

Presentation of Distinguished Service Award to Pat Vance

March 1, 2025

Good evening. There are about 1,200 Fellows of the College, including emeriti and those who've passed away. Only 31 have been selected to receive the College's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, since it was first given 1996. It's my honor and pleasure to introduce number 32, Pat Vance.

Later, you'll hear that only the best and the brightest are asked to join the College. The DSA goes to the individual who, through scholarship, integrity, and service to the profession, to the community and to the College has risen far, far above the rest of us. In other words, a standout who's creamier than the cream of the crop. In other words, someone who's transcendent. In other words, Pat Vance.

Pat and I have been friends since we met almost 40 years in a matter based in New Orleans. We reconnected and our friendship blossomed when we joined the Board of Regents 20 years ago, and since then have served in many College positions simultaneously, culminating when I was the Chair, and he was the obvious choice to be General Counsel.

The recipient of the DSA is selected by a committee of Fellows from each of the Circuits with reference to several criteria. While Pat checks all the boxes, I'm going to touch on only a few of the criteria as they apply to him.

Including both lawyers and civilians, Pat is among the most honorable, decent and humble people I know. I'm not alone; in preparing these remarks, I reviewed the letters submitted in support of his nomination. The authors included federal judges at the circuit, district court and bankruptcy court levels as well as College officers, lawyers and financial advisors. Each discusses Pat's many accomplishments – some of which are listed in the program, but all have a common theme. Here are a few quotes:

Pat has a soft, measured approach, which is effective in leading others to discover for themselves the path that Pat already knows is the right one, but without assuming the spotlight or appearing to dictate the result.

ANOTHER

Throughout his career, he has consistently exhibited integrity, impartiality, and a dedication to justice. Pat's quiet confidence in leading others to a good resolution is inspiring.

ANOTHER

I know of no finer professional - no one who exhibits the level of professionalism, intellect and personal charm in a greater and more consistent manner than Pat

However, I feel compelled to disclose that a U.S. District Judge said, "He's an absolutely wonderful person and great lawyer, but I wish that occasionally he'd take out the trash and recycling."

Pat has served the College as its General Counsel, Vice President, Fifth Circuit Regent and Member of the Board of Directors. He also chaired the Foundation, the College's fundraising and pro bono supporting arm, elevating it from a moribund almost afterthought to a major driver of the College's mission. His service in each capacity was exemplary, and always driven by his burning desire to do what's in the best interest of the institution.

Pat is both an accomplished trial lawyer and bankruptcy lawyer. He's tried over 300 cases, and like most bankruptcy judges and only a few bankruptcy lawyers, he actually understands the Federal Rules of Evidence. His cases range from RICO to copyright infringement to D&O liability.

As such, he's a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers as well as of our College. He's also a Conferee of the National Bankruptcy Conference and a member of the American Law Institute, four

prestigious, invitation-only organizations. The resolution in front of me compares this accomplishment to the receiving the EGOT, namely being awarded an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony. There have been 19 EGOT recipients, but I suspect that Pat is the only one to receive the legal equivalent, which I call the Pat-GOT.

Many of you know about Pat's bankruptcy cases, so I asked him to tell me something about litigation in which he's been involved. I learned that he represented the telephone company in a lawsuit by David Duke, whom you recall was a neo-Nazi and former grand wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Duke claimed that if the telephone company hadn't terminated the 800 number that he was illegally using to raise campaign funds when he ran for a Louisiana US Senate seat in 1990, he would have won the election. He sought the salary benefits he lost when he lost the Senatorial election and thus the opportunity to be President. The phone company won the lawsuit.

Pat does more than practice law. He's a supporter of many charitable and community organizations, and by support, that means active participation. And in his case, invariably a leadership position and being honored by that group. The impressive list extends beyond service to his alma mater, LSU, and law organizations such as the American Bar Association, the Louisiana State Bar and the New Orleans Bar Association.

For example, Pat has served President of the Board of the Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corporation. And he currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Whitney Plantation, a history museum and a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving and teaching the history of enslaved people. The museum offers educational tours of the Plantation, including tours that are tailored for middle school and high school students.

I'll close with an example of Pat being Pat. He was asked by U.S. District Judge Thomas Kingsmill to organize the NCBJ conference in New Orleans in 1987. Way back then, the NCBJ had no Executive

Director, let alone an Executive Director with a staff, so Pat planned everything, including selecting the programs, the speakers, the caterers, the entertainment and, most importantly, choosing the color of the napkins and tablecloths. He didn't complain, he just rolled up his sleeves, quietly got the job done and the conference was a rousing success.

Pat is a most deserving recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. He is what all of us should strive to be. I'm honored and pleased to now turn over the podium to him.