

**RAYMOND L. SHAPIRO**

**R. NEAL BATSON PRESENTATION  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD  
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF BANKRUPTCY**

**MARCH 13, 2010  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Today the College honors Richard Neal Batson with our Distinguished Service Award.

I first met Neal in the Cajun Electric case in the late 1980's. He represented the Debtor and I represented a bank with a significant exposure. I told Neal that I was a bit uncomfortable as a Northerner taking the lead for my client in a New Orleans court room and perhaps I should get a local "gold ole boy" to be the lead. He said a "good ole boy" is really someone with an amiable disposition, a good drinker, and fond of dogs and good looking women but not necessarily in that order. While I did not think I fit that description, Neal suggested that to prove that I was a good ole boy, at some point just say to the Court: "Your Honor, that dog won't hunt". I said Neal, I'm Jewish and I'm from Philadelphia; we don't hunt. Fortunately, I did maintain my client's lead position in a Southern courtroom without difficulty. But Neal said he was afraid that I could never become a good ole boy. The Cajun Case, however, did afford me the opportunity to observe Neal in action. He is an exceptionally well organized professional, thoroughly prepared and very articulate on his feet. In sum, he is an impressive court room lawyer.

By coincidence we both became active in this College. When I served as Chair Neal served as President. God gave us only one front so it's always nice to have someone watch your back, and Neal excels in that endeavor. I learned early on that with Neal on your team, big mountains are reduced to little hills. He follows the basic principles of a skilled leader: have the vision to identify what has to be done, identify who best to do it, and don't worry about who gets the credit. Neal is a leader who solicits the views of others. He demonstrates fairness and integrity in all that he does.

Neal's distinguished professional career started at Vanderbilt Law School where he excelled in scholarship, was elected editor in chief of the law review and as a member of the Order of the Coif. He was then selected to serve as a law clerk to the Honorable Griffin B. Bell on the Fifth Circuit. Judge Bell later became Attorney General of the United States and they remained friends. Neal launched his private practice with the firm of Alston, Miller and Gaines which is now the prestigious firm of Alston & Bird. Neal has been a fixture in that firm, spending his entire career there as a trial lawyer and bankruptcy specialist, while also serving the firm in several leadership capacities.

Indeed, the tapestry portraying Neal's distinguished career is filled with strong fibers of leadership: President and then Chair of this College; President of the Southeastern Bankruptcy Law Institute, and President of the Atlanta Bar Association just to name a few. Is it any wonder that he also played a lead role in other major cases like A.H. Robbins, and most significantly, as Examiner in Southmark and, the ultimate jewel in his crown, as Examiner in Enron. The Wall Street Journal favorably commented on the Batson Examiner report, and I quote: "The examiner,

Neal Batson, is by all accounts a respected and conservative bankruptcy lawyer. And despite the fact that the report is a masterpiece of legal understatement, readers will find it difficult to suppress the cry: Guilty! The Batson report is deliciously specific, naming names via internal memos, phone conversations, faxes, sworn testimony and, of course, the white collar equivalent of the smoking gun – e-mails.” [unquote]

Neal’s skills as a trial lawyer, and his breadth of knowledge about bankruptcy law and practice elevate him to the platinum level. He is comfortable in the courtroom and at the conference table. His prodigious talent brought him a national reputation. He is also a member of the National Bankruptcy Conference, the American Law Institute and the American College of Trial Lawyers. Indeed Neal may be one of the few professionals and, the only professional that I can call to mind, who is a member of this College, the National Bankruptcy Conference and the American College of Trial Lawyers. Quite an achievement.

Neal has also followed professor Larry King’s mandate to “give something back”. Somehow he also found time to be an adjunct professor at Emory Law School, a contributor to publications like Norton Bankruptcy Law, and the Bankruptcy Litigation Manual, and to participate in numerous speaking engagements and seminars for ALI/ABA, the NYU Workshop and the Federal Judicial Center Workshop for Bankruptcy Judges. He also served on the Advisory Committee on Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure. Time simply does not permit me to list all of his many contributions to enhance bankruptcy law and practice.

And all of this is apart from his efforts on behalf of local charities, non-profit boards and on projects for his church. Neal’s energy and achievements clearly demonstrate that one person can make a huge difference.

Neal Batson is one of the good guys you meet on your professional journey. He is certainly the consummate lawyer, a superb leader, and a caring man: as a professional completely dedicated to protect the rights of his clients and to enhance our legal process, and as a citizen, to add significant value to the many organizations he serves. On behalf of this College, we thank you Neal for all that you have achieved as a professional and for all that you have accomplished by supporting so many community activities. We congratulate you and your family for receiving this well deserved honor, the 2010 American College of Bankruptcy Distinguished Service Award.