

The Birmingham News

Metro lawyer heads global group

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Birmingham attorney Scott Powell has taken the reins of the International Society of Barristers, an honor society of trial lawyers who are selected by their peers.

"I'm pretty proud of it," Powell said. "This is the highlight of my professional life."

Powell is the second Birmingham attorney from the Hare, Wynn, Newell and Newton firm to serve a one-year term as president of the society. Alex Newton served in 1979.

The society has had 42 presidents, five of them from Alabama.

"That's remarkable," Powell said. "Alabama has such a rich tradition of very fine lawyers."

Powell has risen in the leadership ranks of the society's Board of Governors since 2003, when he was named secretary-treasurer. He took over as president March 17.

The society has 600 active members, 150 emeritus members and 50 judges who were members before they reached the bench. Members can be found in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Canada, Australia, England, Ireland, Mexico and Scotland.

As president, Powell will preside over meetings, and select sites for conventions and board meetings.

The society, through its foundation, also contributes to legal causes such as the National Institute of Trial Advocacy; The Innocence Project, which promotes DNA testing for Death Row inmates; and the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery.

"My goal is to increase funding for the foundation and letting the endowment grow so we can expand our contributions to those worthy causes."

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