

BILL BOYD:

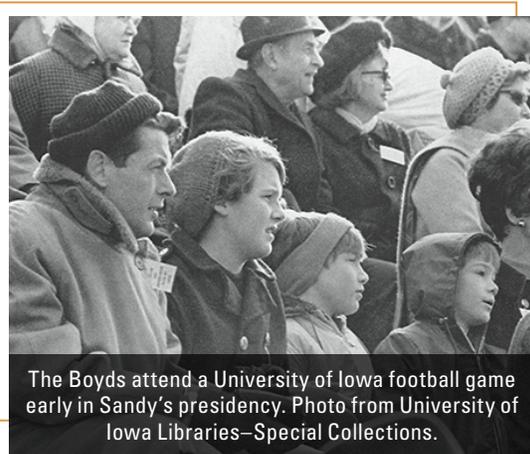
A NEW LEADER AT THE HELM

INCOMING ISBA PRESIDENT PRACTICES AT NYEMASTER GOODE, HAS A PASSION FOR NONPROFITS

By **Melissa Higgins**, ISBA Communications Director



Bill Boyd was in fourth grade when his father, Willard “Sandy” Boyd became president of the University of Iowa. It was a tumultuous time on campus, rife with sometimes destructive demonstrations related to civil rights issues and the Vietnam War. Bill recalls a man dressed as “death” in bandages and fake blood, carrying an upside-down American flag, would park across the street and lie on the Boyds’ lawn morning after morning.



The Boyds attend a University of Iowa football game early in Sandy’s presidency. Photo from University of Iowa Libraries—Special Collections.

“University administrators were often viewed as standing for the status quo and were present on the campus. This made them more available targets than political leaders,” wrote Bill’s mother, Susan Kuehn Boyd, in diary entries written in 1970.

The family wrestled with decisions about where the family should stay to be safe, and his father also worried about the students and the university as well. His challenge was to keep the campus open and allow diverse

opinions to be expressed without intimidation or interruption. He also offered options to those who desired to leave.

It was a formative time for Bill, who at 10 years old, witnessed the impact of social strife up close. “I remember being impressed with the importance of the law in addressing these issues,” he recalled. It was one of the factors that piqued his interest in law as a career.

Bill, having been born and raised in Iowa City, attended the University of Michigan for undergrad and then came back home to the University of Iowa College of Law for his J.D. After clerking for federal Judge Donald O’Brien in Sioux City, he launched his career as a lawyer in Washington, D.C., before ultimately coming back to Iowa when an opportunity arose at Nyemaster Goode P.C. in Des Moines.

Bill has been working for Nyemaster, the state’s largest law firm, for 25 years in the Business, Finance and Real Estate Department. He represents clients that range from large corporations to individuals in transactional matters and regulatory compliance.

“I find the issues the firm’s clients are facing to be very interesting. I enjoy working with them to determine their goals, and then assist in developing strategies to accomplish those goals,” he explained.

Outside of the law, Bill is involved in community nonprofit work, serving on the boards of various organizations such as ChildServe, Variety – The Children’s Charity, Mercy College of Health Sciences, the University of Iowa Alumni Association, Iowa Legal Aid, Humanities Iowa and the Iowa Arts Council.

“One of the things I really like about Iowa is that it is very community-minded with a lot of great nonprofit and charitable opportunities,” he said.

It was this passion for nonprofits that led to Bill’s first significant project with The Iowa State Bar Association. When he realized the state’s Nonprofit Corporation Act hadn’t been updated since 1965, he suggested the Business Law Section set up a committee to review it. This resulted in the Revised Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act that was ultimately adopted by the state legislature. He later published two books



through the American Bar Association on nonprofit organizations and board governance (pictured above).

Since seeing that initial first project come to fruition, Bill has served in various leadership roles within the bar association – as section and committee chair and as a member of the Board of Governors. He also served in ABA leadership roles and as president of the Polk County Bar Association, before making his way up through The Iowa State Bar Association officer rotation. Years of involvement at varying levels with bar associations made clear what he sees as a top priority: member engagement.

“The Iowa State Bar Association is a membership organization, so membership is vital to the success and sustainability of the association. My objective is to focus on member engagement in different ways – especially with the sections and committees, making sure they are active,” he said.

Bill, using his nonprofit board experience, has also been looking closely at ways to restructure ISBA governance to make sure the association is running efficiently and effectively. Additional priorities of his include access to justice, strengthened grassroots legislative advocacy efforts, support for the courts, rural practice issues and keeping the profession and bar association innovative in the modern era of practice. He has seen major changes just in his 25 years at Nyemaster.

“We did not have computers when I started and I can’t imagine working without a computer now,” he said. “We have the same challenge you see in firms around the country. The mode of communications has changed

– there is less in-person contact. Instead, it is voicemail and email, which means you always have to be mindful of what’s going on and be responsive in an extremely timely manner. But changing technology also means we have to make sure our profession is staying competitive in the marketplace.”

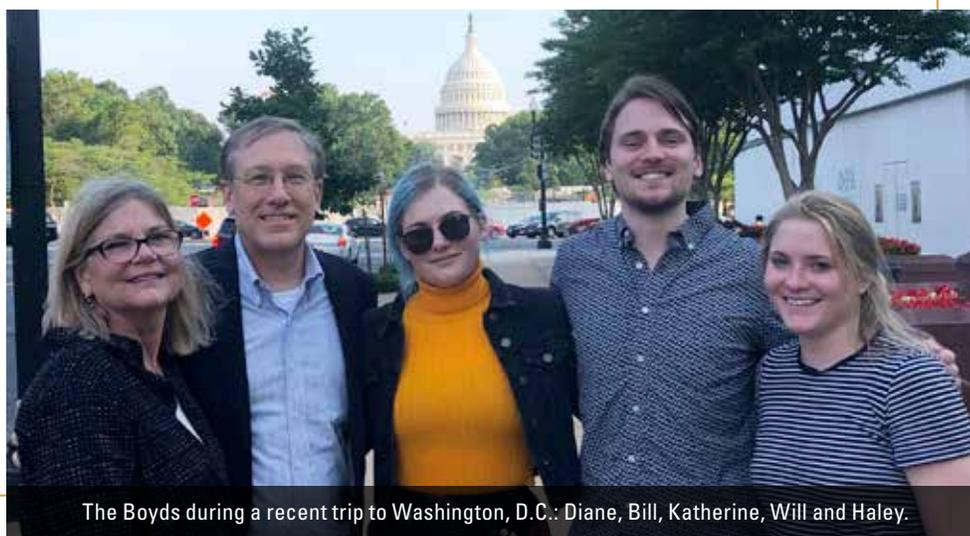
Bill’s predecessor, outgoing President Tom Levis, started the ISBA Innovations Committee to study big shifts in the profession. Bill has been involved in that committee and plans to oversee its continued focus on what is coming down the pipe in the legal profession. He also plans to carry over another program launched under Levis, Table for 10, where ISBA leadership drives to smaller communities around the state to meet with local attorneys for lunch or dinner on a regular basis. He and the other officers put a lot of miles on their cars this last year – visiting all corners of the state. Bill himself visited Centerville, Oska-loosa, Indianola, Atlantic, Fort Dodge and Forest City.

“Table for Ten has been very effective for hearing the concerns lawyers have around the state. We all come from different practices and these gatherings have brought to light some important issues our members are facing,” he said.

On the weekends, Bill puts some miles on his car too. Nearly every weekend, he drives to Iowa City to visit family, including two children who live there. He and his sister, Betsy, take his parents, now in their 90s, on day trips to see the sights in small towns throughout Eastern Iowa. He and his wife, Diane, have triplets: Haley, Katherine and Will. They are all graduates of the University of Iowa, just like Bill, and his brother, Tom, who is a commercial litigator in the Twin Cities.

Many Iowa attorneys may already know the Boyd name because of the family’s undeniable linkage to the University of Iowa. The current law school building is named after Sandy Boyd – his metal bust a visible fixture on the campus. His memoirs were just published by the University of Iowa Press. And while Sandy is often thought of as one of the university’s most revered figures, Bill’s peers say he encapsulates the same highly respected traits: humility, kindness, fairness, a level head and an unsurpassed work ethic.

“I could not be more confident in a successor than I am in Bill Boyd,” said outgoing President Tom Levis. “He is a smart, hardworking lawyer. To top it off, Bill is also one of the nicest lawyers I have ever met. I could not be more excited for the future of The Iowa State Bar Association with Bill Boyd at the helm.”



The Boyds during a recent trip to Washington, D.C.: Diane, Bill, Katherine, Will and Haley.