

Law School Association presents service awards to Bowers and Painter

In June, the Law School Association presented its highest honor, the Distinguished Service Scroll Award, to Michael J. Bowers (J.D.'74) and Paul W. Painter Jr. (J.D.'74).

The award is given annually to individuals whose dedication and service to the legal profession and the law school deserves special recognition. The awards were presented during the LSA's annual breakfast held in conjunction with the State Bar of Georgia's Annual Meeting.

Georgia Law Dean Emeritus J. Ralph Beard presented Bowers with his award. Beard stated that the award honors alumni who are respected practitioners of the law, who have crafted a career of distinguished public service and who have shown outstanding service to the LSA.

"Mike Bowers," Beard said, "more than meets all of these criteria."

In receiving the award, Bowers said he was "honored beyond anything you could imagine. I cannot thank y'all enough." He also expressed his appreciation for the education and inspiration he received from Beard and others who have contributed to his success.

Bowers earned his bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy in 1963, his master's in industrial engineering from Stanford University in 1965, his master's in business administration from the University of Utah in 1970 and his law degree in 1974 from Georgia Law, where he graduated in the top third of his class.

After law school, Bowers accepted a position with the Office of the Attorney General of Georgia, where he worked until he was appointed attorney general of the state in 1981. He was re-elected four times and served in this post until June 1997, when he resigned to seek the Republican nomination for governor.

In 1998, Bowers joined what is currently the law firm Balch & Bingham, concentrating in general civil litigation, and became partner in 2000. He has been named by *Georgia Trend* magazine as one of the "100 Most Influential Georgians" 10 times, most recently in 2006. He currently serves as chair of the Georgia Judicial Nominating Commission.

Bowers served in the U.S. Air Force from 1963 to 1970, when he joined the Air National Guard from which he retired in 1997 at the rank of major general. From 1994 to 1997, he also served as chair of the National Guard Bureau's Counterdrug Board in Washington, D.C.

Bowers has actively participated in the LSA. He was a member of the Law School Association Council from 1981 to 1985 and served on the law school's Board of Visitors from 1985 to 1987. He is currently serving a second term on the Board of Visitors.

Bowers and his wife, Bette Rose, have three children, Carl (J.D.'89), Bruce and Michelle, and eight grandchildren.

Fellow Georgia Law alumnus and longtime friend Carl S. Pedigo Jr. presented Painter with his award. He described Painter as being an "extraordinary, intellectual individual" who "follows through" and "never lets you down." Pedigo said he was delighted to present the award to a "wonderful representative of the law school" whose "career has been nothing short of phenomenal."

Upon receiving the award, Painter said he was humbled by the recognition. "It is not everyday you get to receive an honor of this magnitude," he said. Painter also expressed his love and appreciation for the law school, saying that the institution has "a very important place" in his life.

Raised in Rossville, Ga., Painter is the son of the late Superior Court Judge Paul (Johnny) Painter and Juanita Davis Painter. He entered the Georgia Institute of Technology on a football scholarship, where he earned a degree in management in 1968. After graduation, he spent three years as a naval officer aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Independence*.

Painter entered law school in 1971, where he served as senior editor of the *Georgia Law Review* and on the Moot Court Board. After



Mike Bowers (J.D.'74) (center) poses with (l. to r.) son Carl (J.D.'89), wife Bette Rose, daughter-in-law Deena and son Bruce.



Paul Painter Jr. (J.D.'74) (center) holds his Distinguished Service Scroll Award with his wife Judi and his son Paul III.

graduating from Georgia Law with honors in 1974, he moved to Savannah to practice law.

Painter is a civil trial lawyer and partner in the firm Ellis, Painter, Ratterree & Adams. During his 32 years of private practice, he has served as president of the Savannah Bar Association and the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association. He has also served as the Georgia chair of the American College of Trial Lawyers and as a member and chair of the Board of Bar Examiners. For the last three years, *Law & Politics* and *Atlanta Magazine* have recognized Painter as one of Georgia's "Top 100" lawyers.

He has served as a member of the LSAC and as president of the LSA. Presently, he is a member of the law school's Board of Visitors.

Painter and his wife, Judi, have one child, Paul III.