



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **From the Tennessee Bar Association**

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## **Nashville Attorney Named Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year**

*Award to be presented to David Esquivel at Capitol ceremony*

NASHVILLE, Jan. 13, 2006 — A Nashville attorney who contributed 1,500 hours of his time to help find justice for a group of El Salvadorans terrorized by death squads in their country is being honored with the state's top award for pro bono work by the Tennessee Bar Association.

Bass, Berry & Sims attorney David Esquivel will receive the 2006 "Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer 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 at the luncheon.

Esquivel was chosen for this honor for his work on behalf of five El Salvadorans who witnessed terrible atrocities by the Salvadoran army. On behalf of these men, Esquivel brought suit against Nicholas Carranza — a former colonel in the army now living in Memphis. To date, Esquivel has donated 1,500 hours of his time preparing this complicated case; managing a team of lawyers, paralegals, law students and research librarians; and spending several weeks in trial. Esquivel's personal dedication to the case as well as his firm's commitment of resources has proved a winning combination. Four of the five cases have concluded with unanimous jury verdicts finding Carranza liable for torture, extrajudicial killing and crimes against humanity. The fifth case is scheduled for retrial in February.

Esquivel has long held a strong interest in Central and Latin America. A native of Cuba, he came to the U.S. when his family fled the Castro regime in 1960. As a student at Duke University, he led yearly service trips to Honduras to help build schools, churches and water systems. He also used his college years to help those less fortunate here at home, spending summers on the staff of the Appalachian Service Project repairing dilapidated homes for Appalachia's poorest residents. After college he returned to the mountains for two more years of work with that organization. As a practicing attorney with the Nashville firm of Bass, Berry and Sims, he has taken on numerous pro bono cases. He learned of the case involving the El Salvadoran men through the California-

based Center for Justice and Accountability, a non-profit organization working to deter torture and human rights abuses around the world by helping survivors hold persecutors accountable.

Esquivel will be recognized on Saturday for his vigorous pursuit of justice and for embodying the spirit of pro bono service.

The Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award is given annually to an 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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