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Contact: Michele Johnson

615.255.0331

mjohnson@tnjustice.org

Executive

Director, Tennessee Justice Center

New Board Officers Elected for Tennessee Justice Center

Nashville, TN- Michele Johnson, executive director at the Tennessee Justice Center, announced that the organization has appointed eight new board members: **Ronette Adams-Taylor**, Associate General counsel at Meharry Medical College; **Mark Behr**, professor of English Literature and Fiction Writing at Rhodes College; **Marvin Berry, Jr.**, motivational speaker and former TJC client; **Robb Bigelow**, a lawyer in Nashville focusing on various areas of law; **Terri Lynn Casola**, litigation paralegal and former TJC client; **Justice Janice Holder**, former chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court; **Brad Morgan**, Associate Director for the Institute for Professional Leadership at the University of Tennessee College of Law; and **Jerry Taylor**, attorney and partner at Burr & Forman, LLP. The Tennessee Justice Center also announced their new board Chair, **Mike Abelow**, an attorney at Sherrard and Roe.

“We look forward to working with these new members and the new board Chair. We value their leadership and greatly appreciate their service and the service of all our board members,” said Johnson.

Ronette Adams-Taylor is the Associate General Counsel/Director of Compliance & Risk Management at Meharry Medical College. Before joining Meharry, Mrs. Adams-Taylor was a Legal Consultant for the New York City Civil Service Commission from

2008-2010. Mrs. Adams-Taylor received her B.S. from Alcorn State University, her M.S. from Carnegie Mellon University, and her J.D. from New York Law School. She is a member of the Nashville Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association. On her reasons for joining the TJC board, Mrs. Adams-Taylor said, “On a daily basis I work with clinicians who treat the under-served and under-represented and I see the struggles faced by doctors and the patients in their attempts to provide and receive basic health care. TJC’s mission and purpose that everyone deserves the medical care they need to be healthy resonates with my personal and professional commitment to the community.”

Mark Behr was born in Tanzania and grew up in South Africa. He is currently professor of English Literature and Fiction Writing at Rhodes College, Memphis. He also teaches in the Master’s of Creative Writing program at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is a former research fellow at the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo, Norway. Behr is the author of novels, short stories and essays. His work has been translated into ten languages and has received awards from the *Los Angeles Times*, The British Society of Authors, and the South African Academy of Arts and Science. His work to date has frequently been concerned with questions of militarization, racism, gender, and violence within conservative and authoritarian cultures.

Marvin Berry, Jr. currently works from home part-time selling items on Ebay and enjoys motivational speaking. During tax season, he prepares and submits tax returns for the less fortunate. Berry graduated from Austin Peay State University in May 2005 with a Bachelor’s in Business Administration.

Berry suffered a spinal cord injury at age seven due to an accidental shooting. It left him paralyzed from the neck down. Berry became a client of TJC in 1996 and was a plaintiff in the Newberry case. Berry says, “I needed help with daily living skills at home, but the state denied me care at home, though they would pay for nursing home placement. TJC changed my life forever by

allowing me to receive care at home and still be a productive member of society.” Berry was a speaker at TJC’s 10th Anniversary Fundraiser.

Robb Bigelow is an experienced litigator, having successfully tried cases at the trial and appellate levels. He received The President's Award from the Nashville Bar Association in recognition of his extraordinary service, leadership, and dedication to the Nashville Bar Association and to the city and people of Nashville.

Terri Lynn Casola is an experienced litigation paralegal who assists clients in cases regarding the healthcare industry, as well as litigation against the State of Tennessee.

Since becoming a client of the Tennessee Justice center in July of 2014, she has been a spokesperson for the Wilson case. By interviewing with the *Tennessean* and several other media sources, she brought awareness and real-life perspective to the issues with TennCare. After the news coverage, Terri Lynn was a key speaker for the year end fundraising event for the Tennessee Justice Center.

Justice Janice Holder served as the first female chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court and retired from the bench in September 2014. Prior to her appointment to the state’s highest court, she served as a circuit court judge in Memphis, Tennessee. She led the Court through its innovative Access to Justice initiative and has presented Tennessee’s model to national and state conferences.

Justice Holder is a *summa cum laude* graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and a graduate of the Duquesne University School of Law. She recently received the 2015 University of Pittsburgh Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award.

Brad Morgan is the Associate Director for the Institute for Professional Leadership at the University of Tennessee College of Law. In addition to directing the college’s voluntary pro bono programming and professional mentoring program, he is fortunate to teach Lawyers as Leaders, Leadership Practicum, Public Interest

Seminar, and Pre Trial Litigation.

Until joining the college of law, Brad practiced with the law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, focusing on commercial and financial litigation. Throughout his practice experience Brad was involved in pro bono work. His interests in access to justice and the roles law schools can play in the same have led him to focus his writing on meeting the needs of the under-served. Brad holds a Juris Doctor ('05) and a Masters of Business Administration ('14) from the University of Tennessee.

Jerry W. Taylor is a Partner at Burr & Forman, LLP.

He concentrates his practice in the areas of health care law, administrative law, and commercial lending. Taylor has over 30 years of legal experience in the area of regulatory compliance for health care providers in both the public and private sectors. He has formerly served as General Counsel to the state agency responsible for the certificate of need program, and as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Tennessee.

Mr. Bigelow is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, *cum laude*, and Vanderbilt Law School, where he was Student Body President. He is the former President of the Nashville Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division; a member of Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law Class; and a Vanderbilt Law School Admissions Interview Committee Member.

Mike Abelow has been on TJC's board since 2012. He represents clients in business disputes, including breach of contract, Tennessee Consumer Protection Act, real property, and broker-dealer cases. Prior to working at Sherrard and Roe, he served as a litigator in the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection and also represented clients in commercial litigation, insurance coverage, and government contract disputes at two law firms in D.C.

Abelow graduated from Washington & Lee University School of Law in 2000, where he was a member of the Law Review. After graduation, he clerked for the Honorable E.A. Van Graafeiland of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New

York. Abelow is a member of the Executive Committee of the Litigation Section of the Tennessee Bar Association, and a member of the Board of the Nashville Chapter of the American Constitution Society. In 2009, Abelow was also the recipient of TJC's Pro Bono Attorney of the Year award, for his work with the *Crabtree* case, which sought to prevent TennCare from restricting home health care benefits on adult enrollees.

The Tennessee Justice Center (TJC) is a non-profit public interest law and advocacy firm serving Tennessee's families. It gives priority to policy issues and civil cases in which the most basic necessities of life are at stake and where advocacy can benefit needy families statewide. TJC works to empower its clients by holding the government accountable for its policies and actions. TJC was established in 1996 and is located at 301 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN. **For additional information about the Tennessee Justice Center and its services, visit www.tnjustice.org or call 615-255-0331.**

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