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## A career with impact

Tom Froehle named Leadership in Law Lifetime Achievement Award winner

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**F**rom the law firm board room to economic development projects across Indiana, attorney Tom Froehle has left an impressive imprint.

Froehle, partner and chair emeritus at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath, led the forerunners of his current firm through two significant mergers, ultimately putting it among the 50 largest firms in the nation.

As a public finance attorney, he put his stamp on some

of the largest economic development projects in the state over the past 30 years—from the Honda assembly plant in Greensburg to Lucas Oil Stadium and the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis.

“His vision and leadership have helped drive positive change and growth in the legal industry and state of Indiana,” Kathy Osborn, a Faegre Drinker partner, said in her award nomination for Froehle.

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For all of these accomplishments and for his contributions to civic groups and his ongoing mentoring of up-and-coming attorneys, The Indiana Lawyer has selected Froehle as its Leadership in Law Lifetime Achievement Award winner for 2025.

“There is no one more fitting for The Indiana Lawyer’s Lifetime Achievement Award than Tom Froehle,” said Nathan Feltman, publisher of The Indiana Lawyer and CEO of IBJ Media, noting Froehle’s role in many economic development projects.

“Tom’s contributions to dozens of local organizations such as the Indiana Sports Corporation, Indianapolis Downtown, Inc. and the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee have had a lasting impact on our community,” Feltman added. “Tom guided Baker & Daniels through combinations with multiple firms growing Faegre Drinker into a top national firm. Then he was asked by his partners (both longstanding and new ones) to oversee the consolidated firm as the leader or co-leader for more than a decade, indicating the respect and trust Tom garners with his colleagues and his superb leadership skills.”

Froehle is the sixth attorney to win the Lifetime Achievement Award, which was created in 2021 to recognize seasoned legal professionals whose exemplary careers have demonstrated excellence in community involvement, mentorship and civility.

He will join the ranks of previous winners, including former Indiana congresswoman Susan Brooks, Lacy Johnson of Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, Senior Judge Sarah Evans Barker of the U.S. District Court for Southern Indiana, retired Indiana Chief Justice Randall Shepard and Chief Judge Tanya Walton Pratt of the U.S. District Court for Southern Indiana.

Froehle will be honored at the 2025 Leadership in Law awards breakfast on May 29 at the Indiana Roof Ballroom, along with this year’s class of 17 Distinguished Barristers, 14 Up and Coming Lawyers and five Legal Support Stars.

## Path to law firm leadership

Froehle said he became interested in law because he had an uncle who was an attorney at a small Kokomo firm.

He said what he admired about his uncle and his work was that he got to do a lot of different things as an attorney.

## Tom Froehle

*Partner and chair emeritus at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath*

**Law school:** University of Michigan Law School

**Career highlights:** As managing partner at Faegre Baker Daniels, Froehle chaired the firm’s management board and executive committee and guided Faegre Baker Daniels through its 2020 combination with Drinker Biddle & Reath. As chair and chief executive partner at Baker & Daniels, Froehle led the firm in its combination with Faegre & Benson to create Faegre Baker Daniels in 2012. He served as Faegre Drinker’s co-chair from 2020-2023.

**Family:** Froehle lives in Zionsville with his wife of 36 years, Jenny, and their golden retriever, Bailey. He has two adult children, Kristin and Joe.

It’s something Froehle can claim as well, with his role in law firm management and in putting together public finance packages for many significant Indiana developments.

“I feel very blessed I’ve had a few people that have steered me in the right direction,” Froehle told The Lawyer.

Froehle grew up in Bloomington and earned his J.D. cum laude at the University of Michigan Law School.

He began his career at Baker & Daniels in 1988, building a corporate and public finance practice.. That would eventually lead him to become a law firm executive, with his selection as Indianapolis managing partner in 2000 and then his election as chair and chief executive partner of Baker & Daniels in 2008.

In 2012, he led the firm’s merger with Minnesota-based Faegre & Benson to become Faegre Baker Daniels. Froehle was named chair and managing partner in 2016 and assumed those roles in 2017.

Then in 2020, he also guided Faegre through its combination with Philadelphia-based Drinker Biddle & Reath and would become the co-chair of the combined firm now known as Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath.

That move would create a firm of more than 1,200 attorneys, consultants and professionals in 20 locations across the United States, United Kingdom and China. It now ranks as the 49th largest law firm in the nation in terms of the number of lawyers on staff, according to the National Law Journal. The firm reported more than \$1 billion in gross

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## Leadership in Law honorees

*Here are the other Leadership in Law honorees who will be celebrated at a breakfast on May 29 at the Indiana Roof Ballroom.*

### Distinguished Barristers

- **Stephanie Bibbs**, Indiana Supreme Court Office of Judicial and Attorney Regulation
- **James Bopp Jr.**, The Bopp Law Firm PC
- **Brian Casey**, Barnes & Thornburg
- **Courtney Curtis**, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- **Thomas Fisher**, EdChoice
- **George Gasper**, Ice Miller
- **Amy Jones**, Marion Superior Court judge
- **William J. Kaiser Jr.**, Dentons
- **Jeff Papa**, Indiana Senate
- **Kay Pashos**, Taft Stettinius & Hollister
- **Brian Paul**, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
- **Gavin Rose**, ACLU of Indiana
- **Marc Rothenberg**, Marion Superior Court judge
- **Angela Stephens**, Bose McKinney & Evans
- **David Storey**, Parkview Health
- **Ali Sylvia**, Plews Shadley Racher & Braun
- **Karen Tallian**, Indiana Democratic Party

### Up & Coming Lawyers

- **Lauren Aguilar**, Barnes & Thornburg
- **Nicholas Bognanno**, Plews Shadley Racher & Braun
- **Candace Dickson**, Lewis Brisbois
- **Bianca Eddy**, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
- **Jaclyn Flint**, Riley Bennett Egloff
- **Vivek Hadley**, Taft Stettinius & Hollister
- **Justin Hays**, Church Church Hittle + Antrim
- **Justin Molitoris**, Barrett McNagny
- **Tyler Ochs**, Bose McKinney & Evans
- **Doneisha Posey**, Black Onyx Management
- **Joseph Rhett**, DeFur Voran
- **Daniel Spungen**, Amundsen Davis
- **Connor Sullivan**, Hamilton County attorney
- **Amanda Wilhite**, Dentons

### Legal Support Stars

- **Cyndi Blocher**, Dentons
- **Jessica Contos**, Plews Shadley Racher & Braun
- **Tammy J. Froelich**, Kroger Gardis & Regas
- **Kelli Jachimiak**, Taft Stettinius & Hollister
- **Amy McGrath**, Indiana Legal Services



revenue in 2024, ranking it 56th nationally, The American Lawyer reported.

Robert Grand was the managing partner at Barnes & Thornburg around the same time Froehle took on a similar role at then-Baker & Daniels.

He described Froehle as a “great guy” and said they had a great relationship even as they both looked for ways to grow their firms.

Grand said Faegre Drinker’s growth occurred through successful mergers, while Barnes & Thornburg focused more on recruitment.

“Different strategies, but the two firms had a lot of growth from where they started,” Grand said.

At the time Faegre Drinker announced Froehle was stepping down as co-chair in November 2022, he told The Lawyer that the firm’s growth was in response to market demand.

He noted that corporate clients wanted to have relationships with a small number of law firms that could offer a wide array of services and get to know their businesses really well.

“We call it bringing the whole firm to our clients,” Froehle said of the strategy to get bigger. “We continue to see that, with clients going through these convergence processes where they’re trying to reduce the number of law firms. At least in our view, it’s been a great success in terms of our ability to continue to compete and serve clients better.”

Last month, Froehle told The Lawyer the biggest challenges with mergers is that they create enormous change.

“We were fortunate to be part of firms that were doing well,” Froehle said, adding that the 2012 merger was of a scale that was unusual for Indianapolis firms.



Grand

The second merger offered a new set of challenges because it was finalized just before the worldwide COVID pandemic hit with full force in March 2020. “It was a good reason for us to become experts at Zoom and Teams and WebEx,” Froehle said.

## Froehle’s civic, economic development involvement

Before Froehle entered law firm management, he built a corporate and public finance practice influencing and supporting projects that have created thousands of jobs and generated billions of dollars in economic impact.

His work prior to stepping into firm leadership roles included:

- Representing the Marion County Capital Improvement Board in financing the new convention center and Lucas Oil Stadium in downtown Indianapolis and negotiating a long-term lease with the Indianapolis Colts.
- Implementing an infrastructure improvement program financed primarily from riverboat gaming revenues in northwest Indiana.
- Assisting with the development of a charter school financing program.
- Structuring and implementing financing for relocation of NCAA headquarters and development of the Indiana State Museum.
- Structuring economic development incentive packages for development of the Conrad and JW Marriott hotels and the Honda automotive assembly facility in Greensburg.
- Serving as part of the financing team for the Indianapolis airport terminal project.

“Tom has made extraordinary contributions not just to Faegre Drinker, but also the broader legal profession and Indiana community,” said Gina Kastel, Faegre Drinker’s current chair.

“Community organizations repeatedly tap Tom for leadership roles because they

recognize his good judgment, strong leadership skills and commitment to service,” she added. “Tom selflessly creates opportunities for others and on a personal note, I am grateful for his leadership, mentorship and wise advice.”

## Mentoring younger attorneys

As Faegre Drinker’s chairman emeritus, Froehle said he works with about 25 attorneys around the firm on their professional career development. He also is involved in the firm’s special projects.

In mentoring younger attorneys, Froehle said he tries to let them know there’s a lot of different paths to success and wants them to understand how to better serve clients and build their practices.

Brooke Dunn, counsel with Faegre Drinker, said she first met Froehle in 2014 and considers him a mentor.

She described him as humble, down-to-earth and team-oriented.

Dunn said she worked in banking prior to attending law school and had worked with executives.

She said Froehle set the culture for Faegre by the way he leads, by treating people well regardless of who they are or what position they hold.

“I feel like we just connected naturally,” said Dunn, who noted that the connection occurred despite their differing backgrounds.

Dunn said she grew up in Kentucky and did not come from a family of lawyers, while Froehle has a significant history of being a great lawyer in Indianapolis and nationally.

“Tom has been this leader who has been very open to valuing my different experiences professionally and personally as well,” Dunn said. •



Dunn

