

Johnson & Bell Shareholder Elected President of Statewide Bar Association

The Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel (IDC) has elected Johnson & Bell, Ltd. Shareholder, Rick Hammond, as its new president. Hammond concentrates his practice on property insurance coverage, arson and fraud, and bad faith litigation. He received the 2008 Lexis Nexis Insurance Law Center's Honorable Mention "Insurance Lawyer of the Year Award." He was recognized by Lexis Nexis and his peers as "one of the attorneys who did the most in 2008 to effectively advance insurer positions and improve insurance law from the perspective of insurers."

"We hear a lot about the scales of justice, but the reality is, those scales are not always as balanced as they should be," said Hammond. "Our goal is to foster a more level playing field in the court room," Hammond said of the 1000 member association. He takes over the helm of the association with plans to build upon IDC's increased visibility at the State Capitol. "Historically, the plaintiff's bar has had a powerful and well-funded voice in Springfield. Every session sees the introduction of new pro-plaintiff legislation. It's the job of the IDC to ensure that any new legislation being proposed is fair and equitable for defendants. In that regard, you can expect to see us in Springfield, taking a very active role to combat assaults on fairness in Illinois law."

Rick is the first African-American to be elected President of the Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel in its 45 year history. "My election speaks to the IDC's receptivity to diversity, and that is worth mentioning. However, I see myself as just another hardworking, valued member of the IDC, who climbed the rungs to leadership, like many before me."

He is a member of the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, DRI, and the ABA where he has served as Vice-Chair of their Property Insurance Law Committee. He also serves as General Counsel for the Insurance Committee for Arson Control, a national insurance trade group, and is on the Board of Directors of the Insurance School of Chicago. He has been widely published in numerous journals and magazines, and he's a frequent presenter at national insurance industry and bar association conferences.

The Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel (IDC) was organized in 1964 and currently has 1,000 members. The purpose of the organization is to promote improvements in the administration of justice and enhance the service of the legal profession to the public; to encourage the prompt, fair and just disposition of tort litigation; to enhance the knowledge and improve the skills of defense lawyers; to advance the equitable and expeditious handling of disputes arising under all forms of insurance and surety contracts, and to work for the elimination of court congestion and delays in civil litigation.

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