

# AMARILLO-LAW

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A PUBLICATION OF THE AMARILLO AREA BAR ASSOCIATION

## NOVEMBER SPEAKER: LAURA GIBSON



Laura Gibson

We hope you will join us on November 10th at the Amarillo Club for an update from State Bar of Texas President, Laura Gibson. In her presentation, Laura will discuss three of her initiatives including succession planning, lawyer well-being, and grievance education.

Laura Gibson is a Houston-based partner in Dentons US, and is a member of the firm's Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice and the head of the Texas Employment

& Labor Group. She earned her J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center in December 1984 and joined Locke Lord in 1985. She made partner in the firm in 1992. In 1993, she co-founded a four-lawyer firm last known as Ogden, Gibson, Brooks, Longoria & Hall where she practiced until 2016.

Laura was 2018-2019 chair of the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors. She was a State Bar director for District 4, 2016-2020, and served on numerous committees including the Executive Committee and Nominations and Elections Subcommittee. She is a past co-chair of the Texas Minority Counsel Program Steering Committee.

Laura served as 2011-2012 president of the Association of Women Attorneys and founded the Premier Women in Law luncheon during her term. She served as 2015-2016 president of the Houston Bar Association. In 2013, she received the Trailblazer Outside Counsel Award from the Texas Minority Counsel Program for her commitment to diversity. In early June 2020, Laura founded the Liberty & Justice For All Task Force.

“More importantly, personally talking assures that open office doors remain open.”

– Page 4

“He gave his respect, and attention, to everyone and that way you knew that it was never personal and that you would receive the same treatment when you stepped in. Consistency is key.”

– Page 5

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# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By: Liberty Lay

Yes, November is National Banana Pudding Lovers Month and NoSHAVEmber, but the headliner is Thanksgiving. While the feasting, football-watching, and fellowship (card-playing) create great memories, I also appreciate the reminder to express gratitude for life's blessings.

When it comes to our local bar association, I am thankful for the people who show up and the people who get things done. So, thank you for attending our luncheons and other events, taking time to visit with colleagues and to mark the milestones in our professional lives. Thank you for sharing your talents and treasure to serve and support the AABA and AABF.

I am especially grateful for our executive director, Janet Byars, who keeps our organization on track. This month, to highlight the work that she does, I offer this brief Q&A with Janet:

**How long have you worked for the AABA?** Six and a half years.

**What did you do before coming to work here?** I was retired. Before that, I was the Executive Director of Family Support Services. Prior to that, I worked in the legal field, primarily as a paralegal. I have also worked as a licensed psychotherapist.

**What does your typical day as the executive director look like?** My typical day varies. My most typical duties include processing payments for dues, luncheons, CLE, etc., as well as preparing invoices for those functions. I coordinate the Board meeting and luncheons each month, and maintain the AABA mailing list, email list, and website. When a special event is planned, I assist with the planning and coordinating.

**What do you most enjoy about your work?** I enjoy assisting the legal community and helping to make sure their professional needs are met.

**What do you find most challenging?** The most challenging would be my role in making sure that the financial state of AABA stays on track.

**What is something interesting you have learned while working for the AABA?** I don't know if it's anything specific I've learned, but I have enjoyed getting to know the AABA members. I have always been treated with respect in this role.

**What do you like to do in your free time?** I like to sew (mostly quilts), play games, travel, and listen to live music.

**Who are your favorite lawyers?** Just kidding, don't answer that.

Thanks, Janet, for all you do for us. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!



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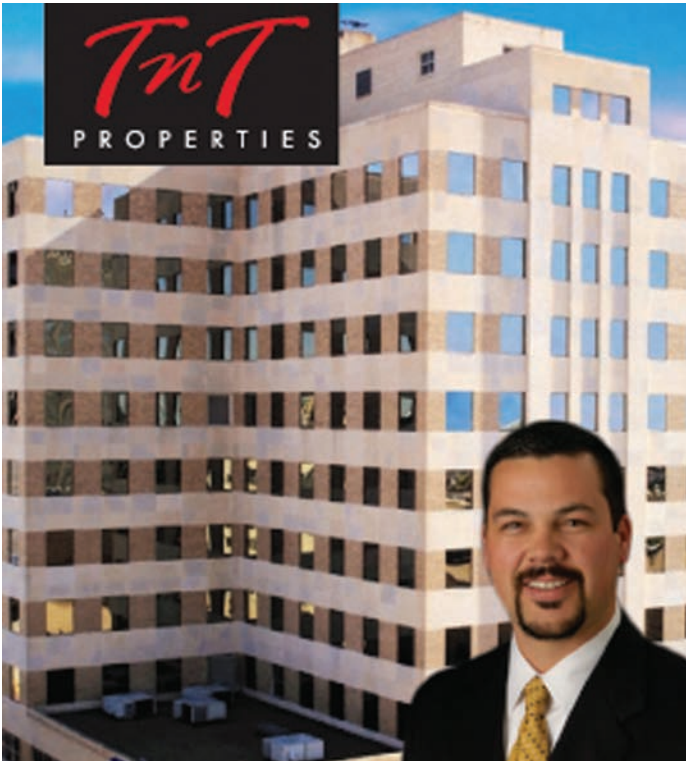
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# 7TH COURT OF APPEALS UPDATE

By Chief Justice Brian Quinn

“Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Johnnie Ray . . . South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio . . . Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television . . . North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe.” Hearing Billy Joel the other night got me thinking; so, I’m taking a bit of leeway this month.

Our judicial life has its bookmarks. Take, for instance, Judge Mark Hocker presiding over a three-day child custody hearing. The parties represented themselves as they grappled with the courtroom ins-and-outs. They persisted in calling “objections” “rejections,” even though they knew the right word. Judge Hocker also described them “figure[ing] out hearsay was ‘rejectionable’ but kept trying to testify to what the kids said.” Eventually on day three while “baby momma” testified “in the narrative,” she stated: “So, hearsay, so-and-so said . . .” Before completing the statement, her opponent uttered “REJECTION, Your Honor, hearsay!” Judge Hocker had no time to react as “baby momma” snapped back with, “Yeah, I told you it was hearsay.” These three litigants out of the hundreds who have appeared before him became a bookmark in the catalogue of his judicial time.

Our “making the sausage” (which you eventually read as an opinion) often leaves its pages in the judicial catalogue. They include the imprints left by staff attorneys. Chief Justice Reynolds told me of one who drafted an opinion with which he disagreed. As the story goes, a debate ensued. The attorney felt so adamant about her position she asked that her draft be circulated to the other judges along with the one Charley wrote. The conversation ended with him looking up and assuring her he would when she became a judge.

My own attorneys challenge me. I recall a few times when their delivery could be better. Once, one wondered aloud why write a draft to only have it ignored. But I see little disrespect in these exchanges, especially when there has been occasion when higher authority proved them right and me wrong.

The culture within the court fosters that freedom to question the accuracy of our rulings. We know “iron sharpens iron” and normally welcome it. As my Dad said years ago, “If everyone always agreed, someone is not needed.”

The same is true when judges disagree. Seldom does it become personal, though it has. Usually beginning with an email expressing concerns, talks generally devolve into the face-to-face. Our close quarters in Lubbock facilitate that. It’s hard to avoid someone you disagree with when getting a cup of coffee or opening the fridge. Either lands you just feet from an open office door. And, while the talks may not always result in changed minds, they affect what and how we write. More importantly, personally talking assures that open office doors remain open.

These exchanges, whether with our staff attorneys or each other, are the spice added to the sausage. They can make the product more palatable. And all of it makes for more bookmarks in the continuing judicial catalogue.

“Eichman, Hocker, Hatch, and Hayes . . . Diddle Dumb, stun gun, and pro se days . . . Board, Schaap, anti-slapp . . . I-40 stop, con law attack.” The fire started long before we took the bench. But each flame left, and leaves, its mark on the judicial page. Let it burn. Until next month . . . thanks, Billy.

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# AAYLA UPDATE

By Alysia Córdova

In two days, the Court of Appeals will have sworn in the youngest of the Amarillo Area Young Lawyers. Admittedly, I am frantically typing this a week late, which would offend my father more than our esteemed editor, Michael Alexander. But, while we're on the topic, that thought (FORTUNATELY) inspired me to share my father's wisdom with our latest legal additions. (Naturally, his advice would involve a stern face warning me against missing deadlines but alas.)

Lesson #1 (or #2, depending on whether you caught my #protip attempt at buttering up the person my tardiness most inconvenienced. Sorry, MA!): Federal employees should not step out of the courtroom to advise a judge on Take-Your-Daughter-to-Work Day or she (me) may end up spending the REST OF HER LIFE in said courtroom. (Okay, let's move on to the real advice. But, honestly Dad, I am still waiting for you to save me. Wink, wink!)

Lesson #2: José Córdova never picked up his phone while you were in his office, no matter who called. He gave his respect, and attention, to everyone and that way you knew that it was never personal and that you would receive the same treatment when you stepped in. Consistency is key.

Lesson #3: Put yourself in an uncomfortable situation as many times as possible and each time you will become more comfortable. Go to the conference without a close colleague to be your buffer. Meet people, market yourself. One day you too can find yourself sufficiently marketable enough to be a local bar association president trying to fill article content for nine months.

Lesson #4: At his retirement, my father's coworkers acknowledged (or perhaps mocked) him for pouring himself a cup of coffee and visiting each office to chat and say, "good morning." It is an excellent opportunity to connect with your peers that I (not a morning person) have yet to take.

And while his advice is plentiful, I will end with this,

("do not miss curfew and no senior boys. . ." errrr, I mean. . .) Lesson #5: make the difficult calls in the morning. If you don't, you'll dread them all day and they will only hinder your work.

And if you do all this right, you just might unintentionally inspire far more than you ever billed.

Full disclosure: when I asked José his expressed advice, not merely what I observed, he said, "Find a career you enjoy and once you find that you'll have great work ethic. Be loyal and accept all challenges. And finally, be humble with your successes." While similar, I think I like what I observed him do a bit more.

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# YOUNG LAWYER OF THE MONTH: FRANK JASSO



Frank Jasso

Frank Jasso (J has the pronunciation as an H like in the name Jose) grew up in the greatest small town known to man, Fritch, Texas (population 2,630). Mr. Jasso would have been a Phillips Blackhawk; however, when he was 4 years old the town of Phillips decided that it was going to shut down the town and families that lived there had the option to move to nearby cities. Frank's parents decided that Fritch, America was the perfect place for Frank to grow up since his father continued to work for Phillips 66 Refinery. Now, Frank would grow up being an Eagle instead of a Blackhawk. Frank graduated from Sanford-Fritch High School and soon after moved to Amarillo, Texas. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Marketing from West Texas A&M University and worked in the restaurant industry for many years after, with the thought of Law School always on his mind.

In February of 2013, Frank moved with his brother to San Antonio, Texas, because, why not? There he continued to work in the restaurant industry until one day his brother told him that he had secretly applied and been accepted to a couple of law schools. Frank's brother decided to attend Oklahoma City University School of Law (OCU Law) and was set to begin in the fall of 2014. At this point, Frank planned on staying in San Antonio and applying to Law School for the spring semester because he figured that there was not enough time to apply for the fall semester. However, as luck would have it, he had one month to complete his application and get all his paperwork in to apply to OCU Law. So, Frank set everything aside and made it his priority to get all the required paperwork together and submitted it in the nick of time. Even though he had not received an answer from OCU Law, he decided to go ahead and move with his brother to Oklahoma City while he waited for an answer. A week prior to moving to Oklahoma City, Frank received that GLORIOUS call from the dean of admissions at OCU Law telling him that he had been accepted.

Frank and his brother attended law school together from the fall of 2014 through the spring of 2017 (first time 2 brothers had attended together in the school's history). After law school, Frank moved back to Texas

for a couple of years and worked at his sister's law firm. Then in 2019, Frank started his own solo practice in Oklahoma City focusing on criminal defense and personal injury law. However, Frank has always been a Texas man and truly believes that there is no state greater than the Lonestar State. So, in March of 2021, Frank moved back to Texas and opened Jasso & Jasso Law firm at the end of 2021. Additionally, he and his brother have a law firm in Hobbs, New Mexico and he still works cases in Oklahoma. Frank has a passion for the practice of law and for helping folks resolve life's issues. Outside of work, Frank enjoys fishing and working out. He travels a lot for work and is excited about joining AAYLA.

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# YOUR BAR EVENTS - NOVEMBER 2022

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Advanced Family Law CLE, 2nd Floor Training Room, Eagle Center				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

AABA Luncheon,  
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Advanced Family Law CLE, 2nd Floor Training Room, Eagle Center