

SOUTHERN TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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Southern Trial Lawyers Association Presents Gordon Bonnyman with War Horse Award

Crawfordville, FL – Gordon Bonnyman, executive director and co-founder of the Tennessee Justice Center, Inc., Nashville, received the prestigious *War Horse Award* from the Southern Trial Lawyers Association (STLA) during the organization's recent annual conference in New Orleans. The *War Horse Award* is presented each year to a trial lawyer who is recognized as a leader of the trial bar, who is highly regarded by his or her legal colleagues, and possesses the highest reputation in terms of ethics and honesty.

“A trial lawyer selected for this award must also be recognized as a great teacher of trial advocacy and as a trial advocate with great skill over a period of at least 30 years,” said Gary Green, president of STLA and an attorney in Little Rock, Arkansas. “Gordon Bonnyman certainly meets and exceeds all of the award criteria. The Board of STLA is very proud to present its *War Horse Award* to him.”

Bonnyman was nominated for the award by Gary Gober, The Gober Law Firm, Nashville. Gober is a past president of the STLA and a past recipient of the *War Horse Award*.

“I have admired Gordon for many years for the zealous way in which he has stood up for sick, elderly and indigent in Tennessee. He has certainly made an impact on thousands of lives and on the practice of trial advocacy law,” said Gober.

Bonnyman has a BA degree from Princeton University (1969) and a law degree from the University of Tennessee (1972). Since his admission to the bar in 1972, his entire career has been devoted to serving low-income families. From 1973 – 1996, he was an attorney with the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee, representing thousands of low-income families in a wide variety of civil matters and earning a national reputation for his expertise in health policy. When Congress restricted the ability of Legal Services to handle class actions and other cases for the poor, Bonnyman co-founded the Tennessee Justice Center (TJC) in 1996 with attorney Michele Johnson. He serves as executive director of TJC and focuses his advocacy primarily on achieving access to health care for the poor and uninsured.

Bonnyman has served on numerous state and national boards, including Families USA, the National Juvenile Law Center, National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, the Nashville Bar Association, and the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services. He has served on advisory commissions on Medicaid and public health under several Tennessee Governors and has consulted with Governors and legislators in other states. He served as a member of the Tennessee Supreme Court's Commission on the Future of the Tennessee Judicial System.

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A nationally-recognized advocate on health policy, Bonnyman has received awards for public service and advocacy from numerous organizations, including the American Bar Association, the American Cancer Society, the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare, the ACLU of Tennessee, the Tennessee Primary Care Association, Families USA Foundation, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Tennessee Bar Association, the Nashville Bar Association and the Metropolitan Nashville Human Relations Commission.

He was named Tennessean of the Year by *The Tennessean* in 2003. *The Tennessean* praised Bonnyman's work on behalf of low-income Tennesseans: "By making the plight of the least in society more visible, Bonnyman has raised the bar for all Tennesseans. The state now is forced at least to look at how its fiscal and social actions affect the poorest among us before it makes a move."

The essential mission of the Southern Trial Lawyers Association (STLA) is to promote fellowship, learning, and networking among trial lawyers throughout 13 southern states. STLA does not engage in political activity or fundraising of any kind, leaving those worthwhile activities to the state trial lawyer association and the American Trial Lawyers Association (ATLA). Membership in the Southern Trail Lawyers Association is by nomination made by a member of the Board of Directors, with approval by other Board members from the nominee's state. For more information about STLA, visit www.southerntriallawyers.com

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