



PRESS RELEASE

From the Tennessee Bar Association

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Memphis Attorney Named Public Service Attorney of the Year

Award to be presented to Webb Brewer at Capitol ceremony

NASHVILLE, Jan. 13, 2006 — A Memphis attorney who has helped thousands live in better, safer housing is being honored as the state's top public service attorney by the Tennessee Bar Association.

Webb Brewer will receive the 2006 "Public Service Attorney of the Year Award" at the Tennessee Bar Association's annual public service luncheon on Saturday, Jan. 14, at noon in the Tennessee State Capitol. Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton Jr. will give the keynote address.

Brewer has worked for Memphis Area Legal Services for 26 years, playing a major role in litigation that has set standards for child custody and disability rights. He also has made a particular mark in the area of safe and fair housing, helping to integrate public housing, improve the safety of low-income housing and launch the Memphis Fair Housing Center. Now as litigation director of the agency, Brewer currently spends much of his time battling predatory lending cases where residents are in danger of losing their homes and savings to unsavory lenders.

Brewer developed his interest in social justice early. As a child, he watched his school being integrated while his father was superintendent. "I'm coming from a generation that was interested in politics as they relate to public policy," Brewer says. He chose law as a career where he could have an impact, and first interned at Memphis Area Legal Services (MALS) after hearing its then director, A C Wharton, speak during Brewer's first year at the University of Memphis School of Law.

After graduating, Brewer went to work full time at MALS and almost immediately got involved with housing issues. One of his first and career-defining cases was a federal lawsuit involving segregation in public housing. The city's mayor at the time, Wyeth Chandler, was not allowing new public housing to be built, Brewer says, because of a U.S. Housing and Urban Development

(HUD) requirement that all new public housing be built in white majority census tracts. Challenging that position, Brewer sued the city, which ultimately settled the case. As a result of his work, many of Memphis's public housing residents were integrated into non-minority areas. His success in that case was so impressive that the terms of the settlement were used later as a model for integration in Dallas and Chicago.

On Saturday, Brewer will share the stage with the very man who inspired him to make not just a career, but also a life, out of serving others.

The Public Service Attorney of the Year Award is given annually to an attorney who has committed to a career in public service, and over the course of that career, has gone above and beyond the call of duty in representing indigent clients. Recipients are nominated by the Tennessee Bar Association Access to Justice Committee and approved by the Board of Governors.

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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