

# PUBLICATION

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## **Baker Donelson Presents First Susan E. Rich Award and Barry Ford Diversity Awards**

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Susan E. Rich, Callaway Bain and Clarence Risin were all recently recognized for their work in enriching the Firm's environment.

Susan E. Rich (Chattanooga) was awarded the Women's Initiative's first Susan E. Rich Award, which is also named for her. Susan was the first female to serve as a managing shareholder and the first woman to sit on the Firm's Board of Directors. She's smart, hard-working and a straight shooter, but those of us who know Susan recognize that the things that are most remarkable about her are her sharp wit, her way of making everyone feel right at home, and her unmatched sense of humor.

This recognition of her impact on women at Baker Donelson and her impact on the Firm as a whole is long overdue and very well-deserved.

Callaway Bain and Clarence Risin are the first two recipients of the Barry W. Ford Diversity Award. Callaway, lead office clerk in Memphis, exemplifies the inclusive spirit of Baker Donelson and no one, from secretary to attorney to building security guard, is a stranger to Callaway. He has a heart that is evidenced by the care he shows toward all of his co-workers and that he extends into the community. Aside from his service at Baker Donelson, he is pastor of a local church – and is also somewhat of a legend for the spirit he has invoked in his team's Daily Docket meetings! Callaway received several nominations for this award and is truly deserving.

Clarence Risin is a major reason the Firm's commitment to diversity is so strong. Among his many contributions, Clarence founded the Firm's Diversity Committee in 2002 and chaired it for five years. Under his leadership, the number of minority attorneys increased by 100% in two years. He also established the Firm's minority mentoring program for associates and began recruiting efforts at historically black law schools. Clarence now serves as a fellow with the national Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, and was profiled in the last issue of Diversity Matters. This award is a symbol of the Firm's huge appreciation for all Clarence has done to foster our shared beliefs.

We cannot forget the award's namesake. Barry Ford displays an exemplary commitment to diversity, both at Baker Donelson and outside the Firm.

During Judge Ford's impressive legal career, he has worked in civil rights, private practice, and as City Judge of Pontotoc, Mississippi. He served as City Judge until January 1991, at which time he made history by being elected the First African American Circuit Court Judge for the First Circuit Court District of Mississippi. He now serves on the Firm's Board of Directors. Baker Donelson has been proud to have Barry Ford as a member of this Firm since 2000.