

For Immediate Release

Lisa Baniewicz
Assistant to the President
Maur Hill-Mount Academy
913-367-5482
lisab@mh-ma.com

Maur Hill-Mount Academy Announces 2019 Commencement Speaker: Top Texas Lawyer, Billie Ellis

Atchison, KS: Maur Hill-Mount Academy President Phil Baniewicz has announced this year's graduation speaker. Alumnus and current Board Member Billie Ellis will be the commencement speaker at MH-MA's graduation on May 18.

Ellis is a senior partner in the international law firm of Winston & Strawn, LLP. His practice covers a broad spectrum of private equity, financial, commercial, and real estate transactions, including the acquisition, financing, development, and sale of all types of properties and companies. For several years, he was a Co-Founder and Managing Director of The Halifax Group, a \$200 million private equity fund.

Born in Galveston, Texas, Ellis' family moved to a dairy farm in Central Texas when he was 6. He credits his successful business and legal career to a work ethic he learned from his father, who worked on the farm 7 days a week never taking a weekend or holiday off. As a young boy, Ellis' dad gave him his first job driving a tractor on the family farm earning \$.50 an hour. Ellis also credits his experience at Maur Hill to his academic success after leaving Atchison.

At 16, Ellis came to Maur Hill Prep as a boarder graduating in 1969. He graduated with high honors 1974 from The University of Texas at Austin with a BA in history. Among a host of academic honors, Ellis was elected to the most prestigious and oldest scholarship organization, Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his MBA from Southern Methodist University in 1977 graduating with honors, being elected to Beta Gamma Sigma. He earned his law degree from University of Houston Law Center in 1978.

The Texas Lawbook, has recognized Ellis as a legendary attorney that the profession considers one of the "Lions of the Texas Bar". With four decades of practicing law under his belt, Ellis is widely recognized as one of the best commercial real estate transactional lawyers in Texas history. He's represented some of the most powerful and wealthy individuals in the state, including the Bass brothers, Richard Rainwater and David Bonderman."

Texas Monthly Magazine has recognized Ellis as a Texas Super Lawyer. He is listed in Best Lawyers in America, and has numerous professional affiliations, achievements, and community leadership positions. He is an accomplished writer and presenter and has been educating students and colleagues for two decades. In 2012, Ellis received the coveted, Texas Exes Teaching Award, an annual tribute honoring 1 professor from the law school and only 1 of 8 teaching awards given at The University of Texas in Austin-for his performance in the classroom.

Ellis lives in Dallas, TX with his wife. He has three grown children.

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