

From: <webmaster@mail.michbar.org>
To: <asmith@mail.michbar.org>, <webmaster@mail.michbar.org>, <elizabeth@your...>
Date: 3/15/2013 6:41 PM
Subject: Nomination for Unsung Hero Award

A copy of this e-mail has been sent to the State Bar of Michigan and to the nominator of the award.

Name of nominee: James E. Brenner
 Title:
 Firm or Organization: Clark Hill PLC
 Address: 500 Woodward Ave., Ste. 3500, Detroit MI 48226
 Phone: 313-965-8814
 Fax:
 E-mail: jbrenner@clarkhill.com

Name of nominator: Elizabeth Jolliffe
 Title: Owner
 Firm or Organization: Your Benchmark Coach
 Address: 543 Fifth Street, Ann Arbor MI 48103
 Phone: 734-663-7905
 Fax:
 E-mail: elizabeth@yourbenchmarkcoach.com

 Explain the merits of your nomination, submit any supporting materials for your nominee by email, fax, or mail. Give specific examples.

Jim Brenner attempts to balance his paid practice of law with pro bono practice including representation of death penalty defendants and service on the board of directors of Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services a/k/a Neighborhood Legal Services of Michigan where he is currently board chair. He also serves as a hearing referee for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. He also handles pro bono cases through his firm Clark Hill's participation in the legal services clinics via the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association.

Jim is currently working on his third pro bono death penalty case. He received it in October 2007. In 2009 he was successful in getting the death penalty reversed in the case. However, the appeal process continues as he fights for a reversal of the original conviction since the state of TN hid a video for 16 years that was helpful to the defense.

Jim's first death penalty appeal case, also in TN which was ultimately successful in reversing the death penalty, took 17 years to go through the process of appeals. The second case, out of TX, was successful as well.

 Please provide a complete resume that includes dates of:
 -Service to and on behalf of the State Bar of Michigan
 -Other service to the legal profession
 -Service to the public
 -Any awards the nominee may have received

James E. Brenner is an attorney with Clark Hill PLC in its Detroit offices and heads its Appellate Practice Department. He received his legal education from The University of Michigan Law School in 1972 and was admitted to the practice of law that same year. Between 1967 and 1969, he served as an officer in

the U.S. Army.

Michigan Lawyers Weekly Lawyer of the Year recipient, 2007.
Pro Bono award through the DMBA, exact year uncertain at this time.

Optional: List news, magazine, radio, and TV features about the nominee's accomplishments (do not submit actual articles or DVDs).
State date/page and media e.g. 12/12/07, p. 12, Lansing State Journal, "Lawyer Begins TLC Program in Schools"

To be submitted.

Please provide a letter written by the nominator explaining why the nominee should be considered for the award. The letter should be signed by the nominator and any additional supporters. One dated and signed letter is required, it can be e-mailed to Anne Smith at asmith@mail.michbar.org, faxed to her attention at (517) 372-2410, or sent by mail. Please note in your communication the name of the award and the nominee's name.

Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend St.
Lansing, MI 48933-2012
Phone: (517) 346-6374

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ELIZABETH JOLLIFFE, J.D.
YOUR BENCHMARK COACH

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March 18, 2013

Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend Street
Lansing, MI 48933-2012

Re: Nomination of James E. Brenner for Unsung Hero Award

Dear Anne:

On March 15 I submitted an online nomination for James E. Brenner of Clark Hill PLC for the Unsung Hero Award. The description of the award is a simple one: "This award will be presented to a lawyer who has exhibited the highest standards of practice and commitment for the benefit of others." As written, this award could be given to hundreds of members of the State Bar of Michigan. Some are unsung heroes, some are not unsung. Jim Brenner is a perfect unsung nominee for this award.

From his basic resume, Jim looks like hundreds if not thousands of other corporate defense lawyers. Jim is a lawyer at Clark Hill and head of the firm's appellate practice department, specializing in insurance, commercial and benefits law. He has also acted as a commercial arbitrator for the AAA and a hearing referee for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. Admitted to practice in 1972, Jim received his undergraduate education from the University of Detroit, his Master of Arts from Wayne State University, and his legal education from the University of Michigan. He is listed in The Best Lawyers in America and in DBusiness 2013 Top Lawyers for his appellate practice. He was selected as a Michigan Lawyer of the Year for 2007 by Michigan Lawyer's Weekly, one of only twelve chosen.

Yet because Jim is so quiet, gentle and unassuming, his pro bono death penalty appeal work takes people by surprise as much as his sly sense of humor. This work involves the defense of death row inmates in states still utilizing the death penalty as punishment for crimes. Jim began his work in 1989 and has successfully advocated for three defendants in the final stages of their respective appeals processes because of the denial of adequate assistance of counsel. In his first case, which took 17 years to go through the appellate process, Jim saved the Tennessee man's life by introducing important information his appointed counsel failed to present. Jim's second case was out of Texas, and his third case is out of Tennessee. Jim was assigned the third case in

2007 and succeeded in reversing the death penalty sentence in 2009. He is currently fighting the original conviction by pursuing the State's failure to disclose a video for sixteen years that was helpful to the defense. Jim does not choose which death penalty appeal cases he will take based on the merits. They are assigned to him.

In addition to his quiet and powerfully effective work on death penalty cases for the last twenty four years, Jim has served as Chair of the Board of Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services for the last ten years and he continues to do so.

I had the pleasure of being partners with Jim Brenner for twelve years at Clark Hill. I knew what we had in our midst but I always enjoyed when our newer colleagues discovered this hidden jewel in the firm. I consider him a hidden jewel in our profession as well. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I nominate Jim for the Unsung Hero Award.

Sincerely,

/s/

Elizabeth C. Jolliffe