tonight (July 26) at 6 p.m. at Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted Street, Chicago). Illinois Supreme Court Justice Mary Jane Theis is the guest speaker at the event that will benefit Equality Illinois, the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago, LAGBAC Foundation, which is the charitable arm of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago, and Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Northern Illinois Council.

Thanks to the hard work of Equality Illinois and many others, Illinois is one of eleven states in which sexual orientation and gender identity are protected classes in the workplace. In addition, the civil union law and other statewide administrative guidelines set a far higher bar in law than can be measured by a national index.

“This higher baseline puts Illinois employers ahead of the pack, but it also gives them a greater responsibility to push the envelope in securing truly LGBT-inclusive policies in the workplace,” Cherkasov said.

As such, the Equality Illinois survey measures workplace equality in three categories: employment benefits, workplace diversity initiatives, and community relations.

With the information gathered from the 2012 Equality Illinois Law Firm Survey, we have identified the law firms in Illinois that are leading the way to LGBT workplace equality. This year, we are honoring firms in three groups. In the first group are the 26 firms that are Setting the Bar, having received perfect or near perfect scores in all three categories. In the second group are the five firms that are Approaching the Bench, receiving perfect or near perfect scores in two of our three categories. In the third group are six firms that are Taking a Stand, making positive strides towards LGBT equality in the workplace.



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“We hope that highlighting these luminaries and their best practices will spur the development of fair LGBT policies at every firm. Equality Illinois will provide the tools for firms in the state to strengthen their LGBT-friendly policies in order to retain top talent and remain competitive,” Cherkasov said.

The law firms being recognized, by category and in alphabetical order, are:

**Setting the Bar**

Baker & McKenzie

Bryan Cave LLP

Chapman and Cutler LLP

DLA Piper

Dykema

Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP

Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP

Jenner & Block

Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP

Kirkland & Ellis

K&L Gates

McDermott Will & Emery

Morgan Lewis

Neal Gerber Eisenberg

Nixon Peabody LLP

Perkins Coie

Quarles & Brady LLP

Reed Smith LLP

Schiff Hardin LLP

Sedgwick LLP

Seyfarth Shaw LLP

Sidley Austin LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

SNR Denton

Winston & Strawn LLP

**Approaching the Bench**

Foley & Lardner LLP

Latham & Watkins LLP

Mayer Brown

McGuireWoods LLP

Yearwood & Associates, Ltd

**Taking a Stand**

Aronberg Goldgehn Davis & Garmisa

Clark Hill PLC

Dykema Gossett

Franczek Radelet PC

Goldberg Kohn

Marshall, Gerstein & Borun LLP