

# Susman Godfrey L.L.P Partner Neal Manne is awarded the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL's) 2011 Karen H. Susman Jurisprudence Award

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The 2011 Karen H. Susman Jurisprudence Luncheon honoring Susman Godfrey partner Neal Manne and past recipients on this 25th anniversary of the award was held on April 6th, 2011. This event was an unparalleled success, both in terms of fundraising, and providing inspiration. The award goes annually to an outstanding member of the legal community who exhibits a commitment to equality, justice, fairness and community service, and Manne's commitment to public service is exemplary. The luncheon raised more than \$625-thousand dollars for the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL's) Southwest Region and its programs. The luncheon also delivered a large dose of encouragement for attorneys, judges and others in the legal system to follow the principles of ADL, and strive for justice and fairness. Highlights of the luncheon included a moving tribute to Karen H. Susman by her son Harry Susman, who also is an ADL board member and served as honorary chair of the event.

*Karen H. Susman was the former ADL Board Chair for whom the award was named and one of Manne's closest friends. They also included Manne's introduction by his friend and Susman Godfrey colleague Parker Folse, who touched on Neal's dedication, irreverence, kindness, and commitment to equality, "Neal is someone who instinctively reacts when he sees someone being mistreated, when he sees discrimination... He simply does something about it," Folse said.*

Then Manne rose to speak, and first thanked ADL and those in attendance who had encouraged and moved him in his life, including his wife, Nancy McGregor; Federal Judge William Norris, for whom Manne clerked; Senator Arlen Specter, for whom he was a counsel and Chief of Staff, University of Texas President Bill Powers and Law School Dean Larry Sager, and his coworkers at Susman Godfrey, especially Steve Susman. Perhaps the most moving part of the event, however, was Manne's stirring account of the case of Anthony Graves, convicted of six murders in Burleson County in 1994 and sentenced to Texas' death row, even though the real murderer repeatedly told the Burleson County District Attorney Graves had nothing to do with the crime.

*Manne applauded the dedication of St. Thomas University Journalism instructor and attorney Nicole Casarez, who took up the case along with her journalism students. He lauded attorneys Katherine Scardino and Jimmy Phillips who also took on the case, and former Harris County Assistant District Attorney Kelly Siegler, who, after being hired as a special prosecutor assigned to try to convict Graves of the murders a second time, dropped all the charges against Graves because, as Manne said, "there was no evidence, and there never had been evidence" to convict Graves. Manne asked whether the case proved the justice system had worked, or failed miserably,*

# SUSMAN GODFREY

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*and answered himself that it had failed miserably. But, he added, “three lawyers, working within the system, with a keen sense of justice and fairness avoided a further travesty,” by striving successfully for Anthony Graves’ freedom. Manne said that was what jurisprudence was all about, then proceeded to introduce Casarez, Scardino, Seigler and Graves. An emotional audience gave Graves a standing ovation. “I can assure you,” Manne said to Graves, “the people in this room will not forget your story, and ADL will not forget.” ADL Southwest Regional Director Martin B. Cominsky agreed. “This Karen H. Susman Jurisprudence Luncheon certainly was one of the most spectacular events I have ever been involved with at ADL. Neal’s powerful message certainly resonated in the room and created a lasting memory of the importance of ADL’s pursuit of justice and fair treatment for all,” Cominsky said. Attorneys and ADL Board Members Ian Scharfman and Jessica Mason were event chairs for the luncheon.*