

## TYLA in Action at Recent Events



TYLA has been busy rolling out its *Vote America!* project across the state. *Vote America!* aims to educate students about the fights for equality and democracy throughout U.S. history in an effort to remind them of their civic duty to vote. On September 30, TYLA Vice President Sally Pretorius and Judge Aurora Martinez Jones presented the project to students at Akins High School in Austin.

From left: Judge Aurora Martinez Jones and TYLA Vice President Sally Pretorius ask students questions at Akins High School in Austin.



McAllen community leaders recently proclaimed October 3-7 "Vote America! Rally Week," in support of TYLA's civics education project ahead of the voter registration deadline. McAllen Assistant City Attorney and TYLA Director Victor Flores made presentations to about 1,500 seniors at the area's high schools.

From left: McAllen Memorial High School Student Council members Lilith Cain, Tavier Talamentez, and Fernanda Aguilera; TYLA Director and McAllen Assistant City Attorney Victor Flores; McAllen Mayor Jim Darling; TYLA President-elect Baili B. Rhodes; McAllen Memorial High School teacher and student council adviser Vivian Tamez; teacher Valeria Carpenter; and student Michael Mata.



TYLA was in Dallas filming a video for its *Strength in Unity* project, town hall discussions on better understanding the role of officers and communities and how they work together.

Above: TYLA Vice President Sally Pretorius (center) with police officers and actors in Dallas during a *Strength in Unity* filming.

# Opportunity and Gratitude

**THE** fall is always a busy time for me personally and professionally. The thought of the imminent holiday season inevitably gives me a swift kick in the *you know where* as I push to move projects off my desk and prepare to celebrate with friends and family. I wouldn't be able to do it without the help of so many people, especially my family, my law partner, and my fellow Texas Young Lawyers Association leaders.

We are roughly five months into this bar year. I have heard Immediate Past State Bar President Allan K. DuBois, a fellow San Antonian, often remark that he got a lot of on-the-job training for his role. He would joke that the State Bar staff would frequently tell him, "As you know Allan, the president does ..." as if everyone was aware of these presidential duties. Allan is, of course, a quick study and had a tremendously successful year serving Texas lawyers. Now that I am in the thick of my term and getting much of my own on-the-job training at events across the state, I must share with you that I have been surprised and delighted by everything that I get to see and do.

A real bright spot for me was the opportunity to participate in LeadershipSBOT earlier this fall. This is a wonderful program that provides a great introduction to bar service and exposure to the important work that lawyers do for one another and the public. Specifically, it arms participants with tools to develop their leadership skills. For me, it was a chance to take some time to reflect on my own role as president. In particular, it forced me to think critically about how I interact and communicate and how this affects how others perceive me.

The TYLA Board of Directors has been on the road too. We reached out to young lawyers around the state, fulfilling our mission to serve our members. One of our goals was to bring CLE programs to places other than the state's five largest cities. A critical component to this project has been forging partnerships with State Bar sections



and local bars. TYLA Director Victor Flores, an assistant city attorney for the city of McAllen and American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Texas representative, forged a partnership with the Government Law Section to conduct a half-day CLE in El Paso on December 9. Working with the Denton County Bar Association, TYLA Director Scott Bodkin has organized a "Beyond the Basics" CLE in Denton on November 4, geared toward two- to eight-year probate law practitioners. We are still looking for partners if you are interested in bringing programming to your community.

Even while we move forward with new projects, we are continuing to promote the work of previous TYLA boards and the generosity of the Texas Bar Foundation to those past efforts. Unless you have been living under a rock for the past two years, you know we have a big election this month. To inspire civic engagement among young people, TYLA Board of Directors Chair Zeke Fortenberry encouraged us to dust off *Vote America!*, a project educating young people about voting rights and voting. We issued a challenge to our board members to roll this out in as many schools as possible. They responded. From September through November we will have had *Vote America!* events in high schools in Beaumont, Dallas, Austin, Corpus Christi, Waco, Galveston, McAllen, College Station, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. We will have reached hundreds, if not thousands of students, many who registered to vote. I am grateful to have so many helping hands, and so proud of the work that we do.

*Sam Houston*

**SAM HOUSTON**

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Texas Young Lawyers Association