

EMERALD ISLE IMMIGRATION CENTER
Meeting the Needs of Immigrants



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**PRESS
RELEASE**

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2009 Briscoe Awards, Monday, 26 January, 2009

New York City Council Member Oliver Koppell and Neal S. Schelberg Esq, Partner, Proskauer Rose LLP, are to be honored at the 16th Annual Briscoe Awards next week.

The event, run by the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, honors Jewish leaders for their work in bettering the lives of Irish immigrants, and was accordingly named after the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin, Robert Briscoe.

This year's honorees are to be rewarded for their tireless work for Irish immigrants: Council Member Koppell for his dedication to fighting crime and discrimination, as well as his tireless work for the Bronx School Board and his commitment to Emerald Isle through the annual City Council Immigrant Opportunities Initiative; and Mr. Schelberg for bringing a passionate dedication to counseling and educating both labor and management in the area of employee benefits so that workers throughout the State of New York receive the most comprehensive, cost-effective pension and health and welfare benefit programs.

City Council Member Oliver Koppell was elected to the State Assembly in 1970, where he served as representative of the Northwest Bronx for 23 years. He is a proud product of Bronx public schools and a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

While serving in the New York State Assembly, he wrote and sponsored 280 laws including the Utility Consumers Bill of Rights, the Returnable Bottle Law and the Automobile "Lemon Law." Environmental Advocates twice voted Koppell as the "Environmental Legislator of the Year."

As State Attorney General, Koppell actively prosecuted consumer fraud, discrimination on the basis of race, family status and disability, environmental pollution and business crime. He acted as special prosecutor in a number of criminal proceedings and personally argued on behalf of the State of New York in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Elected in 1999 as the School Board President for District 10, Mr. Koppell fought the Board of Education bureaucracy for more resources, repairs, and new equipment. The Chancellor singled out District 10 as one of the three most improved districts in the city.

Mr. Koppell was elected to the City Council in 2001. He has various organizational affiliations, including Volunteer Arbitrator of Civil Court of the City of New York, Board Member of the Lawyer's Committee Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith and the Fund for Modern Courts.

Neal Schelberg is a partner in the Labor Department of the global law firm, Proskauer Rose LLP, where he specializes in the practice of employee benefits law. He serves as legal counsel to numerous labor-management pension and welfare benefit funds, including some of the largest trust funds in the private sector. As a member of Proskauer's Sports Law Group, Mr. Schelberg also serves as employee benefits counsel to several of the major professional sports leagues in the United States, advising on employee benefit issues affecting professional athletes and other league and team personnel.

Mr. Schelberg is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and Hofstra University School of Law, where he was a Notes and Comments Editor of the *Hofstra Law Review*. He received his graduate and undergraduate degrees from Brooklyn College.

In addition to his law practice, Mr. Schelberg is a prolific writer and speaker on employee benefits law topics. He is co-author of *ERISA Fiduciary Answer Book*, a contributing author to *Trustees Handbook (Fifth and Sixth Editions)* and *Fiduciaries and Their Professional Advisors* and, for many years, he was a co-author of the "Cases and Rulings" column for *Pension Management* magazine.

He has taught employee benefit law courses at New York University and Fordham University Law School. In a survey published in *The National Law Journal*, Mr. Schelberg was selected by his peers as one of the "Top Benefit Lawyers" in the United States, and is listed in *Euromoney Legal Group Guide to The World's Leading Labor and Employment Lawyers*. He has also been named for several years by *Super Lawyer Magazine* as a New York "Super Lawyer".

Mr. Schelberg has been elected as a fellow of the American College of Employee Benefits Counsel and is a member of the Attorney's Committee of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans.

Mr. Schelberg is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association on Drug Abuse Problems, Inc., and of the District Council 9 IUPAT Scholarship Fund.

"Both our honorees stand out for their approach in helping marginalized members of society overcome some of their day to day challenges by their readiness to help, their steadfast dedication and unique approach; but above all for their giving of their time way above and beyond the call of duty," said Siobhan Dennehy, EIIIC Executive Director.

Past recipients of the Briscoe Award have included Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Senator Charles Schumer, Congressman Anthony Weiner and former Governor Eliot Spitzer.

The Briscoe Awards will be conferred at a reception held on Monday evening, January 26, from 6 pm to 8 pm at the 21 Club, 21 West 52nd Street in Manhattan, and will be presented by Mayor Briscoe's son, former Irish Parliament member Ben Briscoe. The event will be hosted by attorney Brian O'Dwyer, chairman of the Executive Board of the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, and Siobhan Dennehy, EIIIC's Executive Director. Members of the press are invited to attend a pre-event photo-shoot only, from 5.45 pm – 6.00 pm.

Note to the editor:

Established in 1988 through the initiative of the Irish immigrant and Irish-American communities of New York City, the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, Inc. (EIIIC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing counseling for immigrants on all immigration issues, including visas and green card matters, employment referrals, job readiness and education. The EIIIC's client base has expanded to reflect the diverse ethnic makeup of the communities which it serves.

Contact Information:

Sponsorships of the event are being managed by EIIC Board member Bob Costello who may be reached at 212/869-5986

Tickets for the event are \$125 and may be reserved by calling the Emerald Isle Immigration Center: 718/478-5502 Ext. 211. Executive Director with the Emerald Isle Immigration Center, Siobhán Dennehy, can be contacted at (718) 478-5502 Ext 206

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For further information on Councilmember Koppell, please call Adam Dubin (718)549-7300

For further information on Neal Schelberg Esq. please call (212) 969-3085