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Attorney of the Month

Randall Kinnard

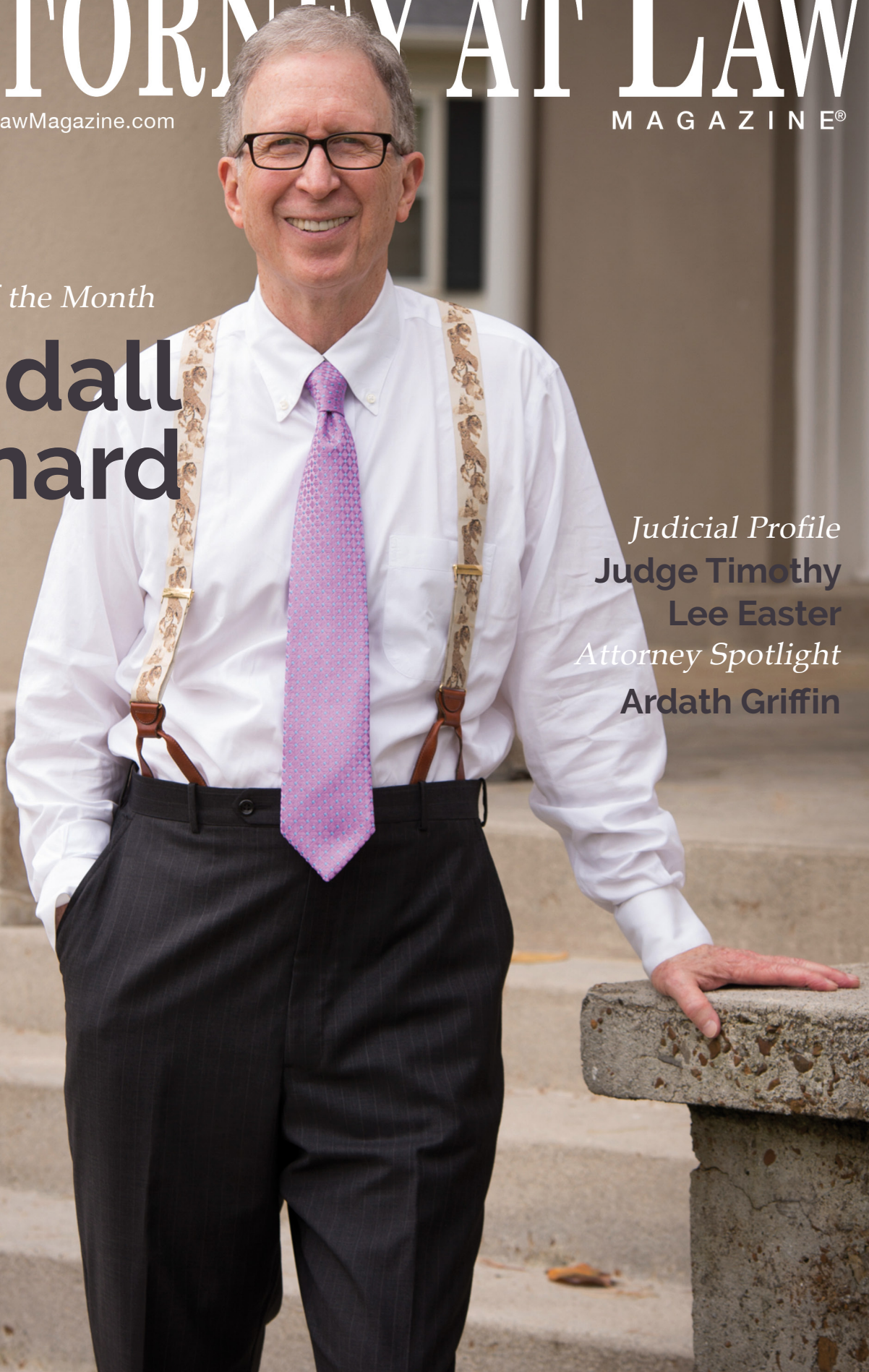
Judicial Profile

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Lee Easter

Attorney Spotlight

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**Attorney
of the
Month**



Randall Kinnard

War Hero, Courtroom Crusader, Humanitarian

By Susan Cushing

Voted Outstanding Trial Lawyer of the Year for 2016 by the Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association, Randall Kinnard is no stranger to success. Numerous awards and honors highlight his preeminent career, yet what is foremost to Kinnard is "the service and enjoyment of helping people."

Born and raised in Nashville, this senior partner at Kinnard, Clayton & Beveridge has a relaxed, welcoming demeanor and a quick, sometimes self-deprecating wit. When asked if growing up in Music City ever made him consider a career in entertainment, he laughs boisterously and quips, "Absolutely not! And if you heard me play anything or attempt to sing, you would understand why. You'd say, 'That was an excellent decision, Randy.'"

“I thought I'd try to transfer my combat skills to the courtroom.”

On paper, Kinnard might not seem like a likely candidate to possess such a jovial personality. Everything in his life has been of a structured nature. Prior to pursuing law, he attended West Point with the intention of becoming a career military officer. Ironically, it was an elective class at the famed military academy that actually piqued his interest in studying law.

“My professor, unlike the other professors, was a civilian,” he says. “This man had a great sense of humor and he got me interested in what it would be like to be a lawyer. Although, at the time, I was still dedicated to my military career.”

Law school was not imminent on the horizon as Kinnard graduated from the United States Military Academy. After becoming an airborne ranger, he was deployed to Vietnam, serving with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Kinnard was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, Purple Heart, Bronze Star for Valor, and the Air Medal during his two combat tours.

“I was certainly in some hot areas of Vietnam,” he says. “Not just temperature, either. I mean the temperature was always hot!”

Kinnard decided to change careers and left the military to become a trial lawyer. He says, “I thought I'd try to transfer my combat skills to the courtroom.”

The Army's loss was Nashville's gain. For more than three decades Kinnard has been representing personal injury victims and always fighting for the maximum value of his clients' cases.

Kinnard emphasizes two things in his practice – competence and respect. Responsible for several initiatives that shed light on the importance of respect in life and legal practice, Kinnard not only talks the talk, but walks the walk. He truly honors his clients, relating to them as a counselor and acting as a friend throughout the entire legal process and beyond.

War Stories

But this isn't simply a story of a nice guy with good intentions. Just as he excelled in the military, Kinnard set new standards in the practice of law. In 2016, Kinnard secured a \$55 million verdict for sportscaster Erin Andrews in her suit against a hotel and stalker. Kinnard has recovered many record-setting verdicts for injury victims, including a \$22 million jury verdict that was the largest in the state for a single victim of medical malpractice.

Many of Kinnard's cases, such as the Andrews litiga-

tion, make headlines, but the case that he says defines his practice was not representing a well-known broadcaster or even the largest verdict in dollars.

“There is a case that I'm extremely proud of, involving a man named George Brown in Lewisburg, Tennessee,” he says. “It's been about 30 years since I tried that case, but it was very significant – and not for the money.”

Brown, an African-American had been involved in a bar fight ending with his opponent going outside and returning with a sawed-off shotgun and shooting 112 pellets into Brown's leg. Doctors in Lewisburg put Brown in the local hospital, but didn't really provide any care. Over the next few days, the smell of gangrene was evident. He was told he needed blood vessel surgery, and was transferred to Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville.

When Brown hit the door at Vanderbilt, a surgeon gave the sad news – only an amputation would save his life. Brown had sought out legal counsel, only to be turned down by one attorney after another.

“Two days before the statute of limitations ran out, he came to me,” Kinnard says. “I thought he had a case, and I filed it for him. The defense never offered to settle, and my colleagues said I was crazy to have accepted the case.”

But Kinnard believed in Brown and in fighting for justice. As he and his client watched the line of potential jurors file into the courtroom, they noticed every face was white. Brown turned to Kinnard and in a whisper asked, “Can a black man get a fair trial here?”

When the time came to question potential jurors for selection, Kinnard stood before the group and said, “George Brown just asked me whether a black man can get a fair trial in this county. I told him, ‘I don't know.’ Let me see a show of hands of anybody who can't give a black man in this county a fair trial. No hands went up.

“Two days later, at 10 at night, Brown won his case from an all-white jury in rural Tennessee,” he continues. “As we left the courthouse, George looked up at a huge oak tree and started crying. I asked what was wrong, and he said, ‘They used to hang men like me in this tree. What a great night!’”

Commitment and Rewards

“I always pull for the underdog,” he says with a grin. “I'd much prefer representing an underdog than an insurance company.”

It's this commitment that drives him to work so hard for every client. “Personal injury is where my passion is,” he says. “As long as I'm in the courtroom, I'm happy. At the same time, it takes time to get someone justice. As a lawyer, I understand that, but it's very hard on the clients.

“I always pull for the underdog. I’d much prefer representing an underdog than an insurance company.”

Tim Jones Portraiture



At a Glance

Kinnard, Clayton & Beveridge

127 Woodmont Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37205
www.kinnardclaytonandbeveridge.com

Practice Areas

Personal Injury
Wrongful Death
Medical Malpractice

Education

Juris Doctor, Memphis State University
School of Law, 1976
Bachelor of Science, United States
Military Academy, West Point

Certifications

Civil Trial Specialist, National Board of
Legal Specialty Certification
Medical Malpractice Specialist, American
Board of Professional Liability
Attorneys

Honors

Law Review, Memphis State University
Selected to Inner Circle of Advocates
Selected to International Academy of
Trial Lawyers
Selected to the Mid-South Super

Lawyers, 2016

Outstanding Trial Lawyer of the Year,
Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association,
2016

Top 50 Lawyers in Nashville, Super
Lawyers, 2012, 2014, 2015

Top 100 Lawyers in Tennessee, Super
Lawyers, 2007-2016

The National Trial Lawyers, Top 100 Trial
Lawyers

The Best Lawyers in America since 1993

Lawyer of the Year in Nashville for
Personal Injury Litigation, 2011, 2013

Featured as Master of Trial Advocacy by
Lawyers Weekly USA

Professional Memberships

Inner Circle of Advocates, The 100 Best
Plaintiff Attorneys in the United States
International Academy of Trial Lawyers,
Fellow

Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association,
Past President

Lawyers Involved for Tennessee,
Past Chair

American Association for Justice,
State Delegate

Tennessee Bar, Legal-Medical Relations
Committee, Past Chair

American Association of Justice, Ethics
Committee

Harry Phillips American Inn of Court
Nashville Bar Association

Tennessee Bar Association

To them the delays feel like eternity.”

Kinnard’s compassion is not left behind when he leaves the courtroom. In addition to serving as a volunteer for Alive Hospice, Kinnard has resided on the Quality Control Council for the organization and has been a board member of Centerstone, a nonprofit helping more than 40,000 individuals with mental illness.

On the board of directors of Friends of Warner Parks, Kinnard also supports The Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland. While serving as chair of fundraising for Legal Aid, he helped raise \$700,000, setting a record for the organization. He also finds time to serve as a board member of Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee. Admired and respected for his myriad contributions, Kinnard has been recognized with many honors from dozens of local and national charitable organizations.

“I sincerely believe in community service,” he says. “Every lawyer in our firm feels the same. We all try to give back where and when we can.”

In 2011, Kinnard started a RESPECT contest for all fifth graders in his home county. Each student is asked to complete a form which asks them to define and illustrate respect. Each year, the top three submissions are recognized at a celebration in the courthouse with the winners

receiving cash awards. Kinnard has published a collection of the best entries.

Kinnard and his wife, Peggy, recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. They have two children – Cannon and Jessica.

When he has downtime, Kinnard says he enjoys spending it outdoors. “I love fly-fishing. You’re with Mother Earth, away from the noise and technology. Great getting back to basics. I also love to hike and play golf.”

He also enjoys reading a good book, especially if it’s historical.

Raising a Practice

Starting a practice is almost like raising a child. You have hopes, plans and visions of that future. For Kinnard, the vision he had 40 years ago when he opened his office wasn’t measured in the number of clients, cases or dollars, but rather in quality.

“My vision,” he says, “was to provide competent representation that’s respectful to everyone, including the other side, the judges and jurors.”

Kinnard’s vision has not changed over the years and as a result the firm continues to grow in both size and reputation.

“It’s an indescribable feeling,” says Kinnard, “when you can take the case of the underdog and succeed in taking care of your client. It’s very satisfying, and one of the reasons I love my work.”

Congratulations

Randall Kinnard



I have known Randy Kinnard since the early '80s. Our professional relationship has been as adversaries for he represents patients in medical malpractice claims and I represent the health care providers he is accusing of professional negligence. We have tried many lawsuits against each other and he has won his share and I have won my share. However, regardless of whether Randy wins or loses he is always professional and humble when he wins and congratulatory when he loses. We are both ferocious advocates for our clients and have had many disagreements over the years. But at the end of the day there remains a mutual respect that has evolved into a friendship. Randy has always been above reproach ethically and his abilities are as good as you will find anywhere. He has instilled these qualities in his partners for whom he has been a great example for how to practice law. I enjoy it when we have cases against each other because I have always preferred practicing against the best. He keeps me on my toes. I congratulate him on the honor he is receiving. It's well deserved.

– C. Bennett Harrison



This is a well-deserved honor for Randy. We have been “friendly” adversaries for 30 years. I have great respect for his legal abilities and professionalism.

– Robert L. Trentham

Randy is among the very, very best courtroom lawyers in Nashville. It is always a pleasure to have him in court and he exudes preparation and effectiveness. The points he makes in court are always creditable and you can sense the jurors respond to his straightforward approach to his client's case. I have always been intrigued by Randy's bemused smile, ever present during his opponent's presentation. He well deserves this recognition.

– Judge Walter Kurtz (Ret.)



Randy Kinnard has earned the reputation as the top lawyer in Tennessee for medical malpractice and catastrophic personal injury claims. Randy's success in the courtroom is due to his work ethic along with his ability to communicate and connect with jurors. Randy is a consummate gentleman, always polite and respectful to everyone. He is a wonderful role model for every lawyer.

– Bill Leader

When I think of Randy, the adjectives that immediately come to my mind are: integrity, professional, respectful, hard working, intelligence, principled, thorough, loyal and humble. My sincere congratulations to Randy on this recognition. He is held in such high esteem that any award seems superfluous ... except that he remains consistently deserving.

– Carol McCoy,
Retired Chancellor



For more than 30 years, I have been on the opposite side of cases with Randy. His success speaks for itself, but I most appreciate the fact that he is a man of his word, and that he consistently treats his colleagues, litigants, judges and witnesses with respect, courtesy and professionalism. He has earned the distinction few can legitimately claim – trial lawyer.

– Tom Wiseman