



News

Insurance Industry Pioneer Richard D. Barger Has Died at the Age of 87

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Richard D. Barger — partner emeritus at the national law firm of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, former California Insurance Commissioner, and co-founding partner of Barger & Wolen LLP — died peacefully in Pasadena, California on January 17, 2016, at the age of 87. Mr. Barger's legal career, which was devoted to representing the insurance industry, spanned more than six decades. He was a national leader in the area of insurance law and remained active as a practicing lawyer at Hinshaw until shortly before his death.

"Dick Barger was an extraordinary man, who managed to gather together great people wherever he went. In doing so, he built a law firm that reflected his energy and values," said Richard G. De La Mora, who worked with Mr. Barger at Barger & Wolen LLP and then at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP after the two firms merged in 2014 and is currently the managing partner of Hinshaw's downtown Los Angeles office. "More importantly, he made the lives of each person he met more productive and joyful. He will be greatly missed," added Mr. De La Mora.

Said Mr. Barger's longtime law firm partner Robert W. Hogeboom, "I worked with Dick Barger for 35 years. He mentored me and then others in the law firm as well. He was one of the most renowned figures in the insurance field of law. His love was the firm and he set the high standards that we all aspire to follow in our practice. His knowledge and enthusiasm will be missed by all."

Donald L. Mrozek, partner and former chairman of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, remarked "Dick Barger was a pioneer in the insurance regulation field who grew to become a legend. He will be sorely missed. He leaves a great legacy, personified by the many attorneys he mentored, who themselves have become luminaries in the insurance regulatory arena. Hinshaw is proud to carry on the tradition of the firm he founded and developed."

In addition to his many accomplishments as a law firm leader and as California Insurance Commissioner — a post to which he was appointed by then-Governor Ronald Reagan and which he held from 1968 to 1972 — Mr. Barger served as president of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners; started the Federation of Regulatory Counsel, a nationally recognized group of state regulatory specialists; and was a member of the board of regents for Indiana University, from which he received his B.S. in 1950. Mr. Barger received his LL.B. from the University of Southern California School of Law in 1953.

Mr. Barger was reappointed by then-Governor Reagan to the position of Insurance Commissioner in 1972, but chose to leave the post to join the law firm of Kalmbach, DeMarco, Knapp and Chillingsworth. There, he started the firm's insurance regulatory practice. In 1976, Mr. Barger co-founded Barger & Wolen LLP, which he grew from a firm of 10 attorneys in two offices into one of the nation's leading insurance law firms, with approximately 90 attorneys, and offices throughout California, and in New York and London.

Barger & Wolen LLP — which focused on regulatory compliance and insurance transactional work, and had a robust insurance litigation practice — represented many of the largest national insurers and formed several California domestic insurers. During the implementation of California's Proposition 103, which created an "elected" insurance commissioner and a system of prior approval of insurance rates, Barger & Wolen LLP represented 63 insurers in implementation and compliance with the new law. In 2014, Mr. Barger was an integral member of the team of lawyers who orchestrated and executed the successful merger of Barger & Wolen LLP and Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.