

U of M Event Honors City's Legal Pillars

By Andy Meek

They've argued landmark cases in Memphis courtrooms in addition to representing everyday clients. They've grown into lions of the local legal profession. And they've helped tilt the course of history in the city.

For their contributions to the law and to the community, seven men will be honored during a dinner and ceremony Aug. 13, hosted by the alumni chapter of the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law.

The alumni chapter is hosting its 2011 Pillars of Excellence recognition program at the University of Memphis Holiday Inn with a reception at 6 p.m., followed by a dinner and the program at 7 p.m.

The fee is \$600 for a table of eight, or \$75 per person. For the Class of 2011, the fee is \$35 per person.

Reservations should be made by Aug. 5, and they can be made online at www.memphis.edu/alumni/reservation.php.

Six of the men are Pillar honorees. They are Leo Bearman Jr., [David Caywood](#), W.J. "Mike" Cody, [Robert Green](#), [John Paul](#) "Jack" Jones and the Hon. Russell Sugarmon.

Charles Tuggle Jr. is the feted Friend of the law school.

To be chosen for the Pillar award, a person must have been admitted to practice law for more than 45 years and have given "significant service" to the legal profession and community, among other things.

Bearman, a shareholder in Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC's Memphis office, graduated magna cum laude from Yale University with an English degree before attending Harvard Law School, where he graduated in 1960.

Over the next half-century, he developed a reputation as one of Memphis' top attorneys for his skill inside and outside the courtroom. And today, Bearman, who still answers his own telephone, is known as one of the go-to lawyers in the city for big cases about commercial law and constitutional issues.

He has served as president of the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Association, and he's an adjunct professor of law for the U of M.

Caywood has been practicing law since his admission to the Tennessee bar in 1962. He's primarily a divorce lawyer and over the past two years became a certified mediator and arbitrator through the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Among his distinctions, he's been listed in Best Lawyers of America for the past 24 years.

Caywood said his advice to young lawyers is to accept the "great responsibility" that comes with the profession and to "be prepared to work long, hard hours to do it."

Cody, a former U.S. attorney for West Tennessee who also is a former Tennessee attorney general,

started working with [Burch, Porter & Johnson PLLC](#) in 1961. Today, he's a partner with the firm.

In addition to his public service, Cody also is a former member of the Memphis City Council. And he's argued several cases before the United States Supreme Court.

Among his distinctions, Cody was named Alternative Dispute Resolution Lawyer of the Year in 2011 by "Memphis Best Lawyers," and he received the 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Academy of Mediators.

"The practice of law is different today than it was in the 1960s when I started," Cody said. "In those days, all of us were general lawyers. If someone came in the door and it was a divorce, you handled it. If it was a criminal case, you handled it. And that's all changed.

"Now I think a young person has to say what part of the law practice would they really love to do. If you don't like what you're doing at work, you'll never do a good job at it."

Green, a retired captain and 30-year veteran of the U.S. Naval Reserve, earned his law degree from Tulane University. He's a former secretary, treasurer, vice president and president of the Memphis Bar Association.

He's also an active member of the "Grey Knights," a group of older attorneys who work on Saturdays with Memphis Area Legal Services to help indigent people in the community.

Green received the Judge Jerome Turner Lawyer's Award in 2005.

Jones earned his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1948, returning to Memphis to take over the family business – The Daily News – following his uncle's death.

In addition to his 35-year tenure as publisher of The Daily News, Jones specialized in transportation law.

He has served as president of the Tennessee Press Association and as national chairman of the American Court and Commercial Newspaper Group. An avid basketball fan, Jones founded the Jack Jones Shootout, a competition that showcases talented high school ballplayers from around the country that lets them play with and learn from the pros.

Thanks to a \$35 million gift made in Jones' honor by his son Paul Tudor Jones to the University of Virginia, a basketball arena there carries Jones' name and is known to UVA fans as "The Jack."

Sugarmon graduated from Harvard Law School in 1953.

After serving in the U.S. Army for two years, he studied finance in graduate school at Boston University, then began a private law practice in Memphis in 1956.

In 1959 he was the first African-American to make a serious run for a major city office. He ran for the Tennessee Senate in 1966 and won. He later was a referee in the Memphis Juvenile Court System and was appointed to the General Sessions bench.

Tuggle has been executive vice president and general counsel of [First Horizon National Corp.](#), the parent company of [First Tennessee Bank](#) and FTN Financial, since 2008.

He practiced law with Baker Donelson for 30 years and joined FTN Financial in 2003, serving as

chief risk officer until he moved into his current position with First Horizon.

More information about the Pillars of Excellence program is available from Alumni Coordinator Wendy Sumner-Winter at 678-1562 or at wsumner1@memphis.edu.