

ALSTON+BIRD_{LLP}

*is proud to announce the induction
of our colleague and partner*

BERNARD TAYLOR, SR.

*as a Fellow of the
American College of Trial Lawyers
September 15, 2006*



BERNARD TAYLOR, SR.



Bernard Taylor is a past chair of Alston & Bird's Partners' Committee (the firm's management committee) and of the Products Liability Group. He concentrates his practice in complex disputes, including commercial litigation, products liability and toxic tort lawsuits.

Mr. Taylor is lead trial lawyer representing Flexible Products Company in the isocyanate toxic tort litigation involving 1,600 plaintiffs and pending in Bessemer, Alabama. He is the lead trial lawyer representing Louisiana Pacific Corporation in toxic tort litigation involving over 1,000 plaintiffs and pending in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama – Northern Division. And he was co-lead trial counsel representing Union Carbide in the 2002 West Virginia mass tort products liability asbestos trial involving over 2,000 plaintiffs.

Mr. Taylor served as a member of the national trial teams for Allegiance Healthcare Corporation and Baxter Healthcare Corporation in the defense of mass tort litigation involving the use of natural rubber latex gloves. He was also co-leader of Alston & Bird's national coordinating counsel team for Charter Medical Corporation. In that capacity, Mr. Taylor coordinated the defense of litigation pending in over 30 states.

In addition to over 24 years of trial experience, Mr. Taylor is a valued advisor to clients in developing successful prelitigation strategies for various matters including commercial litigation, mass tort and toxic tort matters.

Mr. Taylor received his J.D. in 1982 from Vanderbilt University School of Law, where he was the recipient of the Bennett Douglas-Bell Memorial Prize

in Legal Ethics. He received his B.A. from Wayne State University. Prior to attending law school, Mr. Taylor was a police officer for the Detroit Police Department from 1970 to 1979.

Mr. Taylor is a member of the American Bar Association, the Georgia Bar Association, the Gate City Bar Association, the Atlanta Bar Association and a member of the DeKalb County, Georgia, Chapter of 100 Black Men of America. From 1994 to 1997 he served on The Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution, having been appointed by the Justices of the Supreme Court of Georgia. In September 2006 he was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers.



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INDUCTION CEREMONY

At the 2006 induction ceremony in London, England, Mr. Taylor was bestowed the honor of “Responding to the Charge” on behalf of this year’s class of more than 80 trial lawyers. The official “Charge” is given by a tenured Fellow and is followed by the response, which is considered the acceptance speech for all inductees. Mr. Taylor’s response follows.



President Cooper, past presidents, guests, inductees and Fellows... it is an honor to be asked to respond on behalf of this class of inductees. I am also honored to be able to work in this great profession alongside some of the greatest minds and biggest hearts ever to grace a courtroom, and many of you are in this room tonight.

Who among us doesn’t appreciate and maybe even long for the recognition that comes from being named a Fellow of the American College? But lest we get caught up in the headiness of it all, we should keep in mind Ernest Hemingway’s advice, “We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”

As I prepared for tonight’s event, I spent some time considering what it is that we all have in common. Immediately, words like passion, skill, dedication, education, experience and maturity all came to mind. All of those are certainly apt descriptions.

But none of those words seem to really capture the essence of what it’s really like to be a successful trial lawyer.

And then it hit me. The word I was looking for is joy.

We all know that when we look into our hearts we are forced to admit that we are trial lawyers because we love it. We love it because our work brings us great joy. It is that love and joy that we are all here tonight to celebrate.

So as I respond on behalf of the inductees, soon to be Fellows, I just want to reflect upon some of the many opportunities we have to experience love and joy in our work.

There is certainly the joy of winning for our clients. The joy of being an able advocate for the downtrodden. The joy of mentoring others. The joy of sharing the benefits of our good fortune.

In other words, the joy... true joy... of being a trial lawyer.

Many of the important legal issues that have been decided in America, Canada, and here in England were resolved due to the art, craft and ability of trial lawyers. The right to vote. The right not to be discriminated against. The right to due process. I could go on and on.

Our field of law is unlike any other and with it comes responsibilities unlike any other. So, Mr. Jones, in becoming Fellows, we accept the charge you have laid upon us tonight.

And in accepting that charge, we recognize that we have a responsibility to breathe life into the law, and to also provide a basis for those impacted by the law to have respect for it and faith in it.

We all have experienced the pure joy of winning a major case because of our ability to craft strategies and themes that make the complex seem simple and the mundane exciting.

But nothing compares to the joy that comes from winning the respect, love and gratitude of the downtrodden when we are able to

tip the scales of injustice that far too often fall like a lead weight on those who can least bear the burden. Make no mistake... what we do in the community is as important as what we do in the courtroom.

Community service has been a major part of our history as lawyers. It is one of the very foundations upon which the American College of Trial Lawyers was built. As Fellows, we do proudly accept the charge to advocate for those unable to advocate for themselves.

In our various practices and respective firms, we are all proud of our records of servant leadership. We have raised awareness and money for various community projects, tutored children, built homes and torn down barriers. We have reached out to diverse groups of people who have no voice.

We don't do it because of the recognition it brings. Rather, we seek opportunities to advocate for those who can't because it is simply the right thing to do.

Sometimes, it is our financial support that makes the difference between suffering and thriving. There are times when our role is as crucial as unlocking the gates that separate the have nots from the have lots.

There is no contribution too small, no kindness too insignificant and no battle unworthy of the fight if it improves our communities and strengthens our families.

Often, just beneath the surface of suffering lies joy waiting to be unleashed, and we are the leaders who can make that happen.

I came into this profession late in life. After spending 10 years on the streets of Detroit, Michigan, as a police officer, I decided at age 30 to fulfill a life-long dream to become a trial lawyer.

My student life began at a time when most people think they have completed the majority of the formal learning process. I discovered quickly that my learning had only begun. For the past 25-plus years, I have dedicated myself to being a student of the craft that I learned to love and has brought me such joy.

The lessons have been constant and plentiful. Sometimes they have been life-changing. Occasionally, they have been painful. At other times they have been puzzling. But always, they have been worthwhile. Even in those times when I've lost a case, I never lost the lesson. Now, I approach each case eager not just to win, but also to learn.

And as we learn, we have an obligation to teach. Just as we have each looked up to a colleague, a wiser, more experienced lawyer to mentor us, so should we be mindful of those who look up to us now.

Now is our time to experience the joy of mentoring.

You have, no doubt, heard the expression, "We teach what we most need to learn."

Mentoring, then, is not entirely altruistic. On the contrary, it is mutually beneficial. And yet, it is an important part of our legacy... to share the hard-won lessons that have made us the successful trial lawyers we are today.

One of my mentors was Earle May, a Fellow of this college. Earle recently passed away. Earle and I worked together for many years. During that period of time he confided in me that as a white male from South Georgia, he had not always had positive race relations experiences. But Earle and I worked on a lot of litigation and trials together. He not only became my friend, but he became

a father to me. My regret tonight is that he cannot be here to share this honor with me, because it is as much his as it is mine. One of the most important lessons Earle impressed upon me is this: no matter how well educated, no matter how many cases are won, no matter how many dollars are made – without integrity and ethics, one simply cannot be a great trial lawyer.

Sharing the lessons of our experiences and insights is just another way to share the joy of being a trial lawyer. Another important lesson I hope to impart to those who follow me, as well those whom I currently follow, is that we must embrace our differences if we are to ensure the integrity, strength and admiration of the profession in the future.

I remember well a young black boy from Detroit who became a ward of the state. Without a stable home life, chances were not very good that he would grow up on the right side of the law. But thanks to adults who loved him, mentored him, and, yes, advocated for him, he grew up to be a trial lawyer – the very same trial lawyer who today stands before you to provide the response on behalf of the inductees in this room.

I know firsthand the impact of using my God-given talents to help my community, my colleagues and my clients. I understand firsthand the reward of dreaming big, working hard and earning my way. I certainly appreciate from firsthand experience the impact a caring mentor can have.

But above all, I know this – we stand here together as inductees, Fellows, friends and comrades because of the choices we have made and the impact we have had.

We have chosen wisely thus far. As we accept this honor being conferred upon us tonight, I hope it inspires each of us to continue to choose wisely.

Our induction as Fellows is not a way to set our careers in stone. On the contrary, it is in fact the springboard to an even greater life.

Let us leave here empowered to bring joy to our communities... to share the joy of learning with our colleagues and the joy that comes from embracing our differences in ways that make us all stronger.

My fellow inductees, thank you for the honor of allowing me to respond for you tonight, and thank you for loving our profession and our craft.



Bernard Taylor, Sr.

September 15, 2006

London, England



THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS

The American College of Trial Lawyers is an honorary association comprised of experienced trial lawyers in the United States and Canada. The College is dedicated to maintaining and improving the standards of trial practice, the administration of justice and the ethics of the profession. Fellowship in the College is extended only by invitation to those experienced trial lawyers who have mastered the art of advocacy and whose professional careers have been marked by the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism, civility and collegiality. The organization's current membership includes 5,400 lawyers and judicial Fellows.

