

Welcome to the Appleseed Legal Justice Center's 2006 Advocate of the Year Award. My name is Jack Barnes and I chair the Center's Board. Most of you know Appleseed because of the excellent work our Director Sue Berkowitz does for the low income citizens of South Carolina. As a Board member it is a privilege to work with Sue and the other attorneys and staff at Appleseed. They are a fine group of people who genuinely care about the lives of all South Carolinians and provide a voice for those low income citizens who would not otherwise have one in many areas affecting all of our lives.

I would like to thank all of you have have sponsored this event tonight. As you know nonprofits are facing tougher and tougher challenges in raising money. I would encourage you to visit our website at www.Scjustice.org and learn more about Appleseed. In addition we are always looking for volunteers.

Tonight we are honored to present our first Appleseed Advocate of the Year of the Award. This award is presented to someone who truly represents to the work of Appleseed and who has over the years supported Appleseed and its clients in our ongoing mission.

Ken Suggs really needs no introduction to you all and if I gave you the whole list of his accomplishments we would exceed our allotted time here at Nelson Mullins. Ken is a principal in Janet Jenner and Suggs, LLC. He has leadership roles in the firm's medical negligence and pharmaceutical departments. He has worked for consumers for almost 30 years, and is one of the nations's leading trial attorneys.

He is currently the president of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA), the worlds largest trial bar and has held virtually every office in ATLA. He is a former president of the SC Trial Layers and president of the SC Bar Young Lawyers. Other than Appleseed, Ken's public service includes Carolina Sunshine Children, Inc., City Year, Trinity Cathedral, and St. Lawrence Place.

Ken is a graduate of Clemson University and and a cum laude graduate of the University of South Carolina School of Law where he was a member of Wig and Robe and Moot Court.

He is a decorated Vietnam War Veteran, having served in the Navy for four years after Clemson. He was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Achievement Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and an award from the government of South Vietnam; the Vietnamese Honor Medal.

Ken served as a founding board member when SC Appleseed, then SC Legal Services Association, transformed from an off shoot of legal services programs to an independent voice for the low income community. He was instrumental as a board member in the development of our initial focus and mission as we worked to redefine our work and develop support among the Bar and community. Ken came forward to represent SCALJC when our work was under attack by the consumer finance industry defending our right to be a voice in the legislature and avoid personal attack. This was critical to ensure that the full discussion of issues were not chilled because it was not in the best interest of a particular industry. We have now reached our tenth year as an independent organization work to see that all communities have full representation and a voice with decision makers. The success that Appleseed has today is in no small part the result of lots of time and effort by Ken Suggs. Please join me in honoring Ken Suggs as our 2006 Advocate of the Year