

THE TENNESSEE

WINTER 2020/21

# TRIAL LAWYER

Does ERISA apply to Plans  
Sponsored by Associations?

Multiplying the Fruits  
of Your Labor

The Pendulum Has  
Swung Too Far

In Memoriam

Letter from  
our President

Calendar of Events

Flip Over for  
Double Cover  
Issue

TENNESSEE  
TRIAL LAWYER  
OF THE YEAR

**Thomas Greer**

Page 6B

  
TENNESSEE  
TRIAL LAWYERS  
ASSOCIATION





# TN TRIAL LAWYER OF THE YEAR: THOMAS GREER



BAILEY & GREER PLLC  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



**T**homas Greer is the recipient of the 2020 TTLA Outstanding Trial Lawyer of the Year award. This award is given annually to honor an attorney who demonstrated superior skills and outstanding achievements in civil justice during the previous year.

Thomas has spent his entire legal career representing people against corporations and insurance companies. Thomas is a partner in the Memphis based law firm of Bailey & Greer. His true passion as a lawyer is trying cases, where he has obtained many impressive verdicts and is often called upon by other attorneys to be lead counsel at trial. As a long-time TTLA member, Thomas served in various leadership positions and was TTLA President at the relatively young age of 37. Thomas can always be counted on to lend his time, energy, and resources in the fight against special interest groups, insurance companies, and large corporations, as they relentlessly and systematically attack the civil jury system.

Thomas, a self-described family man, is married to his college sweetheart, Tiffaney, and is the proud father of four daughters: Caroline (11), Eloise (8), Juliet (3), and Penelope (2). His home is filled with love, laughter, and an unbelievable amount of barbie and LOL dolls. They enjoy family walks and bike rides around the neighborhood, Friday night pizza cooked on the Big Green Egg, and family vacations.

### **Hobbies/Interests:**

Strumming guitar, playing harmonica and signing (none of which I'm very good at), vacations with my family, exercising, watching movies, and cooking out.

### **What would you say to a young lawyer who aspires to be a trial lawyer?**

If you graduated law school and passed the bar exam, you have the capacity to be a great trial lawyer. Trying a case is nothing more than a set of skills that can be learned with lots of hard work and practice, but to be clear, it's not for everyone. I feel an awesome responsibility, almost overwhelming pressure, and downright fear at the start of every case I've ever tried.

### **What can more experienced lawyers do to help the next generation of trial lawyers?**

This one is easy. Mentor as many young and aspiring trial lawyers as you can and encourage them to join TTLA. My rule is simple, as long as you are representing injured people and not insurance companies, my door is always open. The only strings I attach to my willingness to help is that you must join TTLA. Through mentoring, both informally and through TTLA's mentoring program, I've met so many great people, many of whom have become friends. I hope I've had at least a small part in the success of others.

### **What are the characteristics of a great trial lawyer?**

I don't consider myself great at anything, but when I think about the great trial lawyers I know and respect, three things come to mind: true compassion for the client, a competitive spirit, and the desire and ability to learn and try new things. First, great trial lawyers get to know their clients. They find a way to like, respect, and understand their clients. Sometimes that's hard and sometimes that's easy, but you have to find a way to do it. Second, the adversarial nature of our system means that you have to love winning and perhaps more importantly, hate losing. I think a competitive spirit is at least part of what drives great trial lawyers. Finally, I'm constantly impressed and amazed to see lawyers who have been practicing for decades learning new skills and trying different methods and approaches. It truly is the "practice of law," and if you're trying a case exactly the same way you did ten or even five years ago, you're probably doing it wrong. The trial lawyers I admire have a natural curiosity for learning and the courage to try new things.



The TTLA Outstanding Trial Lawyer Award will be given annually to an attorney or attorneys who, within the past year, have demonstrated superior skills as a trial advocate for their clients, have achieved an outstanding result for a client against obstacles, have shown inspired devotion to improvement of the civil justice system or have worked tirelessly to combat the significant threats to the civil justice system. *Criteria: Must have made an extraordinary contribution to the cause of civil justice and adhered to the highest principles of the legal profession. Must be a licensed attorney and member of the Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association.*

