

TYLA in Action at Recent Events



The city of McAllen declared May 19 Strength in Unity Day at a commission meeting in recognition of the Texas Young Lawyers Association's *Strength in Unity* project, which aims to bridge the gap between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

Front row (from left): Carla Alonso, community service specialist; McAllen Mayor Jim Darling; Jenny Smith, TYLA Access to Justice liaison; McAllen City Commissioner Aida Ramirez; Victor Flores, TYLA member and McAllen assistant city attorney; Irene Luna, police captain; and Maria Gonzalez, community service specialist. Second row (from left): McAllen Police Chief Victor Rodriguez and Gaston Balli, police sergeant.



TYLA representatives, members of the Austin Young Lawyers Association, and local legal professionals gathered in Austin for TYLA's Diversity Dinner, which featured keynote speaker Juan Roberto Meléndez-Colon, who spent nearly 18 years on death row in Florida for a crime he did not commit.

From left: Juan Roberto Meléndez-Colon with TYLA Immediate Past President C. Barrett Thomas.

From left: Recent law school graduate Katie Legband, attorney Ashlee Silva, recent law school graduate Nic O'Brien, Tiago Silva, and State Bar of Texas Board of Directors Member Rudolph K. Metayer.

Coming Together

AMONG the Texas Young Lawyers Association's many charges is to support and partner with local young lawyer affiliates around the state. The bulk of that work is done through our Local Affiliates Committee and at the annual Bar Leaders Conference, which this year takes place July 15-16 in Houston.

The Bar Leaders Conference gives young lawyer affiliates an opportunity to share project ideas. It also gives TYLA a chance to honor these organizations with Awards of Achievement for projects that serve the public and the bar and address diversity. But the best part of the event? The networking. If you have not been to a Bar Leaders Conference, I encourage you to attend.

TYLA also showcases its own new projects at the Bar Leaders Conference. This year it will be unveiling a Media Toolkit for Young Lawyer Affiliates, a short publication containing practical tips that lawyer affiliates can use to gain media attention for events, thanks to the assistance of the State Bar's Communications Division, particularly Public Information Director Amy Starnes.

But beyond the annual event, I want to see more interaction between TYLA and young lawyers organizations across the state. TYLA can continue to do more. Fortunately, we are well on our way. During C. Barrett Thomas's tenure as TYLA president, we were able to conduct joint events throughout Texas, including a Houston Healthcare Business Partners Breakfast presented with the Houston Young Lawyers Association and a business community project in Midland hosted by the Midland and Ector County Young Lawyers associations that joined landmen, oil and gas title lawyers, and probate lawyers. A big thank you goes out to TYLA directors



Bryan D. Mackay, Brittany Ringel, and Scott Bodkin for putting these together.

TYLA is also working outside of Texas. TYLA's *What Do Lawyers Do?*, which educates high school and college students about the path to law school and a legal career, went national as a project for the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. Lacy L. Durham, current chair of the division and a former TYLA director, was instrumental in this effort.

Moving forward, we are looking to increase our partnerships with young lawyers around the country. TYLA has elicited help from other states for its project addressing legal issues unique to military service members going through divorce. So far, we have received contributions from at least two states outside of Texas, and we hope to add more. We also plan to work through the ABA YLD to host an Affiliate Regional Summit with the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of New Mexico and possibly other states.

TYLA wants to work with you. If you want to host one of our existing projects in your area, we will be sure to find folks to help you make it happen. Please go to tyla.org to learn more about what TYLA can do for you.

SAM HOUSTON

President,
Texas Young Lawyers Association