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Civil Rights Activist and Photographer Bernie Kleina receives housing award from Law Center for Better Housing

The Law Center for Better Housing (LCBH) awards career-long housing advocate, Bernie Kleina, with 2023 Barbara Grau Outstanding Housing Advocate Award

(Chicago, IL.) – Civil Rights Activist and Photographer Bernie Kleina will receive the Law Center for Better Housing (LCBH) 2023 Barbara Grau Outstanding Housing Advocate Award on Oct. 19 for his career-long commitment to advancing housing justice.

Kleina marched alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other Civil Rights activists in Chicago and Selma, Ala. in the 1960s. During the marches, Kleina, an amateur photographer, took the first color portraits of King in existence, which remain in circulation in museums across the U.S. King’s emphasis on fair housing during the Chicago Freedom Movement encouraged Kleina to pursue a career in housing.

Kleina served as HOPE Fair Housing Center’s first executive director for 40 years. In that role, Kleina fought against discriminatory housing practices to ensure all DuPage County residents had a decent place to call home. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the National Fair Housing Alliance, DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation, and Housing Choice Partners of Illinois.

His work in fair housing garnered mixed reviews from the public. Some view Kleina as one of the most respected fair housing advocates in the country. Others believed his work was controversial, dubbing him the “most disliked man in DuPage County.”

“I was once called ‘the most disliked man in DuPage County.’ If believing everyone deserves housing justice, regardless of their race, gender, or class, gets me that title, I’ll wear it with pride,” the Wheaton resident said.

LCBH will honor Kleina on Oct. 19 at Buddy Guy’s Legends from 5:30-8:30 p.m. The Barbara Grau Outstanding Housing Advocate Award commemorates LCBH’s first full-time Staff Attorney, Barbara Grau, who committed her life to protecting the rights of low- and moderate-income renters. Learn more and purchase tickets here: <https://bit.ly/2023lcbhfallbenefit>

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The Law Center for Better Housing provides free legal and supportive services to improve housing stability for lower income renters while advocating for the rights of all renters. We believe everyone in Chicago has a right to a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home. Learn more: www.lcbh.org