

M
MEN
LOOKING AHEAD
— NEWS MAGAZINE —

MARK TRIGG
PARTNER
GREENBERG TRAURIG, LLP

2016 MAN OF THE YEAR

LAW & JUSTICE ISSUE

SALUTING GEORGIA'S MOST POWERFUL & INFLUENTIAL ATTORNEYS

ATTORNEY

Mark G. Trigg

Greenberg Traurig, LLP

The moment Attorney Mark G. Trigg saw the stoic compassionate character, Atticus Finch stand defiantly during a courtroom scene in the movie, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, he realized fate was beckoning him. At the tender age of 10, he identified with the tall heroic attorney who loomed larger than life on a

huge black and white screen during the racial turbulence of the sixties. Finch was piously protective of the law, and like Attorney Trigg, he fought for “liberty and justice for all.”

Mark Trigg, Shareholder/Co-Chair, Atlanta Business Litigation Group at Greenberg Traurig, LLP, has litigated numerous complex national cases, including corporate and partnership disputes, class action litigation, defamation and media claims, sports and entertainment litigation, real estate disputes, securities litigation, labor and employment litigation, contractual claims, and white collar criminal defense. He is also an expert in governmental litigation and administrative proceedings, but deciding on a career was a dubious task. The heir to a legacy of lawyers and ministers reached a fork in the road regarding which path to take.

“My father, grandfather, and great grandfather each served fifty years as Methodist ministers. Another great-grandfather, great-uncle and cousin were well-respected lawyers,” he says. “I found myself at a crossroads trying to choose which branch of the family tree to follow, until I learned of a new joint law and theology program at Emory University.”

Although the program seemed ideal, after three years, the struggle for a profession came to a close. Mark G. Trigg decided to put an esquire behind his name and attorney in front of it. It was time to announce his choice courageously to his father. “(My father) replied, after an interminable period of silence, ‘Well, it sounds like we’ll both be saying Let us pray. We’ll just be spell-

ing it differently.” The junior Trigg knew the difference. He was on a mission to assist those who were being preyed upon both socially and legally. He set his sight

on becoming David against the Goliath of their injustices. After carefully scrutinizing the legal system, he decided on a course of action.

“When I began the joint law and theology program at Emory, I thought the only way to merge the two disciplines was to pursue a career committed solely to the legal representation of the poor. I now understand that there are daily opportunities for each of us to live out our principles, even in the challenging environment of an often contentious



litigation practice in a big law firm. I have also come to appreciate the practical reality that by representing large corporations in their business disputes, my firm has the capacity to find creative ways to give a voice to those in need of justice," he proclaims.

The courage of Attorney Trigg's convictions come from his family; the first people to introduce him to the racial lines that divided the country during the turbulent sixties, and the disturbance

result of this case; one that underscored the enormous weight Mark Trigg has as an attorney.

"That trial proved to me that a license to practice law is imbued with tremendous power and, with it, great responsibility."

Community service and an affectionate bond with youth are important to Attorney Trigg. He has been a volunteer with the Truancy Intervention Project for twenty years, serving as a mentor for young boys who live in crime-ridden

representing someone who couldn't afford to hire me, who had been treated unjustly by the wealthy and powerful," he says.

A proponent of legal and social inclusion of people from all walks of life, Attorney Trigg is disturbed by what could be described as the divided state of America. He believes political differences and personal prejudices should not affect the protection of rights for all. "The so-called 'First Amendment

"Most important nationally is the need for sweeping reforms of our criminal justice system, and its disproportionate impact upon minorities and non-violent drug offenders.

that ensued as a result of that mayhem. "My parents and maternal grandparents were on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi and Tennessee in the early sixties," he says. "They demonstrated moral courage and character at a time when their principled public stances from the pulpit put them at grave risk, especially in the Deep South. Facing cross-burnings and death threats from the Ku Klux Klan, my parents were among a large number of ministers who ultimately were forced to leave Mississippi. I've spent my adult life in a vain attempt to be worth of their legacies."

The greatest milestone in Mr. Trigg's career occurred in 1999 when he represented a young African-American woman who was arrested for being behind in her payment to a "rent-to-own" furniture company. It was a false charge, and the tenacious attorney was ready for courtroom battle. "Once we obtained a dismissal of the criminal charges against her, we filed a malicious prosecution civil case against the store," he says confidently. "After the store's insurance carrier offered us only a few hundred dollars to settle the case on the courtroom steps, we obtained a six-figure jury verdict that literally changed my client's life, allowing her to go to college and start her family and career." There was an important lesson triggered by the

public housing sans adult supervision. "I learned the reason some of these boys weren't attending school was their embarrassment that they only owned one change of clothing. My family developed close bonds with each of these young men. Those ties remain strong today," he says proudly.

Although Attorney Trigg is considered a high power lawyer who represents clients who have deep pockets, he realizes

Defense Act' would allow tax-payer-funded organizations to legally discriminate against LGBT Georgians. Full recognition and protections of the LGBT community is, I believe, the newest and most serious challenge to the justice system in our state," he declares.

The pendulum of justice swings with mighty force in the spirit of the minister turned lawyer, His beliefs were formed by an ancestral urge to create a platform of justice from the ills of discriminatory action. The young boy who was mesmerized by the thought-provoking Atticus, a movie character whose name is synonymous with removing the blemish of justice from the face of a prejudicial society, carries each memorable movie moment with him as he walks inside a courtroom. The character has also shaped his philosophy regarding the need for systematic reform.

"Perhaps, most important nationally is the need for sweeping reforms of our criminal justice system, and its disproportionate impact upon minorities and non-violent drug offenders. As lawyers and appointed guardians of the Constitution, we have a moral responsibility to assume an active role in the political debates, irrespective of how unpopular our personal opinions may be to some in the business community, even among those who constitute our primary client base. Atticus demands no less of us."



financial fate has no discretion and justice has no price tag. "I have been fortunate throughout my career to have represented clients in high-profile litigation involving, in the aggregate, billions of dollars in dispute. Those cases have been challenging and gratifying. However, my highest sense of satisfaction and accomplishment has come from successfully