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PENNY J. WHITE - 2017 RECIPIENT OF KNOXVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION'S HIGHEST AWARD

On December 8, 2017, at the annual meeting of the Knoxville Bar Association, Penny White was presented the Association's highest award designated "The Governor's Award." This award is presented only to those attorneys felt by the Association's elected Board of Governors to be exemplary both as community service and service as an attorney.

Penny is regarded as a true role model by attorneys throughout the State. In fact, during the December 8th annual meeting, Penny was attending a seminar in Nashville doing what she is so well known for – teaching other attorneys. Because of that, this year's award was presented to Penny by surprise through a special video arrangement. She was interrupted during her presentation and honored with the award through a video feed between Nashville and Knoxville.

Penny is undoubtedly deserving of this recognition. She received her J.D. from the University of Tennessee in 1981 (selected Order of the Coif) and would later earn a Masters of Law degree from Georgetown University. She began her legal career in private practice in Washington County, Tennessee, before serving as Circuit Judge in the First Judicial Circuit beginning in 1990. She was later appointed to the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals in 1992 and to the Tennessee Supreme Court in 1994. In 1996, she became the target of a campaign against her retention stemming from her vote on a capital murder case. Though she voted with the majority, she was the only justice subject to a retention vote in that year and was ultimately removed from the Court. Many attorneys feel quite strongly she was unfairly targeted.

Undaunted, Penny serves as the Elvin E. Overton Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Tennessee College of Law. She is Director of the Center for Advocacy and Dispute Resolution at the College of Law and has made presentations as lecturer or visiting professor at numerous other colleges, including Washington and Lee, Yale, Harvard, the University of Mississippi, Georgia State University, Denver College of Law, and West Virginia College of Law. She also serves on the faculty of the National Judicial College and has authored many law review articles, books, and book chapters. Notably, she co-authored the benchmark for judges on Capital Trials and solely authored an award-winning book on the defense of capital cases. Her specialty is evidence. She recently stated to a group of attorneys that, for her, discussing evidence is like a Mediterranean cruise. She has lectured on evidence in 38 states!

Her list of prior awards would make any lawyer blush. Indeed, the presenter of this year's Governor's Award insisted that this – the highest award of the Bar Association – must be her last, as she has already received all the others! Her awards include the Advancement of Justice Award, National Judicial College (2014); the University of Tennessee Jefferson Prize (2012); the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association Outstanding Teacher Award (2012); the Knoxville Bar Association 2012 Dicta Award; the Harold C. Warner Outstanding Teaching Award (2010); the Forrest W. Lacey Award for Outstanding Contribution to the UT College of Law Moot Court Program (2013-



14, 2012-13, 2005-06, 2002-03, 2001-02); the two-time recipient of the Carden Award for Outstanding Scholarship and Service to an Institution, and many others.

Despite her outstanding and note-worthy achievements, Penny is humble and unpretentious. She lives modestly in downtown Knoxville and walks to work. Her husband, Michael Okun, is an attorney specializing in labor and employment law. He is in private practice and has served as an adjunct professor at Wake Forest University, University of North Carolina, University of Tennessee and Elon University. Both Penny and Mike are passionate about the law and passionate about each other!

The Governor's Award could have no better recipient than Penny White. An exemplary attorney and a paragon of enduring, faithful, and distinguished service, Penny is truly deserving of our Association's highest honor.