

Fieber & Reilly

Founded: 1896

Location: 84 (later 146) East Market Street, Indianapolis (1896– ); 120 East Market Street; 124 North Delaware Street ( –1967); 207 North Delaware Street (1967– )

On 1 February 1896, Herbert E. Fieber and John J. Reilly established a real estate sales, property management, and insurance brokerage office on East Market Street in Indianapolis. Both had been clerks at local real estate and insurance firms—Reilly with Gregory & Appel, Fieber with John S. Spann & Company. Reilly, who married Fieber's sister Estella in 1900, was the son of an Irish immigrant shoemaker. He had entered the office of Charles F. Sayles, an insurance, loan, and real estate agent, after attending parochial school at St. John's and had extensive business experience by the time he and Fieber established their business in 1896. Fieber took charge of the real estate end of the business, and Reilly handled the insurance. Samuel Rauh, president of the Belt Railroad and Union Stockyards, encouraged the two men to open a real estate and insurance business. The railroad and stockyards became Fieber & Reilly's first account.

Fieber became a leader in the Indianapolis insurance community. In 1911 he became a charter member of the Indianapolis Real Estate Board and served as its treasurer from 1912 through 1914. In 1916 Fieber & Reilly and another real estate firm, J. S. Cruse Company, moved to North Delaware Street and thus established what came to be known as "Real Estate Row." Fieber was widely recognized as an expert real estate appraiser. When he died in 1924, his widow, Sadie C. Fieber, inherited his share of the firm, which later passed to the couple's son, Howard. Reilly took over the real estate and property management sections of the company and also became widely acknowledged as

an expert in property values. In addition, Reilly's brother William L. Reilly joined the firm to manage the insurance department.

John Reilly died in 1933. The Fiebers continued the firm, which, by 1947, employed four salespersons and four property managers. Howard Fieber also added a mortgage loan department. In 1967 Fieber & Reilly, having outgrown its offices at 124 North Delaware Street, renovated the building that contained the old Delaware Bowling Alley at 207–211 North Delaware for use as offices. Howard divided the firm into three companies, each of which he headed: Fieber & Reilly Property Management, which managed hundreds of apartments as well as the State Life Building, the Fountain Square Theater Building, and properties associated with the campus of Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis; Fieber & Reilly Insurance Agency, which dealt in all types of insurance and continued to represent several firms with which the company had started in 1896; and Fieber & Reilly, Inc., which sold, leased, and developed commercial real estate. Howard died in 1971, but his widow, Mary L. Fieber, carried on the firm for many years thereafter. Fieber & Reilly eventually sold off its real estate division and became solely an independent insurance agency. By the mid-1990s Kurt A. Walther was president of the firm.