

## 2007-2008 KCBA President Patrick M. Flaherty

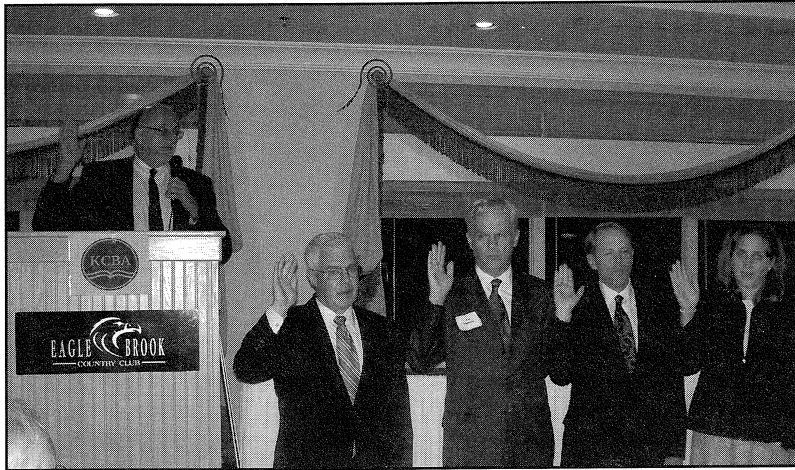
by P.J. Gubbins

Going into its one hundred and fiftieth year, the Kane County Bar Association, as every year, inaugurates a new president. Taking office for the 2007-2008 tenure is Patrick M. Flaherty of Kinnally Flaherty Krentz & Loran, P.C. in Aurora.

Flaherty is a Fox Valley lad, born in Aurora, raised in Batavia and now a resident of Aurora. Following the family tradition (which included his father and four brothers), he is a product of the Benedictine Monks of Marmion High School. "I attended the old Marmion, when it was still Marmion Military Academy, located on Lake Street in Aurora, site of the present day park district building". He was involved in track and his "share of punishment drills for long hair or unpolished shoes and brass."

One of eight children, he is the only one to enter the legal profession. His father attended one year of law school before being interrupted by World War II. The elder Flaherty became a flight instructor during the war but was unable to resume law school after the war due to family obligations. Flaherty's mother was a laboratory technician for many years at Mercy Center Hospital in Aurora.

After graduating from Marmion, Flaherty entered DePaul University, commuting an hour and a half each way to earn his degree in political science. He graduated from DePaul in 1975, after suspending his education for a year and a half while he worked on the assembly line at the Caterpillar plant in Montgomery. Like many other kids in those days, "the kids in my family had to put themselves



Honorable Michael Colwell swears in Past President Bob Britz, 2007-08 President Pat Flaherty, 1st Vice President David Camic and 2nd Vice President Julie Cibulskis

through college," he explained.

"I always knew I wanted to be a lawyer," stated Flaherty. "I grew up in turbulent times, in the sixties and early seventies." Like many of his peers, Flaherty said he was profoundly influenced by "the brutality and injustice of the civil rights struggle and the Vietnam War." He was inspired by people like Martin Luther King, Jr. and enlightened by people like Michael Harrington, Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn. "It was a passion for advocacy against illegitimate authority that drove many of us to law school," according to Flaherty. "We wanted to represent people who needed a voice and who could not stand up for themselves." He remembers watching sessions of the "Chicago 7" conspiracy trial at the Federal Building, a trial which grew out of the violence at the 1968 Democratic Convention.

He entered NIU law school after DePaul and credits his wife as being the sole family support for his three years at DeKalb. Flaherty met the former Judy Wicks when, as high school students, they both worked in the kitchen of the old St. Joseph/Mercy Hospital. She frequently drove him

home after work in her bright red '61 Chevy Impala.

"We were high school sweethearts", states Flaherty. "She was valedictorian of her Rosary class and she is still the smartest person I know." They were married his senior year in college after she graduated from NIU. Mrs. Flaherty supported them first as a secretary at the former St.

Charles Medical Center in Aurora and later as administrator of the facility. "Judy subsequently held management positions at Northwestern University Medical Center and at Central DuPage Hospital. She retired to be home with the kids after serving as president of Marklund, a non-profit organization providing residential and educational services for people with disabilities."

The Flahertys have four children. Ben, the oldest, at thirty, is an independent film maker in New York City. Mark, twenty-seven, is disabled, resides with his parents and is employed at the Association for Individual Development in Aurora. Katie, twenty-two, just graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and is employed in hotel management in Chicago. Daniel, seventeen, is a junior at West Aurora High School. So far, Daniel is the only offspring to evidence an interest in the legal profession.

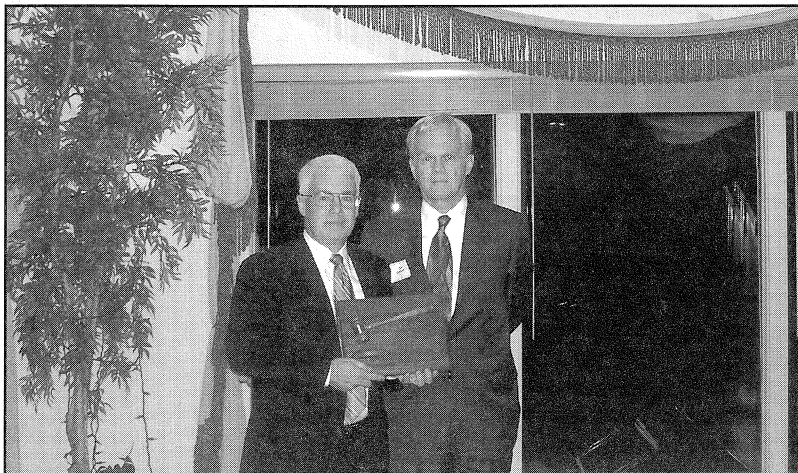
During law school, Flaherty volunteered at Project Verdict. This was an organization that provided representation to Vietnam era veterans who had been dishonorably discharged from the military service and who wanted to challenge the validity of

the dishonorable classification. According to Flaherty, some of these veterans were suffering from mental disabilities that should have precluded induction in the first place and the conduct of others was insufficient to justify a dishonorable termination. As Flaherty saw it, "these were veterans from an illegal war who were victimized a second time by an improper discharge which would affect the rest of their lives."

At Project Verdict, law students took a case from intake through hearing. "We interviewed the clients, gathered evidence, examined witnesses before a military panel, made closing arguments and prepared written briefs," Flaherty said. Cases were heard at Great Lakes Naval Base in Illinois and at Fort Harrison in Indiana. "The project had a good track record and we could do all of the work without being a licensed attorney," stated Flaherty.

After law school, Flaherty did a two year stint as a law clerk at the Illinois Appellate Court in Elgin. From this vantage point, he determined that Reid, Ochsenschlager, Murphy & Hupp of Aurora was one of the best law firms in the area. Flaherty interviewed and was hired by Bill Murphy. At eighty six years of age, Murphy is still practicing law as of counsel at Flaherty's current firm. Flaherty, who appreciates his beginnings, stated that "...Murphy was widely regarded as one of the best trial lawyers in Illinois." While there, Flaherty got his first exposure to personal injury litigation.

After spending two years with "Reid Oxie", Flaherty joined a spin off of the firm eventually called Thompson, Lamont, Flaherty & Masur. He spent twenty-two years with the firm limit-



Past President Bob Britz and Incoming President Patrick Flaherty

ing his practice to personal injury and wrongful death litigation. "Given my philosophical orientation, representing plaintiffs was a natural evolution." Flaherty credits Chuck Thompson, "also one of the best trial lawyers in Illinois," with helping him refine a natural instinct for advocacy.

In January of 2006, Flaherty left the firm with partner Mark Masur and joined the successor of the Reid Oxie firm now known as Kinnally Flaherty Krentz & Loran. He continues to limit his practice to all phases of injury and death litigation, including medical negligence, product failures, truck and auto accidents, premises liability, construction accidents and workers' compensation. Flaherty is excited about his new firm and believes it has a very bright future. He has reconnected with Pat Kinnally, a former neighbor and Marmion classmate, with whom he started his professional life years earlier at Reid Oxie. The tradition of excellence inspired by Bill Murphy continues on in the new firm, Flaherty said. Kinnally is recognized as a Leading Lawyer and Super Lawyer in general and commercial litigation. Flaherty is recognized as a Super Lawyer in personal injury litigation and Masur is recognized as a Super Lawyer in workers' compensation.

Outside the practice of law, Flaherty has coached with Aurora Boys

Baseball and Batavia Boys Baseball and has served on the Aurora Preservation Commission and on the Board of Directors of the Association for Individual Development. His most enjoyable time over the years, however, has been spent with his family. Among other things, he and his wife enjoy taking their disabled son Mark "train watching" every

Friday night. Mark loves trains and on Friday nights they go to train yards so he can watch the trains. Flaherty has become an expert on how to access different yards where one can view the trains connecting and disconnecting.

The family takes a vacation together every year, often to the solitude of Door County. Flaherty prefers destinations that can be reached by car. This son of a flight instructor doesn't enjoy flying. He does enjoys reading, particularly political magazines, history books and Scott Turow novels.

As the new president, Flaherty plans to concentrate on preparations for the KCBA 150th anniversary celebration.



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