

Lew Conner

COUNSEL



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For a significant part of seven decades, Lew Conner has been a giant of the Nashville bar - first as a trial lawyer, next a highly respected Tennessee Court of Appeals Judge, then an arbitrator for half a century and finally, for the last 25 years, one of the fathers of mediation in Tennessee.

After a 30-plus year career as a very successful trial lawyer, Judge of the Middle Section of the Tennessee Court of Appeals and arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association, Lew became a widely sought-after mediator, being one of the first in Middle Tennessee to recognize the value of mediation as a leading dispute resolution tool in the early 1990s. He not only helped put mediation on the map in Tennessee, but also to move it to the forefront of dispute resolution here with an extremely high success rate.

In addition to his legal career, Lew has been a leader of the Tennessee Republican Party, extremely active in charitable causes, particularly the Boys & Girls Club, and multiple religious, educational, cultural and community organizations, especially his alma mater, Vanderbilt. Finally, he has been heavily involved with the game of golf in Tennessee for more than 50 years as a championship player, senior administrator and benefactor with an emphasis in the latter categories on junior golf. He is a member of both the Tennessee Golf and Vanderbilt Sports Halls of Fame.

The trust clients feel when working with Lew derives not only from his vast experience but also from his sharp mind and business-like approach. With his evaluative mediation style, Lew brings candor, empathy, and integrity to the resolution table, thereby gaining the confidence of all parties that he will exhaust every possible avenue to fairly resolve a given dispute. Whether representing clients before an adjudicative body or serving as an arbitrator or mediator in a complex business case, Lew repeatedly finds a successful resolution for those relying upon him. Over the last quarter of a century, Lew has conducted some 850 mediations with a success rate exceeding 85%.

Since 1971 he has served as a neutral panelist in over 50 arbitrations, most large, complex AAA arbitrations and as an advocate in numerous other disputes in the court system as well as serving as a jurist on the Tennessee Court of Appeals from 1980-84 and as a Special Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court in 1979-80. He began his career as a trial lawyer in private practice in Nashville in 1966 after serving as a prosecutor for the U.S. Army, 101st Airborne Division, Ft. Campbell, Ky. for some 2.5 years after he graduated third in his class from Vanderbilt University Law School.

His professional specialties have included:

- Mediation and arbitration
- Complex business litigation
- Domestic disputes
- Construction and real estate litigation
- General litigation

EDUCATION

- J.D., Vanderbilt University School of Law, 1963
 - Order of the Coif
 - Managing Editor - Vanderbilt Law Review
- B.A., Vanderbilt University, 1960
 - Golf team co-captain
 - President - Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity

COURT ADMISSIONS

- United States Supreme Court
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Military Appeals
- All Federal and State in the state of Tennessee

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Tennessee

RECOGNITIONS

Nashville Bar Association

- Recipient, John C. Tune Public Service Award in 2015, presented by the Board of Directors of the Nashville Bar Association to the member of the Association who has shown the highest degree of dedication not only to his or her work as a lawyer but to the betterment of the community in which he or she lives. Because the award is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member, it is not necessarily given annually, but only when someone is deserving of the award. Lew considers receipt of the Tune award as the pinnacle of his 56-year legal career.
- President, 1987-88, and member, Board of Directors, Nashville Bar Association, 1986-88.

Nashville Business Journal

- Best of the Bar, Lifetime Achievement Award, 2019. This honor has special significance beyond the fact that it is given by one of Nashville's most respected newspapers. The 70 voters for this award have themselves been chosen as one of Nashville's "Best of the Bar" among 5,000+ lawyers in a number of categories. It is of the same ilk as the Tune award.

The Best Lawyers in America © (BL Rankings)

- Arbitration, 2010-2021
- Bet-the-Company Litigation, 2010-2021
- Commercial Litigation, 2008-2021
- Family Law, 1987-2021
- Family Law Mediation, 2008-2021
- Litigation - Construction, 1987-2021
- Mediation, 2010-2021
- Lawyer of the Year, Nashville, ADR, 2010, 2011 (first honoree)
- Lawyer of the Year, Nashville, Domestic Relations, 2015

Military Career

- Captain, Judge Advocate General's Corps. Graduated from the U.S. Army Officer Infantry Basic Training School and U.S. Army Law School. Stationed with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky. and successfully prosecuted 128 of 129 cases.

Boys & Girls Club of Middle Tennessee

- Recipient, Lifetime Achievement Award and the Medallion, the highest honors presented by the National Boys & Girls Clubs; selected as an inductee in inaugural class of Tennessee Boys & Girls Club Hall of Fame.
- Multi-term president and long-term (35 years) member and emeritus member, Board of Directors

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

- Recipient of the Hope Award in 2007, the highest honor presented by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Golf

- Founder and Chairman, Tennessee Golf Foundation; Emeritus member of its board.
- Inductee, Tennessee Golf Hall of Fame, 2010. A 9-hole facility for juniors, "The Little Course at Conner Lane" named in honor of his family for its generosity and his leadership of the Tennessee Golf Foundation.
- Inaugural Recipient, Tennessee Golf Foundation's "Tennessee Person of the Year" Award.
- Member and President, 1985, Board of Directors, and Director Emeritus, of the Tennessee Golf Association.
- Member, Boards of Directors of the American Seniors Golf Association and the Southern Golf Association.

Vanderbilt

- Inductee, Vanderbilt Athletics Hall of Fame, 2015
- Recipient, Nashville Banner Vanderbilt Person of the Year Award
- Adjunct Professor, Vanderbilt University School of Law, teaching Appellate Practice, 1981-89
- Member, Board of Directors, Vanderbilt University Law School
- Member, Board of Directors, National Commodore Club
- Member, Campaign Cabinet for Vanderbilt
- President, 1970, and member; Board of Directors, Nashville Quarterback Club, 1970-75
- Lew remains deeply engaged as a supporter of the Vanderbilt men's and women's golf programs. Lew and his wife, Ashley, were instrumental in creating the top-tier facilities at the Vanderbilt Legends Course, including "The Conner Family Hitting Bays" and "Conner Family Short Game Areas." These improvements were so named by Vanderbilt in appreciation of their generosity to its golf programs and a lifetime of leadership by Lew - first as a competitor, and then as supportive alumni.

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- Member, Nashville, Tennessee and American Bar Associations
- Founding Fellow, Nashville Bar Foundation
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- Fellow, American Bar Foundation
- Fellow, American College of Civil Trial Mediators
- Fellow, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
- Life Member, Sixth Circuit Judicial Conference
- Member, Supreme Court Select Commission for the Future of the Court System in Tennessee, 1993-97
- Member, National Board of Directors, American Arbitration Association, 1993-1999
- Chairman, Large Complex Case Panels of Commercial and Construction Arbitrators, American Arbitration Association, 1971-2016
- Member, Tennessee Academy of Mediators and Arbitrators
- Chairman, Tennessee Corrections Overcrowding Commission, 1985-86
- Chairman, Willis Corroon, Tennessee

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, Elder, Deacon, Chairman of annual fundraising drive, Sunday School teacher, Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Member and Chairman, Board of Directors of the Gaylord Music City Bowl, 2004
- Member and Chairman, Board of Directors of the Tennessee State Museum Foundation
- Member, Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Tennessee Business Roundtable
- Member, Board of Directors of the Nashville Symphony, and the Pencil Foundation

- Finance Chairman or Co-Chairman - Lamar Alexander for Governor Campaign, President and Senatorial Campaigns, Finance Co-chairman for Bob Corker and Fred Thompson Senatorial Campaigns, Bill Haslam and Don Sundquist for Governor Campaigns. Finance Chairman, Tennessee Republican Party
- Member, National Finance Committee, Reagan for President, George H. W. Bush for President, George W. Bush for President
- Alumnus, Leadership Nashville
- Member, Nashville Society of Amateur Chefs