



PRESS RELEASE

From the Tennessee Bar Association

Contact:

Stacey Shrader
Media Relations Coordinator
sshader@tnbar.org
615-383-7421 or 800-899-6993

Tennessee Bar Center
221 Fourth Avenue N.
Suite 400
Nashville, TN 37219

Nashville Attorney Named Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year

Award presented to David Cañas at capitol ceremony

NASHVILLE, Jan. 23, 2007 — A Nashville attorney who helped a young disabled woman live independently and attend college has been honored with the state's top award for pro bono work by the Tennessee Bar Association.

David Cañas, a partner in the Nashville law firm of Harwell Howard Hyne Gabbert & Manner PC, recently received the 2007 Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award at the Tennessee Bar Association's annual public service luncheon. Held as part of the association's leadership conference, the luncheon took place in the state capitol rotunda and featured award winners in several categories as well as a keynote address by Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell.

Cañas was honored for his work on behalf of Megan, a young woman with cerebral palsy who, at the time, was preparing to attend Middle Tennessee State University. Because of her disability, however, she had a great deal of difficulty communicating; in fact, since childhood, her parents have served as her full-time interpreters. Entering college would mean that she would be living on her own for the first time and for her to function, doctors said, she would need a specific speech communication device. TennCare, however, refused to cover the device, saying it had a contract with the manufacturer of a competing but inferior product. Megan's parents approached the Tennessee Justice Center for assistance, and David Cañas agreed to take the case at no cost. He prepared for and participated in an administrative hearing process that lasted several months. Due to his efforts, TennCare reversed its decision and approved the originally prescribed device, allowing Megan to participate fully in her college experience.

Cañas says that the thanks he received from Megan's parents was "one of the best fees" he has ever collected. The commitment to pro bono work that Cañas showed in this case typifies his overall attitude toward public service, which he says is an ethical obligation for attorneys. Those who know him say he always is working on at least one pro bono case. It is this dedication that led the TBA to name him pro bono volunteer of the year. A photograph of Cañas is attached.

The Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award is given annually to a private sector attorney who has demonstrated dedication to the development and delivery of legal services to the poor and has performed significant pro bono work. Award recipients are nominated by the TBA Access to Justice Committee and approved by the Board of Governors. The award is named for Harris A. Gilbert who served as president of the TBA in 1994-1995 and whose dedication to legal services for the poor set a high standard for all Tennessee attorneys.

The Tennessee Bar Association (TBA) is the largest professional association in Tennessee with about 9,000 members. Founded in 1881, the TBA provides opportunities for continuing legal education, professional development and public service. The TBA's dedication to serving the state's legal community is evidenced by its membership roll, which represents the entire spectrum of legal practice: plaintiff and defense lawyers, corporate counsel, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, government lawyers and legal services attorneys.

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