



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Judy Clarke Receives Griffin Bell Award for Courageous Advocacy From The American College of Trial Lawyers

IRVINE, CA, March 9, 2017 -- The American College of Trial Lawyers (the College) has presented its Griffin Bell Award for Courageous Advocacy to criminal defense attorney Judy Clarke. The award honors trial lawyers who have persevered in the pursuit of an important cause despite substantial personal danger, fear, unpopularity, opposition or other extreme difficulties. The award is the highest honor conferred on a single individual by the College. In its 53 years of existence, the award has been extended previously only 14 times.

According to award committee's nomination, Ms. Clarke's cause is opposition to the death penalty. The nomination said, "Of course thoughtful persons may disagree on the issue, but it is surely important." Ms. Clarke has represented some of the most notorious defendants in American history. They include Dzhokher Tsarnev, one of the two Boston Marathon bombers; Jared Loughner, the gunman who severely injured Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and killed six others; Eric Rudolph, the 1996 Olympic Park Bomber who bombed an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama; Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber; and Susan Smith, the mother who drowned her two sons in a lake.

College President Bartholomew J. Dalton said, "As trial lawyers, we understand the personal commitment, sacrifice, and courage necessary to sustain the extraordinary advocacy that our recipient has demonstrated. As part of our Mission, the College strongly supports trial by jury, respect for the rule of law, access to justice, and fair and just representation of all parties to legal proceedings – all of which are embodied in the work of Judy Clarke."

Past President of the College Michael E. Mone, of the Esdaile, Barrett, Jacobs & Mone law firm in Boston, MA, presented the award to Ms. Clarke. Mr. Mone said, "For over 30 years, Judy Clarke has defended some of the most notorious defendants of our lifetime. Many lawyers oppose the death penalty, but Judy Clarke has courageously, on multiple occasions, stepped forward to defend persons who the public thinks are not even worthy of a defense. She is fearless on behalf of these clients, who she has defended in the face of threats to her life, a hostile press, and public scorn. Judges and prosecutors are uniform in their praise of the extraordinary professionalism she has displayed in the face of such extraordinary challenges. Her persistence in the face of public anger and scorn mirrors an advocate in Boston 250 years ago when John Adams defended the British soldiers who faced the death penalty for their actions in the Boston Massacre. Adams, late in life, said that that defense of the accused British soldiers was the finest service he had done for this country. Judy Clarke, you stood in the shoes of John Adams and are an inspiration and an example to American trial lawyers who provide defense in the most difficult circumstances. As a Fellow of the College since 1997, you honor the College and every trial lawyer in this country by your actions." Click [here](#) to read the full text of Mr. Mone's remarks.

In her acceptance remarks, Ms. Clarke said, "Thank you, Michael. Thank you to the

College. I'm undone and quite humbled. Thanks very much. Over time, I've had to answer the question, 'How do you represent those people?' Actually, it comes from a good place. That's what we do as lawyers. We help people who can't help themselves.

"I would be remiss if I didn't spend a moment with this incredible body of lawyers and take this opportunity to ask this College to fulfill its mission in looking at the criminal justice system and in our administration of justice, which is part of the mission. The lesson is when you see the death penalty up close and personal, you can see it as barbaric. The United States stands as one of four remaining so-called industrialized countries that still has the death penalty, along with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. In 2015, we stood number six in the number of executions in the world, just behind China, North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. It is a punishment that we should no longer support as a civilized country," said Ms. Clarke.

Ms. Clarke began her career as a criminal defense lawyer in the late 1970's, when female trial lawyers were few and female criminal defense lawyers were fewer. She has served as an Executive Director of Federal Defender offices in Southern California and Eastern Washington & Idaho, taught at Washington and Lee University School of Law, and now practices in San Diego with the firm of Clarke Johnston Thorp & Rice. Her husband, Thomas H. Speedy Rice, also a devoted opponent of capital punishment, focuses his work on international human rights, rule of law and anti-corruption projects. She has served as President of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and as faculty at The National Criminal Defense College. She has argued two cases before the Supreme Court of the United States.

The award was created in 1964 and re-named in 2008 for Griffin Bell. It may be made to any trial lawyer, whether or not a Fellow of the College, who has demonstrated outstanding courage in unpopular or difficult cases. The award was last presented in 2013. Ms. Clarke received the award on March 4, 2017 at the College's Spring Meeting in Boca Raton, FL. Griffin Bell was an attorney and judge of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He served as the United States Attorney General during President Jimmy Carter's administration. Griffin Bell was president of the American College of Trial Lawyers in 1985-1986.

About The American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers is composed of preeminent members of the Trial Bar from the United States and Canada and is recognized as the leading trial lawyers organization in both countries. The College is dedicated to maintaining and seeking to improve the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics, and the administration of justice. The College strongly supports the independence of the Judiciary and respect for the courts in the United States and Canada; that independence is fundamental to our democratic societies. For more information about the College, visit its website at www.actl.com.

Photo Available:

A photo of Ms. Clarke with Bartholomew J. Dalton and Michael E. Mone, on the occasion of receiving the Griffin Bell Award, is available from The American College of Trial Lawyers. Please contact Eliza Gano.

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