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## Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Founded 50 years ago by a small group of downstate Illinois lawyers, Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund Inc. has evolved into a family of companies offering a broad spectrum of services to more than 4,000 lawyers in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan. The company now garners annual revenue of more than \$100 million and will issue its three millionth title insurance policy this year.

"Our 50th anniversary is a celebration of our founding members and the thousands of law firms and agents who have together built the company into the success it is today," said Peter Birnbaum, ATG President and CEO. It's also a celebration of our staff—loyal stewards of the company who believe in our mission to be the premier lawyer service organization for the benefit of the public."

ATG was founded in 1964 thanks to the efforts of attorney Stanley B. Balbach and his law partners Richard L. Thies and Charles M. Webber. Balbach's early efforts built the foundation, and he remained active with the organization until his retirement from the board of directors in 2007. Balbach died in 2012 at the age of 92. Birnbaum cited newly elected board Chair Ward F. McDonald, who served as CEO from 1970-1983, as the person most responsible for bringing ATG from a concept into a thriving business.

"It was Ward's unique ability to promote the ATG mission that built it into a grassroots movement, and over time—a formidable force in the legal and real estate communities," added Birnbaum, who is a member of ALTA's Board of Governors.

In the lead-up to its 50th anniversary, ATG continues in its tradition of being a good corporate citizen. ATG is a leading supporter of the Illinois Bar Foundation, the Chicago Bar Foundation, Mercy Housing, the Jesse White Foundation, The Cara Program, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Urban Initiatives, University of Illinois College of Law, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, and many area bar associations.

"Many of our members and a high percentage of our staff and Board of Directors have been with ATG for more than 20 years," said Birnbaum, who joined the company in 1981, and has been CEO since 1991. "For 50 years ATG has succeeded in the face of formidable odds—we should all be proud of the organization we have built."

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