



American College of Trial Lawyers

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John M. Rosenberg Receives Griffin Bell Award for Courageous Advocacy From The American College of Trial Lawyers

Rosenberg is only the seventeenth person to receive award

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIF., October 26, 2021 -- The American College of Trial Lawyers (the College) has presented its Griffin Bell Award for Courageous Advocacy to John M. Rosenberg during the 2021 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois. 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. In its 55 years of existence, the award has been extended previously only 16 times.

According to the award committee's nomination: "Mr. Rosenberg is a champion for expanding access to legal services in the poor Appalachian region and fought against the dominating coal companies for the rights of poor landowners and employees in the area. From 1962 to 1970, Mr. Rosenberg litigated discrimination cases in the deep south. Mr. Rosenberg's victory in *Brown v. S.C. Bd. Of Ed.* helped spur the process of integration in South Carolina in the 1960's and surely had a great impact on the progress that has been made as of today."

FACTL Eric R. Olson of the Office of the Attorney General in Denver, Colorado, presented the award to Mr. Rosenberg, a man who was both his mentor and neighbor growing up in Kentucky. Mr. Olson said of Mr. Rosenberg, "As someone who grew up down the road from John and [his wife] Jean, just a couple of counties over in eastern Kentucky, I can say without hesitation that our family saw that John's advocacy preserved our region as a place to call home, saving communities, the environment and a way of life."

In his acceptance remarks, Mr. Rosenberg said, "I've been taught by great lawyers; I've practiced with lawyers who are totally committed to representing their clients, often in unpopular causes - what I call uphill lawyering. More than that, I've been privileged to represent and meet the most courageous persons who braved difficult circumstances and spoke truth to power at great personal sacrifices and even great danger.

I've been motivated with the knowledge that this country is founded under the rule of law, at the first direction in the preamble to the constitution of the United States is to establish justice. And I was glad to see that commitment to access to justice in your mission as an organization."

Mr. Rosenberg, aged 90, is a holocaust survivor who became American Citizen after fleeing Nazi Germany with his family as a young boy. Rosenberg went on to become a Duke graduate with an A.B. degree in Chemistry, after which he spent three years in the US Air Force. While in service he witnessed firsthand the discrimination taking place against black soldiers. This, along with his childhood experiences in Germany, inspired him to attend law school and spend his life in pursuit of justice for those who need it most.

Since becoming an attorney, Mr. Rosenberg has been involved with landmark cases such as the "Mississippi Burning" case (*United States v. Price*) and *United States v. Democratic Party* (1966) which challenged discriminatory voting practices in Alabama. For 31 years and until his retirement, he was the Deputy Director of the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund (AppalReD). Mr. Rosenberg has been a member of the Board of Regents of Morehead State University and the Visiting Committee of the University of Kentucky College of Law as well as serving on the boards of several non-profit organizations. Not forgetting his roots in science, he was also the founder and past chair of the board of the East Kentucky Science Center and Planetarium.

The Griffin Bell Award is one of the highest honors conferred by the College upon an individual trial lawyer and recognizes lawyers who have persevered in pursuit of an important cause despite substantial personal danger, fear, unpopularity, opposition, or other difficulties. The award was created in 1964 and re-named in 2008 for Griffin Bell. It may be given 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 to Stephen B. Bright of Yale Law School, Connecticut on March 2, 2019, at the College's Spring Meeting in La Quinta, California. 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. Bell served as ACTL president in 1985-1986.

About The American College of Trial Lawyers

The American College of Trial Lawyers is comprised of the best of the trial bar from the United States and Canada and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in North America. Founded in 1950, the College is an invitation only fellowship. The College thoroughly investigates each nominee for admission and selects only those who have demonstrated the very highest standards of trial advocacy, ethical conduct, integrity, professionalism and collegiality. The College maintains and seeks to improve the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics, and the administration of justice through education and public statements on important legal issues relating to its mission. The College strongly supports the independence of the judiciary, trial by jury, respect for the rule of law, access to justice, and fair and just representation of all parties to legal proceedings. Learn more at www.actl.com.

Photo Available:

A photo of Eric Olson introducing John Rosenberg for his remote acceptance remarks during the College's Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois is available. Please contact Sarah Stokes.

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