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story

The firm today known as Miner, Barnhill & Galland started in 1971 when Judson Miner and Allison Davis, neither of them long out of law school, decided to create a firm that would be racially integrated (a rarity in small firms at that time) and would specialize in civil rights and community development law. Charles Barnhill joined the firm the following year, and George Galland in 1973. The partners bought and refurbished a neglected townhouse at 14 W. Erie Street in Chicago in what was then an unfashionable area a few blocks from Chicago's Michigan Avenue. That building has remained the firm's home office for four decades while the surrounding neighborhood reversed its decline and gradually became part of the vibrant Near North Side of Chicago as it exists today.

From the start, the firm found itself participating in some of the most exciting legal developments of the 1970s. Within a year of the firm's founding, Mr. Miner and Mr. Barnhill were arguing an important case in the United States Supreme Court, and the firm was representing community organizations developing ambitious subsidized housing developments on Chicago's South Side. At the start of the 1980s, the firm became heavily involved in litigation under the Voting Rights Act, leading among other victories to a 1986 court decree that threw out the racially-gerrymandered Chicago aldermanic map and led to Mayor Harold Washington obtaining a working majority in the Chicago City Council. Beginning in the late 1990s, the firm developed a predatory lending practice that led to some of the most significant consumer rights settlements in the nation's history.

In 1988, Charles Barnhill moved to Madison, Wisconsin and opened the firm's Madison office on Capitol Hill overlooking Lake Monona. For a time the firm maintained a third office in the Central Valley of California that specialized in representing low-wage workers challenging wages and other abuses in the food packing and agricultural industries. The firm closed that office when Valeriano Saucedo, who staffed that office, was appointed to the California bench. That legacy has continued with the firm's work challenging wage and hour abuses in several industries.

Various partners and associates of the firm have held public office or contributed to public service in bar associations and other activities. In the mid-1980s, Judson Miner served for nearly four years as Corporation Counsel of the City of Chicago under Mayor Washington and his successor, while George Galland served as General Attorney of the Chicago Park District. President Barack Obama began his legal career as an associate at the firm in 1993 and remained affiliated with the firm until his election to the United States Senate in 2004. Three of the firm's partners have served as past

presidents of the Chicago Council of Lawyers, a reform bar association. Jeffrey Cummings is a past Chairman of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and Nancy Maldonado presently serves as its Vice President. In Madison, Elizabeth Eberle served as the Treasurer of the Wisconsin State Bar's Appellate Practice Section Board of Directors; Sarah Siskind is Treasurer of the Wisconsin Western District Bar Association.

Over the years the firm expanded from its original focus on civil rights and class action litigation and community development. In the 1980s, the firm began representing not-for-profit hospitals and has become well-regarded for its broad health care practice. In the 1990s, the firm began representing governments and private "relators" in litigation under the federal False Claims Act and analogous State statutes. Among many other important achievements in this area, for the last ten years the firm has represented the Attorneys General of numerous States in litigation that has recovered hundreds of millions of dollars for States in litigation challenging the pricing practices by the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry.

Miner, Barnhill & Galland today enjoys a national reputation and represents a broad range of individual, government, nonprofit, and corporate clients. The lawyers based in Chicago include Judson Miner, George Galland, Laura Tilly, William Miceli, Jeffrey Cummings, Robert Libman, Benjamin Blustein, Nancy Maldonado, Scott Entin, and Deanna Pihos (who divides her time between the Chicago office and Los Angeles, California), and David Baltmanis. The lawyers based in Madison are Charles Barnhill, Sarah Siskind, and Elizabeth Eberle.



Miner, Barnhill & Galland, P.C. was profiled in the January 2009 edition of the *Chicago Lawyer* magazine. To read a printable PDF of the article, entitled "A Firm with a Mission," please click on the cover image.