

# PUBLICATION

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## 35 Years of Learning from the Great Communicator

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**I worked with Leo Bearman Jr. as his secretary for almost 35 years. I could write a book about all of Leo's good works and his service to others that were never shared on paper or generated great fanfare, but I will say two things that were cardinal rules for Leo which I think sum up his 60-year commitment to the Memphis legal community and to anyone else who needed help.**

1. "Leave my door open!"
2. "If you get a call from any lawyer at any time who needs to talk to me or come see me, set a time and let me know. I will be here."

### **Leo's "Keep My Door Open Policy"**

On the first day I began working with Leo, I made a point of closing his door when I left, thinking he would prefer peace and quiet while working instead of hearing the noise and activity that naturally filtered in from a floor filled with very busy trial lawyers. After closing his door a couple times that day, Leo made a point to nicely tell me that, in the future, unless he had a client in his office, he wanted me to leave his door open. Leo said, "How will anybody know that I am here for them if my door is always closed and they have to go through you to talk to me?" As the years passed, I came to understand why his door was always open and why he always answered his own phone. I had threatened at one point to have a sign made and put on his office door that read:

"Give me all the lawyers and all the people who are frightened and don't know where to turn for comfort and advice, free of charge, with no judgments being made against you".

### **Leo's Connection to Young People**

In writing this summary, I realized that a great part of Leo's service work has been with those who are as much as two generations behind him. For many years, our law firm has hosted a Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day. Since the beginning, Leo and I participated and tried to plan something interesting and fun for our portion of that day. Early on, we did a mock trial in the courtroom downstairs and the kids loved being judge, jury and the lawyers trying the case Leo set before them. Leo and I decided that seeing the real thing in action would be even more impactful to the kids. So, for approximately ten years, Leo would call one of the judges and ask for permission to bring our kids to the courthouse to experience firsthand how the courts and the legal system work. We would trek down to the courthouse and follow the same procedures and protocols anyone who is going before the court would follow. The kids loved being there and I am not sure who enjoyed it more, the children or Leo. Leo was very proud of his profession and you could tell he enjoyed sharing it with young people.