

**MICHAEL E. TOLBERT**  
**3190 Eastwind Court**  
**Crown Point, Indiana 46307**  
**(219) 617-0269**

**EDUCATION**

**Valparaiso University School of Law**, Valparaiso, Indiana  
Juris Doctor, May, 2000, Cum Laude  
Class Rank, 16 out of 108  
Semester Honors, Fall 1998, Spring 1999, Fall 1999  
Black Law Students Association  
Mentor-Mentee Program  
Intramural Basketball

**Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, Indiana  
Bachelor of Arts, Criminal Justice, May 1997  
Pre-Law Society  
Black Students Organization  
Varsity Football Team,  
National Collegiate All Star Football Game, 1997  
Gazette's First Team All-American, 1996  
First Team All Pioneer Football Conference, 1996  
Second Team All Pioneer Football Conference, 1995

**ADMISSIONS**

Indiana  
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana  
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana

**EMPLOYMENT**

*January 2015*     *Partner, Tolbert & Tolbert, LLC*  
*To Present*     *Gary, Indiana*  
Commercial Litigation  
Insurance Defense Litigation  
Employment Litigation  
Municipal Litigation and Section 1983 Litigation

*August 2000*     *Partner, Hoepfner, Wagner & Evans, L.L.P.*  
*To 2015*     *Merrillville, Indiana*  
Commercial Litigation  
Insurance Defense Litigation  
Employment Litigation  
Litigation Segment Chair  
Executive Committee

*Fall 2014 to*     *Adjunct Professor, Valparaiso University School of Law*  
*2017*     *Valparaiso, Indiana*  
Trial Practice I with 2d and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Students

*Summer 1999*     *Law Clerk, Hoepfner, Wagner & Evans, L.L.P.*  
*Summer 1998*     *Valparaiso, Indiana*  
Legal writing and research as well as the filing of court documents.

*Summer 1997*     *Counselor, Youth Service Bureau*

*Valparaiso, Indiana*

Counseled children and families while creating a positive and safe environment in the Valparaiso community. I frequently gave inspirational speeches to children stressing the importance of education.

*Summer 1997 Detention Officer, Porter County Juvenile Detention Center  
Valparaiso, Indiana*

Provided a safe and productive environment for children that have committed felonious crimes. I was required to evaluate a child's daily behavior and create activities geared toward personal growth and development.

*Summer 1995 Assistant Director, Prayer House Deliverance Temple Basketball League for  
To 1997 Underprivileged Children  
Gary, Indiana*

Organized and supervised basketball teams and games for inner city youth.

**PROFESSIONAL  
ASSOCIATIONS &  
ORGANIZATIONS**

Indiana State Bar Association

Member, 2000-Present

Board Member, 2006-2008

Executive Committee, 2007-2008

Diversity Committee 2008-2017

Treasurer, 2010-2011

Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, 2010-2011

Nominating Committee, 2010-2011

Wellness Committee, 2011- Present; Co-Chair 2012-2014

Chair of the House of Delegates 2017

President, 2020-2021

American Bar Association Member, 2000-present

James C. Kimbrough Bar Association

Member, 2000-Present

Vice President, 2007-2008

President, 2008-2009; 2011-2012

Executive Board Member, 2007-2013

Porter County Bar Association, Member, 2000-2013

Lake County Bar Association, Member, 2000-Present

Vice President, 2012

President Elect, 2013

President, 2014

Porter County Chapter of American Inns of Court

Member, 2000-2016

Secretary/Treasurer, 2003-2005

President, 2007-2008

Housing Opportunities, Inc., Board Member, 2001-2012

Indiana State Bar Association Young Lawyers Section

At-Large Member, 2003-2012  
Awards Committee, 2010-2011

Indiana Continuing Legal Education Commission  
Commission Member, 2003-2012  
Symposium Committee, 2004-2012  
Chair, 2009

Gary Chamber of Commerce  
At-Large Member, 2003-Present  
Special Events Committee, 2003-2018  
Board Member, 2005-2018  
Public Policy Committee, 2005- 2018  
Board Chair, 2007-2010  
Economic Development Committee, 2010- 2018

Chesterton Girls AAU Basketball 15 and under  
Head Basketball Coach, Summer 2003

Triumphant Transitions, Inc.  
Board Member, 2008-Present

UNCF Northwest Indiana Advisory Council, 2010-Present

Urban League of Northwest Indiana, 2011-Present  
Board Counsel, 2011-Present

Indiana Bar Foundation  
Board Member, 2011- 2016  
Fundraising Committee, 2011-2016

Leadership Northwest Indiana Board Member, 2013-2016

NAACP Life Member, 2014-Present  
Executive Committee (Counsel), 2014-Present

American Law Institute  
Member, 2015-Present

Positive Approach to Teen Health (PATH)  
Board Member, 2022-Present

## **HONORS & CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**

American Karate Association Number 2 Nationally Ranked Brown Belt, 1989

American Karate Association, Black Belt, present

Gazette College Football All-American, 1996

International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award, 2000

Indiana Bar Foundation, Fellow, 2004-Present

Calumet High School Athletic Hall of Fame, 2004

Guest Speaker, Bridge the Gap Seminar, Fall 2005-2010  
Lake County Bar Association

Guest Speaker, 1L Orientation, Fall Semester 2005-Present  
Valparaiso University School of Law

National Business Institute Seminar Speaker, July 2005  
*How to Get Your Expert Testimony Admitted in Indiana*

2009 Recipient of the Valparaiso University Black Law Students Association's Alumni Award

The Times "BusIness" 20 Under 40 Award Recipient, 2010

James C. Kimbrough Bar Association Member of the Year, 2010-2011 and 2020-2021

Leadership Northwest Indiana (LNI30) graduate, 2011

Embassies of Christ Kingdom Ministries Leadership Program graduate, 2011

Top 20 Under 40 Minority Lawyers in the Midwest, 2013

Indiana State Bar Association Rabb Emison Award, 2014

American Law Institute Inductee, 2015

NAACP Hilbert Bradley Award, 2016

Litigation Counsel of America Inductee, 2017

ISBA Cinch Strap Award, 2011 and 2017

Katie Hall Foundation Merit of Distinction Award, 2017

Indiana Super Lawyers Inductee, 2017

Defense Trial Counsel of Indiana, Lawyer of the Year, 2020

C. Rodger Wilson Leadership and Humanitarian Award, 2021-2022

Kappa Alpha Psi (Gary Alumni Chapter) Kappa Man of the Year, 2021-2022



**TOLBERT & TOLBERT** LLC  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

**BIO – Michael E. Tolbert**

(219) 427-0094  
Fax (219) 427-0783  
1085 Broadway, Suite B  
Gary, Indiana 46402  
[www.TolbertLegal.com](http://www.TolbertLegal.com)

Michael E. Tolbert is a graduate of Valparaiso University School of Law where he received his Juris Doctorate, cum laude, in the year 2000 and was also the recipient of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award. At his prior firm, Michael was a partner and served as the chair of the firm's Litigation Department from 2010 until 2013. Under his leadership, the firm was voted Best Litigation Firm in Northwest Indiana by the Indiana Business Quarterly Magazine. The firm was also recognized as a 2013 Go-to Law Firm for the Top 500 Companies for contract litigation.

In 2010, Michael was the recipient of the 20 Under 40 Award given by the Northwest Indiana Times publication "BusINess." Michael also served as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Gary Chamber of Commerce from 2007 until 2010. Michael has concentrated his practice in the areas of alternative dispute resolution, complex civil litigation, bad faith insurance litigation, wrongful death actions, catastrophic personal injury cases and employment related litigation. Michael has represented a wide variety of clients in complex litigation matters. His clients have ranged from large insurance companies to small family run businesses. He is a respected litigator and a frequent presenter at instructional trial seminars such as How to Get Your Expert Testimony Admitted into Evidence in Indiana, Defense Strategies in Personal Injury Cases, and Sophisticated Depositions Strategies. He also is an instructional speaker at a seminar entitled Bridge the Gap, which is aimed at providing new lawyers helpful practice tips as they enter the legal profession. Michael was also an adjunct professor at Valparaiso University School of Law where he taught Trial Practice from 2015-2017.

Michael was appointed to Indiana's Commission for Continuing Legal Education by the Indiana Supreme Court, serving for nine (9) years, including as Chair of the Commission in 2009. Michael also served on the Board of Directors for the not for profit organization Housing Opportunities, Inc. for eleven (11) years. Michael is an active Board member for the not for profit organization Triumphant Transitions, Inc., geared at providing professional development services to men and women in rehabilitation who are attempting to transition into independent living.

Michael has served, with distinction, twice as President of the James C. Kimbrough Minority Bar Association. Michael is a past President of the Porter County Chapter of the American Inns of Court. In 2014, he served as President of the Lake County Bar Association. He also served on the Board of Governors for the Indiana State Bar Association (ISBA), holding the position of Treasurer and member of the Nominating Committee. In 2017, Michael also served as Chair of the House of Delegates for the ISBA. Michael has participated as a member of the Diversity Committee of the ISBA, and served as co-chair of the Association's Wellness Committee. In 2021, Michael served as President of the Indiana State Bar Association.



**BIO – Michael E. Tolbert**

Michael was recognized as one of the Top 20 Under 40 Minority Lawyers in the Midwest, 2013. He also received the ISBA Rabb Emison Award in 2014. In 2015, Michael was inducted into the American Law Institute, the leading independent organization in the United States that produces scholarly work to clarify, modernize and improve the law. Its membership is restricted to only 3000 members nationwide. In 2016, Michael received the NAACP's Hilbert Bradley Award. In 2017, Michael was selected to the Super Lawyers list and recognized as being within the top 5% of litigators in Indiana. In 2020, he also was selected as Defense Lawyer of the Year by the Defense Trial Counsel of Indiana.

Michael is a graduate of Leadership Northwest Indiana (LNI 30), and is now a Board Member. Michael continues his community efforts with his involvement on the United Negro College Fund Northwest Indiana Advisory Council and as a member of the Urban League of Northwest Indiana, where he also serves as board counsel for the organization. Michael is a life member of the NAACP and proudly serves on the Executive Committee and attorney for the organization. Michael is also a proud and active member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Gary Alumni Chapter and was voted Kappa Man of the Year in 2022.