

IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW

ICON AWARDS



ROY EIGUREN

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Roy Eiguren has helped define public policy in Idaho

Roy Eiguren is a passionate civic leader who has used his aptitude for business development and legal representation to create a stronger and greater Idaho. As a nationally recognized public policy strategist and law firm partner with over 40 years of working directly in government legislation, he is recognized for his innovation, leadership and outstanding service that supports people in communities all around the state.

Eiguren, an Idaho native, first dipped his feet into the business world in high school when he began work as a salesman in a hardware store. There, he quickly learned the importance of putting his all into every facet of his work. He also began to see how his personality and gifts could be used to positively affect the world around him.

“I learned a great deal, including the importance of being empathetic, of having integrity and honesty, the value of hard work, and the appreciation for the diversity of the many personalities of the public,” he said.

Once he began college, he decided to pursue business and law. He is a graduate of the executive management program of the Dartmouth School of Business Administration. He also attended Georgetown College of Law and the University of Idaho College of Law, where he received his Juris Doctorate.

Before entering his law practice in 1984, Eiguren served as a special assistant to the administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy. He also worked as chief of the Legislative and Administrative Affairs Division and as a deputy in the office of the Attorney General of the State of Idaho. He also previously served as a deputy secretary of state and as an Ada County deputy prosecuting attorney.

Today, Eiguren is a managing partner for Eiguren Ellis Public Policy, where he manages legislative and public policy matters, including representing and counseling clients before departments and agencies of state and federal government. The firm has been in existence since 2007. As the managing partner, he oversees client development and services in addition to financial oversight, support services and personnel matters.

But Eiguren’s heart is and always will be to remain an effective advocate for each person he has the privilege of representing.

“The cornerstone of our work is government engagement, supported by diverse services including business development strategy and strategic communications counsel,” he said. “We have had unparalleled success over decades with the enactment of legislation and in achieving results in administrative rule making proceedings, procurements and regulatory initiatives.”

This year, the firm has had to make big changes due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. He has had to conduct all meetings with clients remotely, including those with state officials and the Governor. He has been working closely with state and federal governments on a wide variety of COVID-19 issues, as well.

In addition to his legal work, he has served for the last five years as the co-owner of Intelligent Office, a professional business center that provides executive and virtual office services with various businesses and outsourced staffing solutions. Eiguren and his team acquired new

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technology to allow receptionists to work from home this year to adapt to state stay-at-home orders, while still maintaining their high-level phone answering service.

Eiguren explained that he uses Nike’s motto as his own: Just do it!

“When there have been times in my practice where a desired result from a public policy process seems impossible, my approach has been ‘just do it’ if there is a plausible path forward,” he explained. “An example is a 20-plus year effort on behalf of a client to change federal and state laws and rules prohibiting the use of larger but safer trucks on Idaho highways to move agricultural products. The opposition was strong and committed. However, knowing that the facts supported our position, we proceeded with a ‘just do it’ attitude, resulting in a change in federal law, numerous changes in state law, and the modification of dozens of administrative rules. The result for the clients has been multi-millions of dollars in annual saving on transportation costs.”

He was also directly involved in drafting the legislation that created the State Capitol Commission. He later chaired it, where he planned and managed the restoration and expansion of the Capitol. Another career highlight included serving as a negotiator for the agreement to federal and state governments that prevented the importation of commercial nuclear waste into Idaho and accelerated the environmental clean-up of the Idaho National Laboratory.

In 2018, Eiguren’s impressive career earned him the Idaho Business Review’s Leaders in Law Lifetime Achievement award.

When asked how his job as a lawyer and lobbyist can positively influence the world, he said that he is proud to have been involved in developing public policies that have had an immediate impact for communities.

“I am fortunate to represent a significant number of national and local blue-chip clients with federal and state elected and appointed officials,” he said. “My personal philosophy is focused on service — to the profession, the clients, the community and state and family.”

Eiguren went on to share that another career experience he had that encapsulates his passion for taking action and seeing results is when his organization was approached by a small group of board members from the Foundation for Idaho History. They wanted to start a fundraising campaign to provide private-sector contributions for the renovation and expansion for the

Idaho State Museum.

“Our outside fundraising consultants said that our small organization, with a very limited history of fundraising, would have a very difficult if not impossible time to raise any significant level contributions. We all said it was truly a moment in history...”

He said the team initially planned to raise \$2 million. But when the Governor urged them to double that number, they decided to take the leap. Ultimately, they raised \$4.3 million.

As a leader, Eiguren explained that inclusivity and being consensus-driven is important to him.

“In working with clients as well as colleagues, my style is — to the greatest extent possible — to involve them in identifying goals that collectively we want to achieve,” he said. “From there, I attempt to develop a consensus where we all strive together to achieve those goals.”

Outside of work, Eiguren is active in Idaho’s Basque community. He has served as the President of the Pete Cenarrusa Foundation, where he has assisted in philanthropic efforts that provided over \$50,000 in awards to local Basque organizations to enhance Basque language and culture. Also, he was a founder and president of the American Basque Foundation, a joint effort between the Basque government of Spain and the American Basque community. The goal was to establish intergovernmental relations between the two governments. Because of his leadership, there are now long-lasting diplomatic, cultural and educational programs put in place. Eiguren has also led several trade missions from Idaho to the Basque region of Spain to establish markets for Idaho products in Europe.

Further, Eiguren is the current board chairman for The American Red Cross of Greater Idaho. In 2019, he received an award for innovation, leadership and exceptional service in support of the organization and had the award named after him. The Roy Eiguren Leadership award will be presented to an outstanding volunteer every year.

Eiguren is also a dedicated family man who is married with two children and five grandchildren, all of whom live in Boise. He loves to spend time with them in addition to hiking, reading and traveling.

As he looks toward the rest of his career, Eiguren says that he plans to remind himself to remain focused, stay the course and continue to be a life-long learner.

— Brooke Strickland,
Special to the Idaho Business Review