

2008 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS



NICK C. NICHOLS '57

Nick C. Nichols is the senior partner in the law firm Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Sorrels & Friend. He attended Rice University on a basketball scholarship and received his B.A. in 1958. He then attended The University of Texas at Austin School of Law and has practiced in Houston since 1963.

His courtroom successes as a civil trial litigator and the esteem in which he is held by the legal profession have led to invitations to join the prestigious American College of Trial Lawyers, International Academy of Trial Lawyers, International Society of Barristers and The Inner Circle of Advocates. He has been listed consistently in Woodward White's "The Best Lawyers in America." Nichols received the Southern Trial Lawyers Association War Horse Award in 2003 in recognition of his outstanding professional accomplishments. He has been an adjunct professor at South Texas College of Law and a frequent lecturer at law schools, legal seminars and Rice. Nichols is a Keeton Fellow at the UT School of Law, where the Nick Nichols Endowed Presidential Scholarship has been established. Rice Athletics is the beneficiary of the Nick and Linda Nichols Men's Basketball Scholarship Endowment.

One of Nichols' noteworthy victories resulted from a case known as "The Punch," which involved the serious injury to Houston Rockets forward Rudy Tomjanovich, a victim of a vicious punch thrown by an opposing player. This case resulted in a substantial judgment and had a profound effect on professional basketball and sports law. The NBA responded with important safeguards to discourage recurrences of such misconduct, and the precedents set by this case provide the opportunity for redress for future victims.

Nichols has made numerous contributions in his personal life, as well. "Somehow Nick Nichols, always blessed with boundless energy, a positive upbeat attitude and dogged determination, has found time to dedicate to his community," said Bill Arhos '57. He has served Rice as a Rice Associate, community associate of Will Rice College, former Hanszen College Board member and a member of the Owl Club, RBI Club, Ace Club, "R" Association, ROMEOS and scholarship fund committee.

William Powers, Jr., former dean of the UT School of Law and current president of the university, stated, "I have seen firsthand not only Nick's remarkable professional skills as a practicing trial lawyer, but his exemplary commitment to his community. He has given back many times over with his time and expertise, as well as his treasure, to the universities that have given him so much. Nick is a worthy exemplar of the men and women who are proud to be Rice alumni."