

PROFILES IN SERVICE

Pro Bono Week 2013



• WILLIAM J. BAXLEY •

A 1964 graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law, William J. (“Bill”) Baxley II has made important contributions to public service in Alabama.

Bill Baxley was elected Alabama Attorney General at age 28. He served as Attorney General from 1971 to 1979, and Lieutenant Governor from 1983 to 1987. As Attorney General, Mr. Baxley appointed the state's first African-American assistant attorney general, who later became a federal judge. His successful prosecution of Ku Klux Klansman Robert Chambliss for the 1963 bombing of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church is featured in the Spike Lee documentary, *4 Little Girls*. His legal accomplishments are also documented in *Lay Down with Dogs*, *Until Justice Rolls Down*, and numerous other publications.

Throughout his career, Mr. Baxley has served in the Alabama Army National Guard, beginning as an enlisted clerk and rising through the ranks to retire as a Colonel in the JAG Corps. In 1979, he founded the firm known today as Baxley, Dillard, McKnight & James. Mr. Baxley has successfully represented clients in the United States Supreme Court, the Alabama Supreme Court, and in appellate and trial courts over which they exercise jurisdiction. He has been selected as a Fellow in the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, as well as being recognized by his peers as a Super Lawyer.

Mr. Baxley has spoken to groups around the country about his role in prosecuting the Sixteenth Street church bombing case, and has been particularly active in re-telling this important story during 2013, the 50th anniversary of the bombing. Earlier this year, Mr. Baxley was awarded the Order of the Samaritan by the University of Alabama School of Law, the highest public service honor bestowed by the law school.

We are proud to count Bill Baxley among our distinguished graduates.