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## Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund Elects New Chair, 2014 Board Members

Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund Inc. announced the election of Ward F. McDonald as chair of the board of directors for the organization, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2014.

McDonald has a long history with ATG and was instrumental in its early growth and success. His efforts in the late 1960s and 1970s, starting as executive vice president, then president, ensured that founder Stanley Balbach's vision took root.

"Ward's 45-year history with ATG provides the board, staff and ATG members with a chair who has a great perspective on who we are, where we have been, and where we are going," said Peter Birnbaum, ATG's chief executive officer and president. After leaving ATG in 1983 to pursue a private practice, McDonald continued to serve on the ATG board. As 2014 chair, McDonald will preside over board meetings, have a seat on key ATG committees, and interact with ATG's executive staff on long-range planning and financial decisions that affect the company.

Consistently cited as one of Illinois' best commercial real estate lawyers, Ward practices with the highly respected Meyer Capel firm in Champaign, Ill. Ward also brings a wealth of experience in banking and commercial law to the ATG board. In addition to his private practice, for the past 22 years he has been an adjunct professor at the College of Law and Department of Finance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has taught and mentored thousands of students over the years, all of whom learn not only the legal principles and technical aspects of Ward's classes, but also the importance of the attorney's true role, and his/her relationship with and duty to the client.

"I am excited that my good friend and mentor, Ward McDonald will take the reins as the chairman of the ATG board in our 50th year," said Birnbaum, who is a member of the American Land Title Association's Board of Governors. "During his tenure as CEO from 1970-1983, Ward was the person most responsible for bringing ATG from a 'concept' into a thriving business. It was his unique ability to promote the ATG mission that built ATG into a grassroots movement, and over time--a formidable force in the legal and real estate community. Working with Ward, I can promise you that ATG will continue to innovate and rise to the challenges facing our members' law practices."

Over the course of his career, McDonald has handled numerous transactions up to \$100 million for commercial and residential real estate developments, including sales, acquisitions, refinancing and consolidation.

Other directors elected at the recent shareholders meeting:

- Peter J. Birnbaum, who began his career at ATG as a law clerk in 1981, and advanced to positions of staff attorney, then vice president and counsel, before being named president and CEO in 1991. He was elected to the board of the American Land Title Association in 2009 and currently serves as treasurer.
- James N. Hallene, a founding partner of CapX Partners in Chicago with more than 30 years of experience in private equity investments and banking. He is the first non-lawyer to be elected to ATG's board of directors.
- Aurora N. Abella-Austriaco, a prominent attorney serving in real estate and litigation at Clark Hill PLC in Chicago. She is Immediate Past President of the Chicago Bar Association, emblematic of her deep commitment to professional and community service. In 2013, Leading Lawyers named her one of the top 10 women consumer law attorneys in Chicago.
- James M. Grant, of James Grant Law in Charleston and Casey, Ill., an experienced lawyer in real estate, title insurance, probate and income tax law. For the ATG board, he has served on the audit, claims, member services and promotion committees, and on the board of directors of ATG subsidiary, The Judicial Sales Corporation.
- Murphy C. Hart, of Hart & Hart in Benton, Ill., concentrates his practice on real estate, creditor collections, and title insurance. His father, Richard Hart, was one of ATG's founding directors. Spanning five generations, Hart & Hart is among the longest-running family practice in Illinois.
- John (Jay) M. Heutsch, principal of Mon-Clair Title Company of Waterloo, Ill., a member of the Illinois State and Missouri Bar Associations, he has previously served on the ATG board's legal education, LegalServe, audit and claims committees.
- Jonathan P. Sherry, principal of Chicago law firm, Jonathan P Sherry PC, and Of Counsel to Petersen & Houpt, concentrates his practice on residential and commercial real estate, and represents closely held corporations. He serves on the member services and promotion committee of the ATG board, and on the board of directors of ATG subsidiary companies The Judicial Sales Corporation and Auctions.

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