

ATTORNEY

profile



ARTHUR D. BYRNE

by Bill Vines

1994 RECIPIENT - KNOXVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION GOVERNOR'S AWARD

Governors' Award - 1994
Arthur D. Byrne

At the Golden Gavel Awards Ceremony on December 1, 1994, **Arthur D. Byrne** was presented the prestigious Governor's Award by the Knoxville Bar Association.

THE AWARD

Several years ago KBA officers observed that certain attorneys brought special honor to the profession and the Association both through their work as an attorney and in their service to the community. Not only would those attorneys be good advocates, but they would be highly respected by members of the profession. There was, however, no then existing means to honor such persons properly.

An award was therefore instituted which was to be the highest award of the Knoxville Bar Association. The Board of Governors of the Association makes the choice for the recipient and his/her name is placed in a special case in the City-County Building which is located just outside the lawyer's lounge.

The Board this year chose **Arthur D. Byrne**. He is certainly a very deserving recipient.

Arthur Byrne graduated from the University of Tennessee Law School in 1942 where he was Editor of the Law Review and Order of Coif. He has been a lawyer for 52 years with his practice interrupted only by World War II where he served as a Captain in the Army Air Corps.

Importantly, he has essentially always practiced with the same law firm. He is now a partner in Baker, McReynolds, Byrne, O'Kane and Shea, which is the successor to the Poore, Cox, Baker, Rhea and Byrne law firm in Knoxville.

For many years, Art represented the Knoxville Housing Authority, predecessor to Knoxville's Community Development Corporation and was principal counsel during several urban renewal projects. He was lead counsel during the Yale Avenue project which resulted in development of such structures as Stokely Athletic Center, Tom Black Track and U.T. Aquatic Center. He was very involved further in the Mountain View/Morningside project which led to the development of such structures as the Hyatt Regency Hotel. He was an active participant in the project that led to the development of The World's Fair site as well as many other projects.

In the most recent past, Art has limited his practice to that of civil medical defense and defended numerous health care providers in suits for professional negligence, primarily representing physicians. Art has a very calm, reasoned approach to the trial of lawsuits and is highly respected by plaintiffs' attorneys for his ability to "put into perspective" the damages sustained by a plaintiff. All would agree he is one of the most respected trial attorneys at the Knoxville Bar.

SERVICE TO THE ASSOCIATION

Art Byrne has served as President of the Knoxville Bar Association, and East Tennessee Vice-President of the Tennessee Bar Association. He was elected a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and elected a Fellow of the International Academy of Trial



Bill Vines presents Art Byrne (with wife Jean) with the 1994 Governor's Award

Lawyers. He served as chairman of the Standing Committee for admission to the bar of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee and is a Masters of the Bench Emeritus of the Hamilton Burnett Chapter of American Inns of Court.

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Art has been very interested in and active with regard to The Knoxville Symphony Society. For more than twenty years he served as a symphony board member and served in the capacity of Secretary, Vice-President and President of the Symphony. He served as President of the Knoxville Lions Club and was National Trustee for the Committee for the Preservation of the Justice John Marshall Home. Art is a member of the University of Tennessee President's Club and was a member of the ABA Site Evaluation Team for the U.T. Law School.

Art is very active with regard to Magnolia Avenue Methodist Church and has served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He has also served as a Sunday School Teacher.

PERSONAL

Art has been married to **Jean White Byrne** for 52 years and has two daughters, Laurie and Terry. He is a skilled woodworker and works with stained glass.

Most importantly, however, Art is a truly fine lawyer and a truly good person. He has served in an exemplary fashion and the Bar Association is proud of Art Byrne. He is a hardworking but very modest man. This is probably best shown by the letter written stating his appreciation for the award:

"Dear Bill:

I write to express my appreciation of your very generous remarks in presenting the Governor's Award last Thursday evening. It had me almost feeling important.

The feeling that will be lasting, though, is one of gratitude for the continuing collegiality of the Knoxville Bar, its members and its leaders."

His letter says it all. Sincere congratulations, Art.