

attorney profile

By Bill Vines

ROBERT E. PRYOR - 2006 GOVERNOR'S AWARD RECIPIENT

The Knoxville Bar Association Board of Governors chose Bob Pryor as the 2006 Governor's Award recipient. The award was presented at the KBA annual meeting on December 8, 2006 where Bob received a standing ovation.

Designated as the KBA's "highest award," it is presented each year to an attorney whose service as an attorney and as a community citizen is felt to be exemplary. The name of the recipient is engraved upon a plaque which hangs in the Knox County Courthouse in honor of those who are felt by association members to be role model attorneys.

Bob was described as a person who loves the law and the challenges of the courtroom. A Knoxville native, he attended the University of Tennessee College of Law, graduating in 1969. In addition to his private practice, Bob has served the profession as an adjunct professor of law and lecturer at the University of Tennessee College of Law 1978-2002. He strongly believes in the advocacy system and has repeatedly volunteered to teach law students the art of advocacy. His generosity (a six figure gift) helped establish the Center for Advocacy at the U.T. College of Law. An award is given each year to a deserving student, which the award is known as the "Robert Pryor Award."

In addition to his work through the University, Bob has served as faculty of the Tennessee College of Trial Advocacy and the National Institute of Trial Advocacy. He has taught by example and text. He coauthored a three-volume work on product liability.

Bob served as president of the Young Lawyers Conference for the Tennessee Bar Association and as a member of the Board of Governors of the Tennessee Bar Association. He served on the Board of Governors for the Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association eleven years and held various offices. He was appointed to the Appellate Court Nominating Commission 1991-1994.

While serving with distinction as professor and author, Bob's real strength is in the spoken word. On his feet he really shines. He has a wonderful sense of humor. Simply, he is possessed of a natural ability to entertain ... and so he has tastefully, with humor, taught

us not to take ourselves too seriously by being master of ceremonies at bar association social functions. Those same talents are utilized at a trial. Those who have tried cases as an adversary with Bob know the trial will be interesting and almost fun ... until the verdict. He possesses a power of persuasion which is unmatched. His arguments begin almost apologetically. Carefully he discusses the facts he feels are helpful. He is prepared. Importantly, he can present complex matters in a way that is easy to understand and convince. As he proceeds, he gestures more frequently; his voice rises; and when he concludes, the adversary may worry the jury will stand and applaud! If you haven't tried a case opposing Bob Pryor, you really haven't suffered in the law practice!

His gift of speaking so convincingly is the trait most envied by trial lawyers. Consequently, he has been asked to speak to lawyers. He has conducted over ninety (yes, 90!) legal seminars for attorneys as primary speaker. When this association sponsors a CLE seminar, Bob's name is often mentioned. His presence will be a big draw.

Not surprisingly, Bob has been richly rewarded for his efforts as an attorney ... but he is modest ... ("My golf course-beachfront house in Florida near a country club is really for my grandkids."). Bob has been richly blessed with family. He and Norma have been married "more than 40" years and have three children. Robbie is a prominent member of the Knoxville Bar Association; son

John is an attorney in Smithville; and daughter Amy works as a human resources specialist. Bob's eyes twinkle when he tells you about his grandchildren.

The present award is not his first. Bob has been listed in Best Lawyers in America since 1993. He was listed among the 150 best lawyers in the state of Tennessee by Business Ten 2006. He was voted as the Top Lawyer in Knoxville in personal injury and professional malpractice in a survey of lawyers and judges conducted by CityView Magazine in 2006.

And, once again, his peers have voted. This time his peers voted that he should receive the Knoxville Bar Association's highest award.



Governors' Award - 2006
Robert E. Pryor