

Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen

Est. 1910

The law firm of Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen was established one hundred years ago when Clarence Heyl opened his office in the YMCA building on the corner of Fulton and Jefferson. Clarence believed in “putting his clients first and representing them efficiently and effectively.” Clarence did just that, and established himself as an outstanding trial lawyer with an expertise in insurance defense.

The firm moved to the Central National Bank Building in 1913 when it was newly constructed. Recognized as one of the great trial lawyers in downstate Illinois, Clarence Heyl was elected President of the Illinois State Bar Association in 1932. With a growing practice, Verle Safford became an associate. Heyl’s son-in-law, John H. Royster, later joined the firm and later became a partner. Royster’s expertise in the area of corporate, real estate, probate and trust law contributed greatly to the firm’s success.

In 1946, former Army Captain William J. Voelker, Jr. joined the group and the firm became known as Heyl, Royster & Voelker in 1948. An outstanding trial lawyer, William Voelker managed the firm and earned numerous honors including election as President of the Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel and he became a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Upon retirement, Voelker served as a judge in the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Illinois.

A second military veteran and Peoria County native, Lyle W. Allen, joined the firm in 1951 and developed an expertise representing doctors in malpractice lawsuits. In 1957, Allen became a partner: the firm’s name was subsequently changed to Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen in 1962. Ten lawyers were in the office during that time. Like the other partners in the office, Allen had a distinguished career, serving as President of the Association of Defense Trial Attorneys, President of the Illinois State Bar Association, and he was recognized as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

The firm saw tremendous growth beginning in the 1970s, as offices were opened in Springfield followed by Urbana (1981), Rockford (1985), Edwardsville (1987) and North Peoria (2004) – all while maintaining their downtown presence in the Chase Bank Building where they have been since 1978.

Today, the firm has over one hundred lawyers representing clients throughout the state of Illinois. The firm has earned the distinction of having more attorneys selected as *Super Lawyers* than any downstate firm in Illinois, and it is the only firm in the state to have three attorneys elected to be President of the Illinois State Bar Association. Locally, six members of the firm have served as President of the Peoria County Bar Association. Beyond numerous additional professional accomplishments, the firm provides hundreds of hours of pro bono volunteer legal services annually. Members of the firm have a long tradition of giving back through involvement in numerous social, charitable, religious and community organizations. Clarence Heyl’s philosophy of “putting his clients first” and his unwavering commitment to excellence have been the hallmark of the firm’s success for over one hundred years.

Congratulations to Heyl, Royster, Voelker & Allen on becoming a Peoria Historical Society Centenarian organization.