

Tennessee Bar Journal

JULY/AUGUST 1998 VOL. 34, NO. 4

1881-82 W.F. Cooper Nashville • 1882-83 D.M. Estes Memphis • 1883-84 Andrew Wilson Memphis • 1884-85 Xenophon Wheeler Chattanooga • 1885-86 W.C. Fowlkes Memphis • 1886-87 J.W. Wood Springfield • 1887-88 H.H. Ingersoll Knoxville • 1888-89 J.W. Wood Springfield • 1889-90 J.W. Wood Springfield • 1890-91 G.W. Pickle Dandridge • 1891-92 M.W. Bell Memphis • 1893-94 J.D. Boxer Nashville • 1895-96 W.A. Henderson Knoxville • 1897-98 J.A. McNeill Memphis • 1899-1900 W.B. Swaney Chattanooga • 1901-02 W.A. Henderson Knoxville • 1902-03 R.E.L. Mountcastle Morristown • 1904-05 John H. Henshaw Knoxville • 1906-07 Edward T. Sawyer Knoxville • 1908-09 H.H. Beiskell Memphis • 1907-08 M.T. Bryan Nashville • 1908-09 Foster K. Brown Chattanooga • 1909-10 Harry B. Anderson Memphis • 1910-11 Percy D. Manning Nashville • 1911-12 L.D. Sims Knoxville • 1912-13 Albert W. Bings Memphis • 1913-14 John Ben. Moore Nashville • 1914-15 H.H. Steffen Bristol • 1915-16 C.W. Burch Memphis • 1916-17 Joe C. Higgins Fayetteville • 1917-18 E. Watkins Chattanooga • 1918-19 Julian T. Wilson Memphis • 1919-20 Giles E. Vannoy Sevierville • 1920-21 Malcolm McFadden Knoxville • 1921-22 Elias Gates Memphis • 1922-23 Thomas H. Malone Nashville • 1923-24 William G. Stinson Chattanooga • 1924-25 Lovick P. Miller Memphis • 1925-26 Frank M. Bass Nashville • 1926-27 Chad H. Cox Johnson City • 1927-28 Walter Chandler Memphis • 1928-29 William E. Newell Jr. Nashville • 1929-30 S. Barlow Strang Chattanooga • 1930-31 Wendell Steere Ripley • 1931-32 Charles C. Grabue Nashville • 1932-33 Harley G. Fowler Knoxville • 1933-34 Earl King Memphis • 1934-35 Louis Leftwich Nashville • 1935-36 Joe V. Williams Chattanooga • 1936-37 Walter P. Armstrong Memphis • 1937-38 George W. Johnson Jr. Nashville • 1938-39 R.A. Davis Athens • 1939-40 James T. Shea Memphis • 1940-41 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1941-42 John C. Gools Chattanooga • 1942-43 Sam Cosina Memphis • 1943-44 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1944-45 Clyde W. Key Knoxville • 1945-46 J. Golden Allen Memphis • 1946-47 J. Golden Allen Memphis • 1947-48 Robert M. Ewing Chattanooga • 1948-49 Milton G. Evans Nashville • 1949-50 Raymond Donny Nashville • 1950-51 George W. Wright Knoxville • 1951-52 Lloyd S. Adams Nashville • 1952-53 Alfred T. Adams Nashville • 1953-54 William H. Elizabethon • 1954-55 E.P. Adams Nashville • 1955-56 Weldon H. Hays Nashville • 1956-57 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1957-58 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1958-59 Lon P. MacFarland Columbia • 1959-60 Erby L. Jenkins Knoxville • 1961-62 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1963-64 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1964-65 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1965-66 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1966-67 James M. Hays Nashville • 1967-68 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1968-69 J. Daniel Breen Knoxville • 1969-70 James M. Senter Jr. Humboldt • 1970-71 Joe V. Henry Pulaski • 1971-72 Frank N. Bratton Athens • 1972-73 Walter P. Armstrong Memphis • 1973-74 Marlan Dodson Nashville • 1974-75 F. Graham Barrett Knoxville • 1975-76 J. Woodrow Norvell Memphis • 1976-77 John D. Whalley Nashville • 1977-78 Robert J. McMurray Cleveland • 1978-79 G. Griffin Boyte Humboldt • 1979-80 F. Evans Harvill Clarksville • 1980-81 T. Maxfield Banner Chattanooga • 1981-82 Richard H. Allen Sr. Memphis • 1982-83 John C. Dine Nashville • 1983-84 John B. Waters Sevierville • 1984-85 W. Emmett Marston Memphis • 1985-86 Wilson Sims Nashville • 1986-87 Donald F. Paine Knoxville • 1987-88 Theo J. Emison Jr. Alamo • 1988-89 William Landis Turner Hohenwald • 1989-90 John W. Wheeler Knoxville • 1990-91 Ronald L. Gilman Memphis • 1991-92 Thomas C. Binkley Nashville • 1992-93 Paul Campbell III Chattanooga • 1993-94 J. Fraser Humphreys Jr. Memphis • 1994-95 Harris A. Gilbert Nashville • 1995-96 Howard H. Vogel Knoxville • 1996-97 Hon. J. Daniel Breen Jackson • 1997-98 Dan L. Nolan Clarksville • 1998-99 Pamela L. Reeves Knoxville



118 men before her

Meet the Tennessee Bar Association's first woman president, Pamela L. Reeves

Also in this issue ■ Criminal Contempt: Jury Trials, Private Prosecutors and Child Support ■ Legal Ethics & Legal Fees ■ Humor: An Embarrassing Moment for Me, If Not the President

Meet the Tennessee Bar Association's first woman president, Pamela L. Reeves

Support from Family, Law Partners and Friends Make Presidency Possible

This article is an excerpt from an online audio interview with Pam Reeves. You can listen to the complete interview in the [radio area](#) of TBAlink.

Pam Reeves, the Tennessee Bar Association's first female president, brings experience, vision and well-rounded leadership to the TBA. Reeves -- a Knoxville lawyer, University of Tennessee College of Law graduate and partner with the Knoxville law firm of Watson, Hollow & Reeves -- has served in numerous leadership roles in the TBA and the Knoxville Bar Association over the past decade. Pam's leadership in this 7,500-membership organization will surely be history in the making.

How long have you been practicing law?

What is your practice area?

I got my license in October of 1979. Primarily, my practice area involves defense of employment discrimination and civil rights cases. I do a lot of sexual harassment work, race discrimination, Americans with Disabilities, that kind of thing.

What prompted you to become a lawyer?

I guess the honest reason is that I was about to graduate from college with a history degree and couldn't really think of a way to make money with a history degree so I went to law school. I think also a part of it was even then, reading a lot of history and realizing the role lawyers play in society. I knew I wanted to have a voice in it.

How does it feel to be the first female president of the TBA?

Well, I try not to think too much about the fact that I'm the first female. There's a lot of pressure in this position already without adding anything else to it, but I'm honored, very honored, to be the first woman. I'm also so very excited because I know I won't be the last. There's already a person who will be the president two years after me who is also female, so I think it shows that it is definitely going to continue to be an organization that welcomes diversity. When I think about the important role that women have played in the judicial system in the state of Tennessee, I'm just honored to be able to step into these shoes and hope I'll be able to fill them.

When did you first get involved in the TBA?

I got involved shortly after I got my license to practice. A friend of mine, a lawyer from Memphis, Bill Haltom, called up one day and asked me if I'd serve on a committee for the Tennessee Young Lawyers Division. I, of course, had no clue what the Tennessee Young Lawyers Division was, but he convinced me that it was a worthwhile project, so really from that point on I've been involved, in some form, either as a committee member or board member or in some organizational capacity with the bar association.

Why do you continue to be involved in the TBA?

There are a lot of answers to that question. Number one, are the people I have met over the years in the bar association. A lot of them have become my nearest and dearest friends. So I stay involved because I enjoy spending time with them. I've had opportunities within my practice to get to know some of the best lawyers and definitely the best judges from all across the state. By working with the judges on a personal level, I think you get to know them on a personal level and that helps you then when you are dealing with them in the courtroom and that helps you have a better understanding of them and hopefully they have a better understanding of you.

I have stayed involved also because I'm very committed to the concept of the organized bar and how it helps the profession. I think that lawyers who are active in the bar association do it because they feel there is a value to the profession and to the legal system. There's also a lot of opportunity to provide public service and any time you can do something that helps a member of the public feel better about our profession and our bar association, that gives you some satisfaction.

What's meant most to you about being in law activities?

Well I guess if you ask about 'law activities,' that breaks down into two forums. As far as the practice itself goes, to me, anytime I can take the skills and resources I have as a lawyer and use that to help somebody else solve a legal situation that's important to them, then that's a very meaningful experience. You still have a good sense that you are actually helping somebody out when you do that. As far as why I stay involved in the bar or what has meant the most to me about being involved, I guess that just comes down to the fact that the people I work with are the most important thing about being involved in the organized bar.

You're married to a lawyer -- how does he feel about your involvement in the TBA?

Well I think it's good in many ways that I'm married to another lawyer because he's also very involved in the Tennessee Bar Association and other legal organizations so he can share the ideas and the experiences that we have. He, of course, has many of the same close friends that I have and that gives him a good opportunity to spend time with them and because he understands a lot of what I'm going through; I think it makes it easier to survive all the hectic times that come with being in the bar association.

Speaking of hectic, how do you cope with having an 8- and a 6-year-old, in addition to practicing law and being involved in the TBA?

Well, number one, I have the world's best husband, who helps a lot. And a very good nanny. Aside from that, we try to involve them as much as we can. They don't think of trips to bar association activities as going to a meeting; they see it as an opportunity to stay in a hotel and visit with their friends who are children of our friends. So that's been a really good experience for them, too. They get to travel a lot and go to places they enjoy. I think, again, a lot of it means being flexible; having kids that know their lives are subject to chaos the same way their mom and dad's are, but they go with the flow. They're pretty good troopers about it.

What's different about the bar association now, as opposed to when you became a member of the TBA?

Well, I guess there are a number of answers to that question as well. Obviously, as the bar itself has become more diverse over the years, we've had an increase of diversity in the bar association. Particularly, I think we have a wonderful track record with regard to female members. We are still encouraging minority members and hope to make that a major focus of the administration this year. There has certainly been a huge increase in the number of women who are actively involved in the practice of law since I started practice in 1979. Consequently, we see more people involved in the bar association activity.

Is it difficult for a woman to become involved in the bar?

No, absolutely not. It's not any more difficult for a woman than it is for a man. The bar association always has a need for good volunteers; if you find a niche or area that you want to be involved in, all you have to do is let us know and we'll put you to work. There's never any problem with that. And I truly have never felt over the years, as I've moved up through the various stairs and ladders of the association, that being a female really had anything to do with it one way or the other.

Why would you recommend that a young lawyer get involved in the TBA?

I think there are lots of reasons to get involved. Realistically, if you took a poll on career satisfaction, you would find that the lawyers who do bar activities, by and large, feel a lot more positive about the profession, about the legal process and the general state of being a lawyer. Because it gives them opportunity to do something that makes a difference. And anytime you have somebody who's engaged in changing and working with their profession, you get more of a sense of involvement and satisfaction. I think also that the friendships you develop are helpful. The connections you make with other lawyers and judges from other parts of the country, the ability to travel, to visit with these people and share ideas. It just provides you with a lot of opportunity that you wouldn't have if you stay in your office, bill your 40 hours a week and go home.

What advice would you give someone - male or female -- who aspires to become TBA president?

I guess the first bit of advice is make sure you have a spouse and partners who are very supportive of you because I know it's going to be a challenge and demand on them this year, so I appreciate the fact that I do have a wonderful husband and wonderful law partners who have agreed to let me do this. Secondly, I think that if you are interested you should just get out there and get involved as soon as possible. Find out what's going on; find out where the areas of concern are. Figure out what you can do to bring some enlightenment or some interest into these areas and get out there and be a part of the team. Because the bar association has a tremendous number of very committed volunteers. They need good leaders and are always welcome to new leaders.

These are excerpts of the speech Pam Reeves gave as she was sworn in as TBA president. You can read the [full text of her speech](#) on TBALink(R).

'I am honored to stand before you today'

"If you think that being the first female president of the Bar Association is a big deal, think for a moment how it must feel to be the first First Man."

* * *

"Two other people are here that are more important to me than I could ever begin to describe: my parents, Fred and Betty Reeves. All I can say is that many times in my life they have been there to support me and to encourage me. Without them I would never have been able to make the leap from the hills of Virginia to this podium today."

* * *

"I can also tell you that there are many women in this room today whose accomplishments have

meant and will continue to mean much more to your day-to-day existence than the mere fact that I am honored to stand before you today and accept the position of first female president of the Tennessee Bar Association. There are those women who were among the first to practice law in this state. There are those women who were the first on the bench at many levels. There are those women who were the first to stand up in courtrooms filled with men wearing suits and ties and say, 'Yes, I am a lady lawyer.'

"To those women who were there when times were tough and when it took a great deal of courage to do what they were doing, I say this: 'Today, we recognize and salute what you have done. I promise to try very hard to follow in your footsteps and to do what I can to make the way easier for those who follow me.'"

* * *

"I accept this position with the hope that somewhere today there is a young man or young woman who will see what a difference a good lawyer can make in people's lives and what a difference being a lawyer can make in a person's life and will say, 'I too want to grow up to be a lawyer.'"

Tennessee Bar Journal
July/August 1998 - Vol. 34, No. 4

[Home](#)[Page Finder](#)[Feedback](#)[What's New](#)[Help](#)

© Copyright 1998 Tennessee Bar Association