Jere D. McGaffey, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is this year’s recipient of the Section’s Distinguished Service Award. The eleventh person to receive this honor, he joins the ranks of a select group of individuals whose professional and public accomplishments and contributions have been truly outstanding and exemplary.

Born and raised in Nebraska, Jere graduated at the top of his class from the University of Nebraska, where he majored in accounting and was a formidable college debater. He earned his law degree, magna cum laude, at Harvard (1961), where he served on the Law Review. (His classmates included several others who also would go on to extraordinary careers in the tax world among them, Jerry Cohen, Dan Halperin, Jack Levin, Bob McQuiston and Matt Zinn.)

After service as an Army officer, Jere joined the Milwaukee firm of Foley & Lardner, which then had less than 50 lawyers and only a few tax lawyers. As Foley continued to grow, so did Jere’s reputation as one of the nation’s outstanding young tax lawyers. He has practiced at Foley for almost 45 years in the tax, estate planning and business counseling areas; chaired the firm’s tax and individual planning department; sat on several public and closely-held corporate boards; authored two tax treatises and numerous articles for professional journals; lectured extensively at tax and estate planning institutes and programs throughout the country; and occupied leadership positions in several major professional organizations. Despite recently becoming a “retired” partner, he remains active in all of these arenas.

Jere chaired the ABA Tax Section in 1990–91, and was a member of the ABA House of Delegates from 1995-2000. His term as Section Chair marked an important turning point in the scope and focus of Section activities, with the adoption by Council of a new Mission Statement and several related Goals designed to enhance the “public educational” and “tax system improvement” dimensions of the Section’s work. Jere’s leadership in formulating these important organizational tenets, and his keen instincts regarding the Section’s proper role and untapped potential, were in large part responsible for our numerous public-oriented activities and contributions over the past 15 years.

A number of other professional groups have also benefited greatly from Jere’s many talents. He has chaired the American College of Tax Counsel, the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance and the Milwaukee Association of Commerce Tax Committee; served as a Regent of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel; and was a member of the Advisory Group on Takeover Legislation to the Wisconsin Commissioner of Securities. In 1989 he was named Wisconsin’s Outstanding Tax Professional.

And beyond all this, Jere somehow has found time as well for extensive involvement with community and charitable organizations, including board memberships and other leadership positions for Aurora Health Care, the Milwaukee Association of Commerce, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Foundation, the University of Wisconsin Medical and Nursing Schools and the Helen Bader Foundation.

The Section is indeed proud to honor our good friend and colleague, Jere McGaffey, for his many years of distinguished service and continuing contributions to the tax bar, the tax system and the community-at-large.

– Herbert N. Beller, Washington, DC