Bill Purcell

Counsel

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Industries

Energy

Finance

Multifamily Housing

Practice Areas

Business & Commercial Litigation

Health Care

Land Use & Zoning

Litigation

Real Estate

Real Estate & Land Use Litigation

Bar Memberships

Tennessee

A strategic advisor to public and private clients, Bill Purcell has spent more than 40 years in law, public service, and higher education. Having represented clients in all of the trial courts of Nashville as well as the federal and state appellate courts, he has been focused on advising clients with administrative and policy concerns at the local level across Tennessee.

During his eight-year tenure as Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee (1999-2007), the city saw unprecedented economic expansion, an increase in Metro school funding of more than 50 percent, and the development and preservation of more than 26,000 affordable housing units. He was elected to his second term as mayor by a record-setting 84.8 percent of the vote. During his term, Nashville was ranked as the number one city for corporate headquarters and twice ranked as the hottest city in America for expansion and relocation of business. Bill was elected to five terms in the Tennessee House of Representatives (1986-96), serving as Majority Leader (1990-96). During his decade in the General Assembly he sponsored and passed legislation undertaking major reforms in Tennessee's schools, courtrooms, industrial plants and boardrooms, criminal and juvenile justice, hospitals, and voting booths. During his service Tennessee was twice ranked the best managed state in America.

An active participant in the work of the profession, Bill has been honored by the Nashville Bar Association with the John C. Tune award for outstanding contributions to his community and faithful service to the bar.

Other Info About Bill

Work History

Mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee, 1999-2007

Tennessee House of Representatives, 1986-1996 (Majority Leader, 1990-1996)

Vanderbilt University, Adjunct Professor of Public Policy Studies, 2012-present

Meharry Medical College, Visiting Professor, 2014

Harvard University Special Advisor and Co-Chair – Allston, 2009-2011

Harvard Institute of Politics, Director, 2008-2010

Harvard Kennedy School, Lecturer in Public Policy, 2009-2010

Harvard University Institute of Politics Fellow, 2007

Tennessee State University, Founding Dean of the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs, 2008

Founder and Director, Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University, 1996-1999

Office of the Metropolitan Public Defender, Senior Assistant, 1981-1985

West Tennessee Legal Services, Staff Attorney, 1979-1981

Experience

Commission on the Future of the Tennessee Judicial System

Tennessee IOLTA Grant Review Committee

Board of the Nashville Bar Association

Fellow of both the Tennessee and Nashville Bar Foundations

Education

Vanderbilt University School of Law, J.D., 1979, Distinguished Alumnus (2003)

Hamilton College, B.A., 1976

Courts

United States Supreme Court, 1988

United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, 1985

Recognition

Nashville Business Journal, Best of the Bar Award, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024

National Superintendent's Roundtable, Robert Koff Award, 2019

Nashville Alliance for Public Education, Distinguished Service Award, 2008

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Welcoming Tennessee Award, 2008

Greater Nashville Association of Realtors, Honorary Realtor of the Year, 2007

Mental Health Association of Middle Tennessee, Jack C. Massey Leadership Award, 2007

Nashville Downtown Partnership, Vision Award, 2007

Community Nashville, Human Relations Award, 2006

Americans for the Arts, Public Leadership in the Arts Award, 2006

International District Energy Association, Leadership Award, 2006

John C. Tune Public Service Award, Nashville Bar Association, 2006

Public Official of the Year, Governing Magazine, 2006

Tennessee Education Association, Friend of Education Award, 2006

Civil War Preservation Trust, State Leadership Award, 2004

Vanderbilt University School of Law, Distinguished Alumnus, 2004

Public Relations Society of America Nashville, Apollo Award, 2003

Country Music Association, The Connie B. Gay Founding Presidents Award, 2001

Legislator of the Year, Tennessee Counseling Association, 1996

Legislator of the Year, Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, Friend of Education Award for Outstanding Support of Public Education, 1996

Legislator of the Year, Tennessee Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, Tennessee Pediatric Society, 1995

Tennessee Hospital Association, Community Service Award, 1994

Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy Studies, The Bridge Award, 1991

Legislator of the Year, Tennessee Conservation League, 1991

Legislator of the Year, Tennessee District Attorneys Association, 1989

Professional Affiliations

Nashville Bar Association

Tennessee Bar Association

Civic Activities

Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, Board of Commissioners, Chairman, 2019-2024

National Policing Institute, Board of Directors

Sister Cities of Nashville, Board of Directors

Center for Non-Profit Management, Nashville, Board of Directors, 2017-2023

Abe's Garden, Nashville, Board of Directors

MDC, Inc., Durham, NC, Board of Directors, 2016-2022

St Bonaventure University, Board of Trustees, 2011-2020

Roundtable on Obesity Solutions, National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, Chair, 2011-2019

Presentations

Panelist, What We Learned from COVID-19: Preparing Nashville for Future Health Emergencies, Nashville Health Care Council, December 2021

Panelist, Civic Design Center 20th Anniversary, November, 2021

Panelist, Vanderbilt Chancellor's Lecture Series: Nashville Through the Decades, Vanderbilt University, November 2021

Panelist and Moderator, Why Local Governments Can Seem More Effective than Federal Counterparts, The Vanderbilt Project on Unity & American Democracy, November 2021

Major Publications

What Business Leaders Need to Know About the Benefits of a Healthy Workforce by Margaret E. Guerin-Calvert, Senior Managing Director, FTI Consulting; Michael W. Cropp, MD, President and CEO, Independent Health; and Bill Purcell, former Mayor of Nashville (1999-2007) and advisory board member for FTI's Center for Healthcare Economics and Policy, April 4, 2022.

Nashville is better prepared for the next COVID variant thanks to early action review | Opinion by Bill Purcell, Kristi Mitchell and Mark Yancy, guest columnists, *Tennessean*, Feb. 1, 2022.

Featured Articles

Nashville Mixed-Income PILOT Program 2.0: New Tax Abatement Incentives for Multifamily Developers

Tennessee's Community Workforce Housing Innovation Pilot Program

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