

TYLA in Action at Recent Events



TYLA officers and members met at the 2016 Bar Leaders Conference July 15-16 in Houston to brainstorm ideas for new projects, meet with local bar associations, and network. The event, which is held annually, brings together lawyers from across the state and from diverse practice areas to learn about leadership opportunities and innovative initiatives. TYLA presented achievement awards to local bars during one of the many breakout sessions.

From left: TYLA President-elect Baili B. Rhodes, Chair Zeke Fortenberry, and Vice President Sally Pretorius.



TYLA members rolled out *Vote America*, a video project that educates students about the constitutional amendments and legislation concerning voting—including the Voting Rights Act and other federal laws—in El Paso at Montwood High School.

From left: TYLA Director Raymond Baeza and his wife, Melissa, who is a shareholder in ScottHulse in El Paso.



Fall signals back to school, and TYLA President Sam Houston spoke to students about the state of the profession at various institutions, including Baylor Law School (above left) and St. Mary's University School of Law, where he stressed the importance of civility and professionalism.

Building Something Together

AS a lawyer, I have repeatedly reflected on the fact that I don't really make anything. At the end of a long day at the office, I often do not have something tangible to show for all those hours at my desk thinking. Skip Watson, an appellate lawyer in Austin, once explained during a CLE presentation that he had to cut billable time spent thinking "because clients don't like to pay for looking out the window."

Still, he stressed that you have "got to do thinking before you write or say anything." Skip has it right. This "thinking time" is the part of my practice that I treasure most, even if I don't really get to build anything.

Over the past two years, though, I have become an unwilling expert on the topic of building. If you have been within earshot of me in that time, you have probably heard me complaining about my home renovation project.

My original six to eight-month undertaking quickly turned to 22 months. Its budget also expanded at an exponential rate. Aside from vowing never to move again and contemplating bankruptcy, I have been searching for positive life lessons to validate this whole experience. I now have a deeper appreciation for support networks, the importance of accountability, and the need for project vision.

After mulling over my construction catastrophe, I now realize that I fulfill my innate need to build things through bar service. This work results in tangible projects that help the public, fellow lawyers, and law students. In the same way that an architect draws plans that guide a construction project, our hardworking Texas Young Lawyers Association committees develop and then execute initiatives, employing Skip's advice.



Under the direction of Kimberly Clark of Huntsville, Rachel Grove of Beaumont, and John Ellis of Austin, our Public Service Committee is creating a *Sexual Assault Survivor Rights Guide*. Kimberly, a prosecutor in the civil division of a state agency's special prosecution unit, and Rachel, an assistant district attorney in Jefferson County, bring their own knowledge to the project and provide access to resources from across the state, while John, a civil litigator, has been utilizing his stellar project management skills. This material addresses many of the important and timely issues associated with sexual assault.

Our guide is broken up into three sections. We address the criminal justice system generally and walk through the various steps that a survivor can take, including interactions with law enforcement, medical professionals, prosecutors, and the court. Experts, such as Title IX coordinators, are helping us to address the administrative law processes colleges and universities follow. Our guide also touches on legal issues faced by those accused of committing sexual assault. I want to thank Wendy Humphrey of the Texas Tech University School of Law, a frequent author on the topic of affirmative consent, for her contributions.

One does not become TYLA president without being a true believer in bar service. But as is made clear by all of our projects, such service fulfills needs that are not otherwise addressed in our day-to-day practice. Let's build something together.

SAM HOUSTON

President,
Texas Young Lawyers Association

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