

WILLIAM D. VINES, III

KNOXVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION 2007 BOARD OF GOVERNORS' AWARD RECIPIENT

Service, Excellence and Loyalty

William D. (Bill) Vines, III, was the first Chairman of the Knoxville Bar Association's Board of Governors' Award Committee in 1988 and has remained its Chairman each year since. We appreciate Bill's long and excellent service, but year after year the problem has been: How does one honor a man who is so deserving of the esteemed award when he is the Chairman of the award committee? This year the Knoxville Bar Association's Board of Governors and Governors' Award Committee members decided to address the problem and voted to present a second 2007 Governors' award - to Bill Vines.

The Governors' Award is presented to an attorney who has consistently and generously served the Knoxville Bar Association and the Knoxville community as an attorney and as a citizen. Bill has done just that. In addition to serving as the Chairman of the KBA Governors' Award Committee and fulfilling all the responsibilities that position entails, Bill was President of the KBA in 1986 (during the years before the KBA had a professional staff), is a frequent KBA CLE presenter, and regularly hosts the KBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Section's monthly meetings.

Just a few of the many honors that Bill Vines has received include election as a Fellow of the International Society of Barristers and selection in 2007 as one of the Best Lawyers in Knoxville as well as one of the Best Lawyers in America. He is listed as a Certified Civil Trial Specialist by the Tennessee Commission on Continuing Legal Education and Specialization and by the National Board of Trial Advocacy and is a Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 31 listed Mediator, both in state and in federal courts.

Bill is a founding partner of Butler, Vines and Babb, P.L.L.C., which was established in 1973. He has attained excellence as a trial attorney in a number of areas which are complex, both factually and legally. One of Bill's earliest entries onto the national scene of premier litigators occurred when he was selected as one of a handful of attorneys to serve as national counsel for Celotex Limited, a corporation which supplied asbestos insulation materials. Bill tried the first asbestos case in the nation in the courtroom of Judge Robert L. Taylor, Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee. After winning the case, Bill's only error seemed to occur when Judge Taylor asked him if asbestos cases would become more prevalent, to which Bill responded, "No, your honor, I think this will about wrap them up."

A landmark case for Bill and for the evolution of the law of lender liability was the 1985 case of *K.M.C.Co., Inc. v. Irving Trust Co.* The *K.M.C.* case successfully established the concept, which was novel prior to Bill's successful prosecution of the case: the obligation of good faith in a lender's dealings with its borrower. The case's \$7.5 million jury verdict remains one of the largest collected verdicts in East Tennessee.

Bill was able to combine his passion for protecting the outdoors and his passion for law when he successfully represented a group of marina owners in *Euclaw Marina v. Union Carbide, et. al.* The case alleged damages as a result of radioactive and toxic pollution from the atomic energy plants.

Bill's life does not end at his law office doors. Bill is a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He and his wife, Dawn, are virtually always in each other's company when they are not working. They are at their mountain home at Chilhowee Mountain at every opportunity. When I asked Dawn what they enjoy doing there, she replied that they spend a lot of time with Bill chainsawing to keep the roads clear and her helping move the debris. (Bill once told me "Dawn and I just love to work.") Close to their mountain home and on yearly trips to Canada with his sons, Bill enjoys environmental fly fishing. He is also an avid snow skier, taking yearly snow skiing trips

to the west with Dawn, his children, and grandchildren. Bill's multi-engine instrument rated pilot's license serves both as a source of enjoyment and as a service to his clients when he flies the firm's twin engine Cessna plane to investigate the scene of a new case. He is the only lawyer that I know that is a member of the Lawyer Pilots Bar Association.

Bill's enthusiasm for excellence, productivity, and learning was not lost upon his children. His three sons, David, Greg, and Derek are all medical doctors, and his daughter Rachael is a coordinator for a public relations company in New York City on new product launchings. Dawn remembers Bill saying to their children (as well as to others) "How can you sleep at night, if you didn't accomplish something during the day?" Dawn says that of all the things that Bill has done and of all his accomplishments, she believes that he is most proud of his children and grandchildren.

Bill Vines: Service, Excellence, and Loyalty.

