

AMA-LAW

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Volume 34
April 2020
No. 8

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMARILLO AREA BAR ASSOCIATION

“And, working hard has always been our West Texas Way!” -Page 4

“If you know someone that works in health care, public safety, or at the grocery store/discount store/pharmacy, show them some support, they are overwhelmed right now.” -Page 5

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By: Joby Mills

March Luncheon Attendance, Upcoming Membership Survey, State Bar of Texas President-Elect Candidates, Cancellation of April Luncheon & Postponement of 2020 Spring Institute to a Date to be Determined Later

My President's Page required updating for a second time because of the unprecedented situation involving the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. There is almost no sports to watch and it's a real-life March Madness situation. Each of you and your families are in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. For those who attended our March luncheon, which is now the last luncheon of the fiscal year, thank you for taking the time to attend the luncheon. Kirsten Castaneda gave us a very good a Texas Supreme Court update on recent cases.

To our members, please be on the lookout for a membership survey that will likely be sent to your email addresses after we navigate through this current pandemic situation. We are working on the survey to identify and continue to better meet your membership needs. We promise the survey will be short and sweet. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey.

Lastly, we had the pleasure of welcoming our two State Bar of Texas President-Elect candidates to our March luncheon. Both Ms. Sylvia Firth and Mr. Pablo Almaguer shared their visions for our members if elected to their 3-year term to lead our State Bar. As you know, there campaigns have been suspended with the recent declarations of emergency

at both the Federal and State levels. Mr. Almaguer mentioned that our State Bar of Texas does not have a disaster recovery plan for its members, only a plan for State Bar employees. His vision is to create a disaster recovery plan for our members too. Ms. Firth has a plan to increase support and resources for the lawyers who need the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program (TLAP). Both Ms. Firth and Mr. Almaguer have great ideas to better serve our members at the State level. Please take a moment to review each candidate's platform before you cast your vote.

Considering the environment that we are currently facing and all of these public closures during this Coronavirus pandemic, I know we'll be having many continued discussions on how your local bar association can better serve its members during declared periods of disasters and pandemics. If you have any recommendations, please give us a call or send us an email.

Lastly, we are also forced to postpone our 2020 Spring Institute, which had been scheduled for May 8th. We will notify our members when a new date has been set for the Spring Institute and annual golf tournament.

Better times ahead! Stay safe and healthy!

WHAT DOES THE STATE BAR DO FOR ME?

By James Wester, State Bar of Texas District 13 Director



James Wester

The State Bar of Texas offers many valuable services and benefits to its members. Below are a few of the member benefits available to you, but you can find a full list of the member benefits at texasbar.com/benefits.

Technology Resources - The State Bar of Texas has launched a technology page with information and links to resources that attorneys need to navigate the intersection of technology and the law. texasbar.com/tech-resources offers links to online resources from TexasBarCLE, technology articles from the Texas Bar Journal, law practice management resources, and a link to a book about electronic discovery from TexasBarBooks. The page also features “**Tech Bytes**,” a series of short videos created by the State Bar of Texas Computer and Technology Section and TexasBarCLE on topics including apps, encryption and ethics, electronic discovery, cybersecurity and data planning. The videos cover simple to elaborate technology matters and their application to the legal profession and are 3 to 23 minutes in length. For more information, go to sbot.org/tech-bytes.

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Law Practice Management Software Discounts - The State Bar is excited to announce the expansion of its law practice management member discount offerings. In addition to the existing discount available through Clio, members can now save when subscribing to Bill4Time, CosmoLex®, Mycase, Practice Panther®, and Rocket Matter. You can learn more about each service at texasbar.com/benefits.

Texas Bar Career Center – The State Bar provides a great tool for both employers and job seekers. Post open positions or search online for Texas legal-related jobs. Anyone seeking a job in the legal profession can create an account at the Career Center. Go to texasbar.com/careercenter, click on “My Account” under the “Job Seekers” menu, and then create your account at absolutely no cost. You can upload your resume and read informative articles on interviewing, career advancement, and more—all at no cost. You can also sign up to receive job alerts on positions of interest and to receive a bimonthly Job Flash email that lists numerous openings. For employers, the Career Center offers free, 30-day job postings for contract lawyer positions. Other job postings are available for purchase by employers.

If I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at James.Wester@uwlaw.com or 806-379-0354.

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7TH COURT OF APPEALS UPDATE

By Chief Justice Brian Quinn

Several of us judges on the Court of Appeals had the recent opportunity to visit a local Lions Club to discuss the court. Judge John T. (for Tops!) Boyd called that “waving the flag” and thought it necessary. He’s right. Few lay people know intermediate courts of appeal exist, much less about what they do. That realization led me to open my portion of the talk by calling us “the forgotten court.” In fact, we are so forgotten that some counties within our district didn’t even put my race (and another one) on the primary ballot this Spring. But, that’s another story. Being forgotten, though, doesn’t mean we lollygag.

There are 80 active justices on the 14 Courts of Appeal in Texas. Together, those 80 (plus a handful of assigned justices) disposed of 10,294 appeals in 2019. That averages roughly to 129 dispositions per judge. The 4 justices on the Seventh Court disposed of 566 that same year, or about 141 per judge. Of the 566 cases, 329 were criminal matters while 237 were civil.

Additionally, the time that lapsed between the filing and disposition of an appeal or original proceeding averaged about 8.4 months, for 2019. The period was a bit shorter for civil matters (6.7 mos.) and a bit longer for criminal (9.6). The difference may be attributable to the growing number of accelerated civil appeals (e.g. termination of parental rights) and original proceedings (e.g. petitions for writs of mandamus) filed on the civil side; we are required to address them first. And, our overall clearance rate exceeded 100%. In short, we’re keeping up.

And, though I am still searching antique shops for a “Harry Potter” wand, I have yet to find one. So, that means neither I nor any other judge of the court can just wave a wand over our docket and have it magically dispose of itself. Maybe, some day, though. Instead, we have to write to do our job and end disputes. And, during 2019 the total number of opinions the four justices wrote was a bit of 600. They included majority, concurring and dissenting opinions as well as a handful of others that don’t end

the appeal but keep it moving along to its ultimate disposition. And, because we work in 3 judge panels, that means the author of those majority opinions is not the only one that has to work on the case. Two other judges must participate, too.

Being a middle child, I was kind of the forgotten one in my family while growing up. It gave me freedom, though. So, maybe being forgotten isn’t all that bad because we can avoid unnecessary distractions while working. But, rest assured ... though the public may have forgotten about us, we have not forgotten about the need to do our job and work. And, working hard has always been our West Texas Way!

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AAYLA UPDATE

By Thomas McMillian

“The world has a habit of going on.” – Woodrow Wilson, the United States’ 20th lawyer president.

“I was devoted to the law, its reasonableness appealed to my mind as the best method of securing justice between man and man.” – Calvin Coolidge, the United States’ 21st lawyer-president.

My friend Sally Pretorius Hodge, a past Texas Young Lawyers Association President said, “some leaders don’t have the bar year that they planned but end up with the bar year that is planned for them.” This quote couldn’t be truer for local bar associations across Texas and the United States right now. The Coronavirus’ arrival and spread in the United States has forced all of us to evaluate what the right thing to do is for our organizations

and communities. In that light, AAYLA has decided to cancel the annual Easter Egg Hunt scheduled for April 10, 2020 and indefinitely postpone the Bunny Hop 5K scheduled for April 11, 2020. We will evaluate the situation and look at rescheduling the 5K for a date in the future if conditions and timing permits.

These are uncertain times. I saw a post on Facebook on Monday showing the rush hour traffic maps for Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Austin. They were ALL GREEN, void of the congestion one expects to see. Who would’ve thought we’d see that in 2020? We don’t like uncertainty. It breeds fear and can bring out the worst in us. We need to do our part to prevent the spread of this virus. While not all of us may be directly affected, our actions can affect those that are more vulnerable to it. Sometimes we serve our community by putting on events to raise awareness or funds for a cause. This time, we can best serve our community by pulling back and following CDC guidance on public gatherings.

If you know someone that works in health care, public safety, or at the grocery store/discount store/pharmacy, show them some support, they are overwhelmed right now. The effects of social distancing and event cancellations are necessary but will be hard on local businesses. Grab a meal to go from a local restaurant or take your growler down to your favorite brewery and buy a fill up to show your support. They’ll appreciate it.

This isn’t the ending to the bar year we’d planned, but it’s the one we’ve got. Woodrow Wilson’s quote reminds us that even though we face challenges, our world does indeed go on. Our organizations and the communities we serve will come out on the other side of this situation stronger. Adapting to new situations is always tough but we always learn something about ourselves from adversity. Stay safe, stay well, and we’ll be back to our regularly scheduled programming as soon as possible!



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YOUNG LAWYER OF THE MONTH: DOUGLASS ROBERT BROOKING



Douglass Robert Brooking

This month's young lawyer of the month is none other than Douglas Robert Brooking (aka "Doug" aka "Douglas Robert" aka "Dougie Fresh" aka "Doug Bob"). Dougie Fresh was born in St. Louis, Missouri and attended Xavier University in Cincinnati, which is one of only a handful of reputable universities in the United States that does not have a football team. Upon graduation from Xavier, and tired of first and second round exits in the NCAA tournament, Douglas Robert decided he needed some football in his life and enrolled in law school at the University of Oklahoma. A recent U.S. News and World Report survey revealed that Xavier University and The University of Oklahoma have less in common than any two other universities in America. Upon graduation from OU, Doug graciously accepted an offer to practice law at Sprouse Shrader Smith PLLC in Amarillo, where he is plying his trade doing oil and gas law and corporate transactions.

On a personal level, Douglas Robert snagged himself a local girl, and will be married to the beautiful Anastasia in October in Scotland. He and Anastasia enjoy playing golf at the Amarillo Country Club where

Doug Bob regularly chastises himself for poor swings by saying something to the effect of "golly gee willakers

Douglas Robert!" or "gosh darnit all to heck Señor Brooking!".



Joby Mills



Alisa Scott



Scott Richardson



Buffy Haden



Todd Wetsel



Terri Wright



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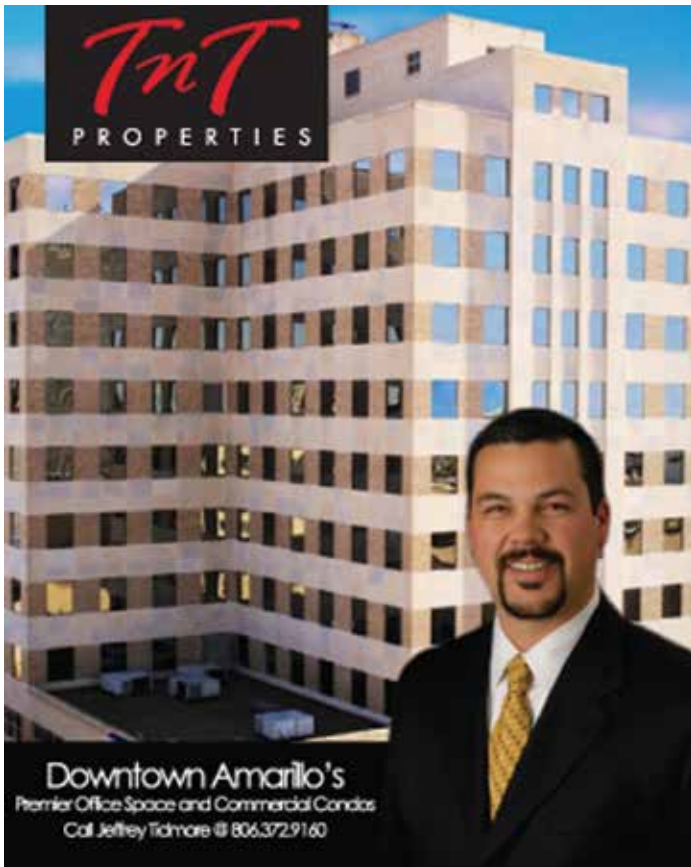


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AMA-LAW is published monthly from September through May by the Amarillo Area Bar Association.

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Business Card	\$75
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Half-Page	\$200
Full Page	\$350

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Contact Us

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YOUR BAR EVENTS - APRIL 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	AABA Bar Luncheon cancelled this month.	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	