

TYLA in Action

Members of the Practice Series Podcast Committee learning best podcast practices.



TYLA Vice President Britney Harrison and Judge Emily Miskel setting up a bookshelf on September 24 in the 470th District Court in Collin County.



LeadershipSBOT members gathered for the first meeting of the year October 4-6.



American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division liaisons John Ellis and Jay Forester attending the YLD Conference October 26-28 in Charleston, South Carolina.



Proud to Be an American

It was about this time last year that Texas Young Lawyers Association Immediate Past President Baili Rhodes and I were invited to participate in a border tour with the American Bar Association. Baili and I toured various detention centers, visited the border, and, more importantly, heard from children themselves about their motivations to come to the U.S. and what their journeys here were like. To say that their stories were heart-wrenching and eye-opening is a gross understatement. Baili and I went back to our hotel that night and couldn't stop thinking about this situation: *What can we do to help? How can we make a difference?* I will never forget one boy's story (told through a translator). He had ridden on top of a train and surrendered at the border for the promise of a better life—one in which he wasn't scared of being killed and where he would have the opportunity to pursue the American dream to go to school and make money to send back to his family. While listening to him, I realized that I take for granted many of the rights and duties that are afforded to me as an American citizen, and I turned to Baili and she was thinking the same thing. And that's when *Proud to Be an American* was born.

Proud to Be an American, which is funded by the Texas Bar Foundation (thank you, TBF, for your continued support), educates grades K-12 about the rights and responsibilities of being a U.S. citizen. TYLA will use a video format in conjunction with other media (coloring books, handouts, etc.) and a curriculum created with the State Bar of Texas Law-Related Education Department to help educate students on TEKs-focused components. We hope to highlight the freedom to express yourself; the right to worship as you wish; the right to a prompt and fair trial by jury; the right to vote in elections for public officials; the right to apply for federal employment requiring U.S. citizenship; the right to run for public office; and the freedom to pursue "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as well as the responsibilities to support and defend the Constitution; stay informed of issues; participate in the democratic process; respect and obey federal, state, and local laws; respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others; participate in your local community; pay income taxes; serve on a jury; and defend the country if the need should arise.

A special part of this project will include personalized videos from people who have a long history as a citizen in the country, people with a short history, and those who are in the process of becoming U.S. citizens. It is our hope to also use this project as a way to unify existing programs that focus on rights of U.S. citizens, such as *I Was the First. You Can Be a Lawyer Too!*, *American Juror*, and *They Had a Dream Too: Young Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement*.

The TYLA board and this project's committee members are hard at work making *Proud to Be an American* a reality. We hope to have it up and running by February 2019, so be on the lookout!

SALLY PRETORIUS

President,
Texas Young Lawyers Association