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BGA HIRES THREE VETERAN JOURNALISTS, AIMS TO BUILD ONE OF NATION'S FOREMOST NON-PROFIT INVESTIGATIVE TEAMS

CHICAGO— In an effort to add extraordinary muscle to non-profit journalism in Illinois, the Better Government Association (BGA) announces the new leaders of its investigative team: Bob Reed, Bob Herguth and John Conroy. These award-winning, veteran journalists instantly double the size of the BGA's investigative unit, bringing more than 90 combined years of journalistic experience and a wide diversity of backgrounds and expertise. The team will be present at the BGA's Investigative Journalism Awards Ceremony later today.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity to put some of Chicago's—and the nation's—most talented journalists, communicators and watchdogs together in one unit, enabling us to greatly expand the scope and impact of investigations throughout the state of Illinois and into public officials and agencies that have flown under the radar for far too long," BGA Executive Director Andy Shaw said. "In a time of shrinking newsrooms and withered journalistic resources, the need for in-depth investigations into how our city, suburbs and state operate on every level and spend each tax dollar has never been greater. I anticipate that the new BGA investigative team will be a force to be reckoned with."

Bob Reed, a journalist with more than 20 years experience as a reporter, columnist and editor, will be the BGA's director of investigations. Former editor of Crain's Chicago Business, Reed reported on and investigated the savings and loan industry; won awards for his investigation into the Chicago-area currency exchange business; and edited and directed numerous in-depth investigations into the events leading up to the destruction of Arthur Andersen and its ties to Enron. He is also an experienced radio and TV host and recently served as communication director for Gov. Pat Quinn.

"It is an honor to join the BGA and its terrific team," Reed said. "By pressing government to be more open and accountable, the BGA strives to improve the lives of every Illinois resident. I look forward to contributing to this important mission."

In the newly created position of investigative editor, Bob Herguth brings his formidable experience as former reporter and contributor to the Chicago Sun-Times, The New York Times, Crain's, the Daily Herald and The Business Journal of Milwaukee. Herguth served as the BGA's interim director of investigations over the summer, driving the BGA's continued investigations into Metra (along with many other stories) and launching the Investigators' Notebook, a BGA blog.

"This is an exciting time at the BGA, and I'm happy and honored to be a part of it," Herguth said. "With the addition of Bob Reed and John Conroy, the organization is strengthening its investigative mission and redoubling its commitment to the people of Illinois to root out corruption, waste and ineptitude in

our government. I see more deep-impact investigations from the BGA in the future, which I hope motivates the public—and elected officials—to take a real interest in cleaning up our public institutions."

John Conroy, a nationally recognized investigative journalist, joins the BGA as a senior investigator. A former reporter for the Chicago Reader, Conroy's diligent reporting—over 25 years—into allegations of torture in the Chicago Police Department uncovered the scandal that ultimately led to former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge's conviction for perjury and obstruction of justice. Conroy is author of "Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People: The Dynamics of Torture" and "Belfast Diary: War as a Way of Life."

"I'm looking forward to investigating areas where the failure of government can ruin lives or wreak havoc in families and communities," said Conroy of his decision to join the BGA.

"Investigating and exposing waste, fraud and inefficiency in government has been the central mission of BGA for more than 50 years," said Dave Lundy, president of the BGA Board of Directors. "This expansion of the BGA investigative unit increases our reach, allowing us to hold politicians throughout more of the state accountable."

Reed, Herguth and Conroy solidify the BGA's existing investigative unit, consisting of Patrick Rehkamp, a senior investigator, and Stephanie Crets and Joel Ebert, both investigators. The entire investigative unit will be at the BGA's Investigative Journalism Awards Ceremony, made possible by the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, today at 4:30 at the Arts Club of Chicago, 201 E. Ontario. Andy Shaw will announce the new team at 6:15, and he, along with Bob Reed, Bob Herguth and John Conroy, will be available for interviews.

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