

# A LAWYER IN

If you need legal expertise, chances are you won't have to look any further than the list of attorneys provided in the Highland Park Chamber directory. Included you'll find contact information for lawyers who represent such areas as family practice, personal injury, real estate, and intellectual property. These local firms are committed to giving your case the personal attention it deserves... and you don't have to drive downtown!

### Three Generations of Attorneys

Brian Lewis, of the firm **Baizer Kolar and Lewis**, comes from a long line of lawyers. It was his grandfather, Hy Lewis, who inspired him to become a lawyer. "My grandfather was the longest licensed practicing attorney in Illinois," said Lewis. "He left a legacy of helping people who couldn't fight for themselves, and this is the philosophy I maintain today."

Lewis and his firm specialize in catastrophic personal injuries, medical malpractice, and wrongful death. Lewis' experience as a defense attorney for an insurance company gives him experience on both sides of the coin. Lewis said that in his firm, "Every case is done on a contingency basis, and we put two or three partners on each case. At the end of the case, we've changed their lives."



Brian Lewis

Photo: Baizer Kolar and Lewis

Photo: Becker Gurian



Marty Becker

Lewis grew up in Highland Park, and he is bi-lingual in Spanish. He loves being a part of the community. "I eat here, shop here, and raise my family here."

*Recommendations: "Be sure your case is not referred out to another firm and that you have the best team representing you at depositions and in court."*

### Commercial Real Estate Expertise, Locally

"Our clients consider us their 'outside in-house counsel,'" said Marty Becker, a founding member of **Becker Gurian**, a boutique law firm specializing in real estate acquisitions and dispositions, property development, and complex leasing transactions. He values the partnerships the Becker Gurian legal team has built over the years.

"Our full-service real estate practice is based on a win-win situation. Our clients continue to refer to us because they trust our judgment and legal skills, and they're always buying, selling, leasing, or require assistance with real estate financing. The same is true with the attorneys we work with on these transactions. Our attorneys are grateful to have built these ongoing professional relationships."

Many years ago, Becker moved his office from Chicago to the North Shore. "It's a great advantage to be able to walk to the train or grab lunch in a neighborhood restaurant where they know you when you walk in."

*Recommendations: "Talk to people who've had a professional relationship with the attorney you're considering. Make sure your attorney appreciates the importance of communicating with you regarding the status of your case."*

### It's All in the Family

Miles Beermann began his career by founding a neighborhood law firm in Chicago in 1958. Although his firm, **Beermann Pritikin Mirabelli Swerdlove** has grown to more than 40 attorneys, covering everything from family law to commercial litigation to employment law, his commitment to serving his clients with integrity and compassion remains the same. He followed in the footsteps of his father, who was a probate attorney. What Beermann loves about his career is the intricacies of the law and being able to problem-solve.



Miles Beermann

Photo: Beermann Pritikin Mirabelli Swerdlove LLP

In handling divorce cases, Beermann said he is deeply concerned with "the impact divorce will have on a family. I try to create a positive atmosphere of working together for the best outcome."

# THE HOUSE?

Beermann taught at DePaul Law School for 20 years, teaching divorce law as well as trial skills in a courtroom in Daley Center, where he served as judge. Will he retire soon? "Absolutely not. I love what I do!"

Photo: KSN Law

*Recommendations: Beermann urges searching the Internet first. "Do your homework. There's a lot of information out there. In divorce cases he counsels, "If you're living in the same house, get a P.O. Box to ensure you receive all your mail, and also ascertain that your email address is secure."*



Jordan Shifrin

## Loves to Litigate

Brad Block, **Law Office of Brad Block**, likes to solve problems. After graduating from Harvard Law, he gained broad base experience at several law firms, which helped him determine his future path. "I liked the litigation aspect of the law and enjoyed the challenges of complex negotiations in bankruptcy," Block said.

Block spent 10 years in the litigation group of McDonald's Corporation, handling both franchisee and company issues. That experience led him to set up his own practice, specializing in commercial litigation, commercial bankruptcy, and insolvency matters.

*Recommendations: "Make sure you and your attorney share the same agenda. Analysis should be done up front; no one should just get on the treadmill and see what happens. Your lawyer should focus on solving your problems and moving the ball forward."*

## The "Condo" Firm

**Kovitz Shifrin Nesbit** founding principal Jordan Shifrin said that when he graduated from law school, everyone practiced every kind of law. As time went on, however, his law firm, like many others, became more specialized. Today, the cornerstone of the firm is working with condominium and homeowner associations in the Chicagoland area and Wisconsin.

Shifrin opened his firm in 1984, and he said he has enjoyed his 30-year career because it has allowed him to help people and build long-term relationships. "When I get to the heart of the problem, I can fight for people's rights and help resolve their issues," he said, adding, "Condo associations continually need legal representation, and we've had some clients with us since our inception."

*Recommendations: Shifrin stresses convenience and confidence. "Check the Leading Lawyers and Super Lawyer Networks as a good resource. Consult with an attorney who specializes in your area to see whether or not you have a case."*

## The Beat Goes On...

Before going to law school, Alan Pearlman of **Alan Pearlman, Ltd**, was a percussionist. He played for Berry Gordy as a studio musician, and he can be heard on drums on recordings of The Supremes and other Motown greats. Pearlman's father-in-law, however, who was an attorney, said he would pay for him to go to law school. But if Pearlman didn't make the grade or quit, he would have to pay back his father-in-law all the money, plus 20 percent. Fortunately, Pearlman liked law school and succeeded, specializing in family law, criminal law, and complex DUI matters. For the last 41 years, he has advocated for children and helped families through difficult times.

"I like the fact that I make a difference in people's lives," Pearlman said. His proudest moments are when former clients come back to him, thanking him for helping turn their lives around. Pearlman also believes "you should never stop learning your craft" and regularly participates in continuing legal education seminars. An expert in legal hardware/software, Pearlman has shared his expertise as "the electronic lawyer" in nationally syndicated columns.

*Recommendations: Check out lawyers' ratings at Avvo.com or LinkedIn to see what others have said about them."*

Photo: Alan Pearlman, Ltd



Alan Pearlman

## Where There's a Will...

In his practice, Michael Rhoades has handled more than 2,000 estate plans, bringing order and consistency to his clients' personal affairs. His firm, **Rhoades Levy Law Group**, incorporates a documented structure of wills, trusts, and power of attorney; coordinates documentation with other assets; and provides such valued-added referrals as charities and CPA recommendations. "My objective is to create a properly planned and implemented estate plan to avoid probate, as well as assure that a minor doesn't receive too much financial freedom," he said.

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# LAWYER

Photo: Rhoades Levy Law Group



Michael Rhoades | Bill Levy

Rhoades' partner Bill Levy, who works on both estate planning and corporate business services, takes pride in "positively impacting my clients' lives and developing personal relationships. By asking the tough questions like 'who gets what, when and how,' my job is to determine who's in charge and create peace of mind." Levy advises that an attorney be a resource for all kinds of issues. "You should be able to consult with your lawyer on any legal or business matter."

*Recommendations: "Look at a firm's competency and experience. What specialty do they practice every day? Can they give you the face time you need?"*

### That's Never Been Done Before

Lesley Wallerstein has always questioned how things work. That curiosity has led her to a career as a Patent/Trademark and Copyright attorney in her Deerfield firm. She specializes in the business of invention; helping people take an idea for a new product from conception to trademark to an actual business in the marketplace. "I help protect the idea, do a patent search, and work with them throughout the process. I also make referrals to trusted marketing, finance, manufacturing, and promotion professionals."

Her favorite part of the job? "I enjoy completing patent applications. It combines my love of writing with problem solving. I'm an advocate for my clients on paper, not in a courtroom." Lesley also works with photographers and authors to help them copyright their work as well as send cease and desist letters when their work is compromised. She suggests that anyone starting a new business join his or her local Chamber of Commerce. "For me, it really helped launch my firm."

*Recommendations: "Ask about a patent attorney's technological background, whether it be in engineering, mechanical, or life sciences. Find out how comfortable they are working with all kinds of technology."*

Photo: Lesley A. Wallerstein, LLC



Lesley Wallerstein

Author Mira Temkin is a North Shore freelance writer whose articles have appeared in *Lakeland Boating*, *What's Happening*, *Chicago Upscale Travel Examiner*, and *Long Island Woman*. She also writes advertising and web copy. Reach her at [miratemkin@gmail.com](mailto:miratemkin@gmail.com).

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