

PRESS RELEASE

Charles Grant Named TBA's Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

January 23, 2009

(Nashville, TN / January 23, 2009) Nashville attorney Charles K. Grant, a shareholder with Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC, was honored with the state's top award for pro bono work at the Tennessee Bar Association's annual public service luncheon last Friday at the state capitol. Held each year as part of the association's Leadership Conference, the luncheon featured award winners in several categories and a keynote address by Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice Janice Holder.

Grant received the Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award for his work on issues of disenfranchisement and restoration of voter rights. In 1996, Grant took on a case from the Nashville Pro Bono program to help a convicted felon who had served his time win back the right to vote. Inspired by that experience, Grant worked with a coalition of bar groups, radio stations and the Davidson County Election Commission to raise public awareness of voting rights restoration and identify those who might be eligible for reinstatement. Through that process Grant became one of the state's foremost experts on the topic. He also discovered that state laws governing restoration of rights were out-of-date and inconsistent.

Grant then worked with the Tennessee Bar Association to introduce and pass legislation to improve and streamline the process for restoring voting rights. He also was instrumental in planning town hall meetings around the state to explain the new law and help others pursue their rights. For his tireless advocacy on behalf of those seeking to redeem past wrongs, the association was pleased to present the award to Grant.

The Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award is given annually to a private sector attorney who has demonstrated dedication to the development and delivery of legal services to the poor, and has performed significant pro bono work. The award is named for Harris A. Gilbert, who served as president of the TBA from 1994 to 1995 and whose dedication to legal services for the poor set a high standard for all Tennessee attorneys.

The Tennessee Bar Association (TBA) is the largest professional association in Tennessee with about 10,000 members. Founded in 1881, the TBA provides opportunities for continuing legal education, professional development and public service. The TBA's dedication to serving the state's legal community is evidenced by its membership roll, which represents the entire spectrum of legal practice: plaintiff and defense lawyers, corporate counsel, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, government lawyers and legal services attorneys.