RICHARD L. TRUMKA TO DELIVER IIT CHICAGO-KENT’S NINTH LABOR LEADER LECTURE

AFL-CIO president to speak at October 6 program

CHICAGO–September 2, 2011–Richard L. Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, will deliver the ninth IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law Distinguished Labor Leader Lecture on October 6. The program, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 3 p.m. at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, 565 W. Adams St. in Chicago.

“We are extremely pleased to have AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka as our speaker,” said IIT Chicago-Kent professor Martin H. Malin, director of the Institute for Law and the Workplace.

“Some have suggested that labor unions are facing a truly existential moment as basic collective bargaining rights have come under attack in Wisconsin and elsewhere. Mr. Trumka’s lecture will come only a month before the rollback in public employees’ collective bargaining rights in Ohio will be before the state’s voters under Ohio’s ‘citizen veto’ referendum statute.”

Richard L. Trumka was elected president of the AFL-CIO on September 16, 2009, following fifteen years of service as the union’s secretary-treasurer. The AFL-CIO is a voluntary federation of 55 national and international labor unions that represents 12.2 million members, including 3.2 million members in its community affiliate, Working America.

Trumka grew up in the coal-mining town of Nemacolin, Pennsylvania. He worked in the mines, eventually working his way through Penn State University and earning an undergraduate degree. After earning his law degree from Villanova University School of Law, Trumka worked four years on the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) legal staff before returning to mine work. He rose quickly through the union’s ranks, first serving as chair of UMWA Local 6290’s safety committee, and later on the union’s International Executive Board.

At 33, Trumka was elected the UMWA’s youngest president. During his three-terms as UMWA president, he helped secure passage of the federal COAL Act, brought the union into the AFL-CIO, mobilized support to win a contract for 18,000 miners after a seven-month strike against the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, and established an office that rallied support among mine workers for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

In 1995, Trumka became the youngest AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer in the union’s history. He soon carved out an innovative leadership role, creating investment programs for the pension and benefit funds of the labor movement, and chairing the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council, a consortium of manufacturing unions focusing on key issues in trade, health care and labor law reform. A member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council since 1989, Trumka was instrumental in rallying the support of international labor on behalf of U.S. workers struggling for workplace justice. He also served on the executive boards of the International Miners’ Federation and the ICFTU, and played a key role in organizing a new global coalition of coal miners’ unions in five countries.

Trumka currently chairs the AFL-CIO’s strategic approaches committee, charged with assisting affiliated unions that seek help achieving their strategic goals through collective bargaining. In addition, he serves as chair of AFL-CIO’s finance and capital stewardship committees, and as co-chair of the China Currency Coalition, an alliance of organizations supporting U.S. manufacturing.
The Distinguished Labor Leader Lecture Series was inaugurated in 1998 by IIT Chicago-Kent’s Institute for Law and the Workplace and Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO as a public service to offer forums on critical workplace issues. Previous lecturers have been given by Morton Bahr, president of Communications Workers of America; Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers; Michael Fitzgerald, business manager and financial secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Works, Local #134 (IBEW); and SEIU Local 1 president Richard Balanoff.

IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law is the law school of Illinois Institute of Technology, a private, Ph.D.-granting institution with programs in engineering, psychology, architecture, business, design and law. Established in 1996, the Institute for Law and the Workplace is based at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law. The institute is a national center for research, training, dialogue, and reflection on the law that governs the workplace. The institute also serves as an intellectual home for the labor and employment law community, both in the Chicago area and nationwide. It pools the resources of leading academic scholars and the practicing professional community to train students and professionals, monitor policies and trends, and reflect upon issues confronting the labor and employment law community in a neutral setting.