



Success at any age is impressive. But to achieve it at an early age is even more of a feat.

Each year, the 40 Under Forty Committee at Law Bulletin Publishing Company sift through hundreds of nomination forms to select 40 of the most talented young attorneys working in Illinois. This publication is the result of this work.

This is the eleventh consecutive year that we have produced this edition. This year, it seemed the competition was more intense than ever. We received more than 900 nominations for attorneys through out Illinois.

What does it take to earn recognition as one of the best young lawyers in the state? Intelligence, passion, success in the office, a desire to help community, and, most importantly, a willingness to work hard at one of the country's most important professions.

Putting together this issue is no easy task. We solicited nominations from across the state. We then worked with our nominated attorneys in fine tuning their profiles. The results, we hope, offer both an entertaining and educational read.

Adam Hrejsa
40 Under Forty

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"He has distinguished himself for his expertise, hard work, and dedication."

It's been only a decade since Enrique Abraham earned his law degree at the University of Illinois, but he's already had a rich and varied career.

For his first year out of law school, Abraham worked as a tax associate in Arthur Andersen's State and Local Tax Practice. Then he spent eight years as a clerk in the Illinois Appellate Court, winning the acclaim of justices.

"The primary responsibilities of a clerk are reading records, research, analyzing and writing," says William Cousins Jr., a retired Illinois Appellate Court Justice who hired Abraham as a clerk in 2001. "Enrique is exceptionally strong in all of these areas."

Justice Denise M. O'Malley (retired), echoes Cousins' assessment of Enrique's skills and abilities and adds that he is a "dedicated and conscientious lawyer who strives for excellence in all of his endeavors."

In December 2009, Abraham began a new job as an Assistant State's Attorney in the Special Litigation Unit for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. He litigates post-conviction claims dealing with constitutional violations and actual innocence in capital murder, sexual assault and other major felony cases. "As evident in his previous employment, Enrique has displayed exceptional writing technique and has really hit the ground running in his new assignment," says Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez. "He has a great future in front of him and is a welcome addition to our office."

And that's not all. Abraham, 36, has also been a leader in bar associations and volunteerism. He was elected to a two-year term as President of the Puerto Rican Bar Association of Illinois in 2008, a group he has been working with for the past six years.

"As president of the PRBA, he continues to work hard to strengthen our ties to the Hispanic and legal communities," says Beatriz Santiago, former president of the group. "Enrique has dedicated countless hours to promoting professionalism and civility within the practice of law and in the judiciary." For several years, Abraham has been co-chairing the Puerto Rican Bar Association's Judicial Evaluation Committee, which is part of the overall efforts by the Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening. "He has done such a good job that he is now the co-chair of the Alliance," Santiago says.

Abraham also helped the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois get reinstated into the Alliance, giving it a voice in the evaluations of candidates running for judge.

"Enrique's advice and guidance was instrumental in helping HLAI rejoin the Alliance," says Leopoldo Lastre, president of the Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois.

"In both the private and public sectors, he has distinguished himself for his expertise, hard work, and dedication to his clients and the judges for whom he has worked," says Patricia A. Rangel, a Puerto Rican Bar Association board member.

Abraham volunteers for Lawyers in a Classroom, a project by the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago that teaches grammar and high schools students about constitutional issues. Abraham now co-chairs Lawyers in a Classroom with Santiago.

"Enrique shares my goal of being a positive role model to minority students," Santiago says.

And Abraham volunteers for the Puerto Rican Bar Association's annual mock trials at Clemente, Wells, Lake View, Roosevelt, Prosser and North-Grand High Schools.

This April, he received the Latino Law Student Association of the University of Illinois's 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

One of the Justices Abraham worked for as a clerk in the Appellate Court of Illinois, Sebastian Thomas Patti, praises his legal abilities and his knowledge in all areas of the law.

Justice Patti adds, "I would be remiss if I did not make note of his excellent sense of humor, his fierce loyalty, and his uncanny ability to work well with all people and solve any problem that may be thrust at him."

Justices Cousins, O'Malley and Patti agree that Abraham appears to be headed for a bright future.

"He is now a leader among his peers," Cousin says, "and he will grow as a lawyer and leader among his peers in future years."

