

In Chambers

The Official Publication of the Texas Center for the Judiciary, Inc.
Vol. 32, No. 1, Spring 2005

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- Permanency by the Numbers in Ohio

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The staff of In Chambers strives to provide current information about national and local judicial educational issues and course opportunities for Texas judges.

Readers are encouraged to write letters to the editor and submit questions, comments, or story ideas for In Chambers. Contact Staci Priest, Publications Coordinator, by calling 800-252-9232, faxing 512-469-7664, or e-mailing stacip@yourhonor.com.

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In Chambers

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Texas Center for the Judiciary Becomes New Home for Texas Court Improvement Project

by Judge Dean Rucker, Chair

At its meeting on March 18, 2005, the Board of Directors of the Texas Center for the Judiciary voted to accept the transfer and administration of the Texas Court Improvement Project and, subject to approval by the Governor, the Children’s Justice Act Project.



Texas Court Improvement Project

The Texas Court Improvement Project (CIP) was established in 1995 with federal funds granted because of the increase in responsibilities and caseloads of many juvenile and family courts as a result of judicial oversight functions imposed by the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-272.). When Congress passed the “Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997,” the courts’ oversight responsibilities were increased even more, and the federal grant program was extended.

The CIP grants were awarded to the highest court of each state. The Supreme Court of Texas originally authorized the Children’s Justice Act Project (CJA), administered by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), to apply for Court Improvement Project (CIP) funds and to administer the program. The Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care serves as the advisory body to the project.

The mission of the Texas Court Improvement Project is “to improve the handling of child abuse cases by equipping the courts to make good and timely decisions; place children into safe, caring and

permanent homes; and equip judges to be leaders in child welfare”. In furtherance of that mission, the Texas Court Improvement Project has awarded grant funds to create child protection courts, court services and judicial training. Working with the Texas Center, CIP developed and implemented the enormously successful and revolutionary “Beyond the Bench” program, a judicial driven multi-disciplinary curriculum to allow participants to explore the “typical” child abuse case.

The Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care requested that the CIP funds be transferred to the Texas Center for the Judiciary for administration and implementation. The Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services gave their blessing to the transfer.

The Task Force plans to use the CIP grant to develop the Texas Supreme Court Center for Children and Families (the CCF), an organization that will establish, develop, and design programs to meet the needs of children, youth, and families involved in the Texas court system, particularly those involved in the child welfare system. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the CCF will (1) ensure that the well-being of children, youth, and families is a priority within the Texas judicial system; (2) encourage positive changes at both the trial and appellate court levels; and (3) provide leadership, outreach, and collaboration to make court and community resources more accessible.

The director of the Court Improvement Project is Carole Hurley. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations and implementation of CIP project activities. There will be two additional employees hired for the Project; a grant attorney and a grant administrator. All three positions are fully funded by the federal grant and all three employees will be housed at the Texas Center. The effective date of the transfer is April 1, 2005.



Texas Children’s Justice Act Project

A second federal grant project that has been administered previously by the DFPS is the Children’s Justice Act Project, a project that was originated in the early 1990’s. Ms. Hurley also serves as its director. The mission of the Texas Children’s Justice Act Project (CJA) is “to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, and the handling of child fatality cases”. This mission compliments the CIP mission, and the joint administration of the projects has resulted in a unique and positive synergy.

The Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care requested that the CJA grant move to the Texas Center as well. As envisioned, the Supreme Court Center for Children and Families will support the missions of both the Children’s Justice Act grant and the Court Improvement Project grant. The CIP task force is primarily made up of legal system members-judges and lawyers-who contribute

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AMERICAN JUROR

by Kevin Priestner

Reprinted with Permission from the Texas Bar Journal, Feb. 2005, Vol. 68, No. 2

Each time she presides over jury impaneling, Travis County Court at Law Judge Elisabeth Earle asks for a show of hands of the jurors who are excited to be there. Few, if any, respond. But when she asked the question on Jan. 10, hands shot up across the room. The jurors had just watched the premiere of "American Juror: The Decision is Yours," a video created by the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA).

With the simultaneous rollout of the video and its companion web site, TYLA launched a major initiative to educate and inspire citizens about jury service.

The engaging and informative video, replete with film clips from popular movies such as "My Cousin Vinny" and "The Verdict," will be screened at jury selection proceedings throughout the state.

The web site, www.americanjuror.org, allows potential jurors to stream the video and find answers to questions about eligibility, jury selection, and terminology, as well as tips for reporting for service.

"TYLA has distinguished itself yet again by addressing an issue that is fundamental to our system of justice — the participation of jurors," said Texas Supreme Court Justice Dale Wainwright, who narrates the video.

TYLA President David McAtee hopes the project will reinforce

confidence in the justice system. "As lawyers, we hear about lawyer-bashing" he said, "but when I talk to citizens around the state, I realize that their distrust is deeper, extending to our entire system of justice. Not only does American Juror make people feel better about serving on juries, it reminds them that our justice system is better than it has ever been."

"Not only does American Juror make people feel better about serving on juries, it reminds them that our justice system is better than it has ever been."

--David McAtee, TYLA President

TYLA Vice President Karin Crump said McAtee's charge to the group was simple: "When David decided he wanted to create a juror project to complement the American Bar Association's efforts, he asked us to create a project that would be meaningful to the public and inspire them to participate."

Interviews with jurors who watched the premiere suggest that TYLA hit its mark.

"I loved it," said Ana Marie Montalvo, who was reporting for jury duty for the first time. "It opened my eyes and I understood. It was very informative and I learned a lot."

Frank Jennings has served on several juries. "They tell you what to do," he said. "It's not intimidating. That came across real well in the video."

Another juror appreciated that the video incorporates clips from movies. "Most of us are exposed to the court system through entertainment," she said. "It was nice to see these familiar images, yet be told what was true and what was false."

The video includes testimonials from judges, lawyers, and jurors, as well as a brief history of jury service, but the segment that elicited the greatest response was "Jury Service: Fact vs. Fiction," which uses film clips to debunk common misconceptions about juries and the jury selection process. (SEE "JURY SERVICE: Fact vs. Fiction" PAGE 5.)

One juror, who had served many times, said he knew most of the factual information in the video, but that the movie clips were entertaining and helped everyone calm down.

McAtee said that calming influence was an unintended, but welcome, development. "One of the most surprising things about the video is the calming effect it has on people," he said. "People get to sit down, catch their breath, and see some familiar images. I thought the video's most important purpose was educating and motivating, and it probably still is, but right behind that is this calming influence."

Earle agreed. "It seemed much calmer today," she said, a statement remarkable given that the Jan. 10 impaneling was

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the first to take place at the Northcross Conference Center. That the impaneling proceeded so smoothly on a day that featured a new venue, a new video, and special guests that included a Texas Supreme Court justice is testament to the tight ship run by Travis County District Clerk Amalia Rodriguez-Mendoza.

In her 15 years as district clerk, Rodriguez-Mendoza has been an early adopter of new technologies. Three years ago, Rodriguez-Mendoza implemented iJury, which allows jurors to answer their jury

summons online, where they can impanel, claim exemptions, or enter scheduling conflicts. Industry experts estimated she would achieve 15 percent participation. “We started at 75 percent and have since climbed to 90 percent,” she said. The 900 people at the Northcross Conference Center on the day of the premiere represented the 10 percent of jurors who did not answer their summons through the iJury system.

Rodriguez-Mendoza was among a group of judges and clerks who served on the advisory panel for American Juror. McAtee

said the watershed decision was getting the advisory panel members involved early in the process.

“The advisory panel members were absolutely critical to the project’s success,” he said. “Without them, the video would not have been as powerful. With them, we have been able to put together a project that is better than we could have hoped for when we started out. We’re looking forward to working with all of them as we implement the project.”

Because of the scale of the

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JURY SERVICE: FACT VS. FICTION

The American Juror web site, www.americanjuror.org, lists common misconceptions about jury service, including the following:

FICTION

Jurors are selected by people in the legal system according to some secret criteria.

FACT

Jurors are randomly selected from voter or driver registration lists in their county. It is strictly the luck of the draw.

FICTION

Attorneys only pick jurors with a college degree.

FACT

The main thing lawyers and judges are looking for from potential jurors is the ability to be open to both sides of a debate. It’s up to the lawyers to present the evidence clearly, but lawyers and judges count on the juries to be honest in deciding for themselves what is true and what is fair. That is not based on intelligence or education — it’s just a basic sense of right and wrong.

FICTION

All jury trials last several weeks.

FACT

Depending on the type of case, most jury trials only take a couple of days. However, some cases, which involve complex issues, can take weeks to present to a jury.

FICTION

Lawyers ask questions designed to figure out who will help reach a verdict in their client’s favor.

FACT

Voir dire is a French term that means “speak the truth.” Prospective jurors are sworn to tell the truth so that the attorneys or judge can ask questions to find out if they can be impartial, unbiased, and trusted to make a reasonable decision based on the facts of the case.

FICTION

All jury trials end with a verdict.

FACT

Many cases are settled out of court before the trial is to begin. The fact that a group of citizens stands ready to hear a case and collectively wield the power of public opinion is a great incentive. It is literally the power of the people that motivates the attorneys to reach a mutual accommodation for both sides in a dispute.



NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE TO MEET IN MAY



The FY 2005 Nominations Committee will meet on May 13, 2005 to slate officers and new members for the 2006 Judicial Section Board of Directors and the Texas Center for the Judiciary Board of Directors.

If you are interested in serving on either of these boards or recommending a name for nomination, please notify Justice Molly M. Francis, Chair of the Nominations Committee in writing no later than May 6, 2005.

Letters of intent should be sent to the following address:

**Honorable Molly M. Francis
5th District Court of Appeals
600 Commerce Street, Suite 200
Dallas, Texas 75202-4658**

The fax number is (214) 745-1083. In addition, please provide the Texas Center with a copy of your interest letter (Attention: Mari Kay Bickett).

The chair-elect position is open and must be filled by a District Judge for 2006. The chair-elect nominee for the Judicial Section will also serve as the chair-elect for the Texas Center. This position is a one year term.


In addition to the chair-elect position, three positions are open on the Judicial Section Board of Directors. They are:

- An appellate judge
- Two district judges

Terms are for three years. The secretary/treasurer position on the Judicial Section Board is an appointed position.

Four positions are open on the Texas Center Board of Directors. They are:

- An appellate judge
- A district judge
- A county court at law judge
- A retired judge

Terms are for three years. The secretary/treasurer position on the Texas Center Board of Directors is an appointed position. 

2005 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Hon. Molly M. Francis, *Chair*
5th Court of Appeals
Dallas

Hon. Julie Harris Kocurek
390th District Court
Austin

Hon. Carl Lewis
County Court at Law #5
Corpus Christi

Hon. Linda Chew
327th District Court
El Paso

Hon. Marvin Moore
County Court at Law #2
Midland

Hon. David Peeples
Presiding Judge, 4th Region
San Antonio

Hon. Brian Quinn
7th Court of Appeals
Amarillo

Hon. Carmen Rivera-Worley
16th District Court
Denton

Hon. Kent Sullivan
80th District Court
Houston




ETHICS OPINIONS

Question & Answer

ETHICS OPINION #291

Representation by the County Attorney

QUESTION: Would it be a violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct for a Judge or Judge's staff to be represented by the County Attorney in court proceedings wherein the Judge and/or the court's staff have been sued in their official capacity, even though the judge presides over cases in which the County Attorney, or an Assistant County Attorney, represents the State in mental health and indigent guardianship matters, and the County in various areas of civil litigation involving its various departments, agencies, and programs?

ANSWER: No. The Committee expresses no opinion concerning the legality of any given type of legal representation. Legal representation by the County Attorney is established by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas. Assuming that a given type of representation is authorized by law, and further that there are no other facts present which would otherwise require recusal or disqualification under Canon 3(B)(1), the Committee is of the opinion that the judge can be represented by the County Attorney and continue to preside over other matters in which the County Attorney is appearing as legal counsel. 

To ask an ethics question, contact Judge Stephen B. Ables (830.792.2290) or the State Commission on Judicial Conduct (877.228.5750).


2005 ETHICS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Hon. Stephen B. Ables, *Chair*
- Hon. Karen Angelini
- Hon. Thomas Bacus
- Hon. Cathy Cochran
- Hon. Lora J. Livingston
- Hon. Menton Murray
- Hon. Emil Karl Prohl
- Hon. Penny Roberts
- Hon. Mark Rusch
- Hon. Melissa Goodwin
- Hon. Robin Ramsay

Meet The Texas Center Staff



Sherry Ballance Conference Coordinator

Sherry Ballance serves as Conference Coordinator for the Texas Center. Her primary role is to act as a liaison between the Center and other organizations involved in its conferences, such as hotel, catering, and conference facility staff. Prior to joining the Texas Center in April of 2004, Ms. Ballance worked at the Texas Travel Industry Association. She has experience as a dance instructor and has a wonderful singing voice. In her spare time, Sherry enjoys golf, hiking and travel. Currently, she is planning a much anticipated trip to Italy. 

Texas Judges Learn Permanency by the Numbers in Ohio

by Chris Hubner, Policy & Grants Management Director, Texas CASA

Imagine that you are a family court judge presiding over an extensive CPS docket. Under Texas law, these types of cases must be resolved by a final order within 12 months after the Department of Family Protective Services has been named as temporary managing conservator, with the possibility of a six month extension if the court finds that continuing the appointment of the department is in the child's best interest.¹ But, dockets are crowded, lawyers and caseworkers are incredibly busy and court cases are inevitably delayed. How do you as a judge ensure that children who are caught up in the legal system, *your legal system*, find a safe and permanent home?

Last fall, The National Center for Adoption Law & Policy hosted a national symposium, *Permanency by the Numbers – Improving Dependency Caseflow Management Through Data-Driven Strategies*, in Columbus, Ohio, to address such issues. The symposium was cosponsored by Fostering Results (a public education and outreach campaign supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts) and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio. Thanks to a generous grant from the Court Improvement Project,

Texas CASA was able to send three court/agency teams to this important conference to learn new methods of utilizing case data to better manage individual cases and court dockets.

The premise of the symposium was to bring together judges, social workers, government managers, lawyers, treatment providers and other child protective and adoption

"How do you as a judge ensure that children who are caught up in the legal system, your legal system, find a safe and permanent home?"

system stakeholders to learn and work together in order to better understand each other's problems and perspectives. Day One of the conference featured presentations by nationally recognized experts who described the implementation of data-driven strategies to problem solving in their particular regions. Day Two involved a juvenile dependency caseflow management workshop designed to plan for and implement the concepts introduced during the previous day's sessions.

Texas was represented by three "teams", one each from a

rural, mid-size and urban area. Each team included a judge: Associate Judge Camile DuBose of Uvalde participated on the rural team; Judge Larry Thorne of Beaumont was part of the mid-size team; and Associate Judge Peter Sakai of San Antonio represented the urban team. Also in attendance as a member of the state level team was Mari Kay Bickett, Executive Director of the Texas Center for the Judiciary.

Together, they worked with Texas lawyers, CPS representatives and CASA program directors, as well as colleagues from around the country, to improve their ability to serve the abused and neglected children of our state.

Of particular interest to judges was the caseflow management workshop conducted by Doug Somerlot of the Justice Management Institute. One of the goals was to improve the juvenile justice system's ability to oversee the movement of dependency cases involving foster care, and to shorten the time needed for children to reach appropriate permanent placement. This workshop focused exclusively on the court process, exploring ways to effectively and efficiently use resources consistent with fairness and the child's best interest.

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Essential elements to successful caseload management include judicial leadership and commitment. It was stressed that judges should create an “expectation of performance” by ensuring that only “meaningful events” occur in court that advance the case toward resolution. Mr. Somerlot noted that an event is **not** meaningful if:

- The only purpose of the event is to schedule another event;
- Everyone is not present or all of the needed information is not available; or
- There are other ways to advance the case without the need for a court hearing.

Meaningful events, on the other hand, fulfill as many purposes as possible to move the case toward a conclusion. Mr. Somerlot emphasized how vitally important it is for judges to manage the time between events, not only to comply with time limits but also to insure that parties have adequate time to prepare. Court participants need to understand that “the event and the case will go forward when scheduled and for the purpose scheduled.” Only the judge is in a position to make this happen.

Perhaps the most important point made during this workshop was the presenter’s admonition that we must all think of time from the perspective of a child. While adults are used to marking

time in months or years, a 12- or 18-month delay for a young child will have a much greater impact. “The enemy and the challenge of dependency courts is time.”

In a report issued last year, The Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care made the following observation:


“Effective judges understand the dynamics of their case loads. These judges can identify the groups of children most likely to languish in foster care and will know why. They can assess how quickly cases move through each stage of the court process and where delays are most likely to occur. They know the percentage of children in their caseload who leave foster care only to reenter because of subsequent abuse or neglect, and they can identify the most common circumstances for repeat victimization.”²

While the above statement is true, judges alone cannot affect positive outcomes in these types of cases. They need the participation and “buy in” of outside stakeholders who are also actively involved in the lives

of these children. **Permanency by the Numbers** provided judges with a “hands on” opportunity to talk and work with other attendees to strategize about how to make positive, data-driven improvements not only in their dockets, but also in the ultimate outcome of these cases. As a result of these collaborations, the judges and court personnel who attended last fall’s Ohio symposium greatly enhanced their ability to achieve “safety, permanence and well-being for children.”

FOOTNOTES

1) Texas Family Code, §263.401(a) and (b).

2) “Fostering the Future: Safety, Permanence and Well-Being for Children in Foster Care,” The Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, p. 36 (May 18, 2004). <http://pewfostercare.org/research/docs/FinalReport.pdf> (To learn more about the Pew Commission’s judicial recommendations visit www.pewfostercare.org.) 



DOES THE TEXAS CENTER FOR THE JUDICIARY HAVE YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL ADDRESS?

The Texas Center frequently sends out important information via e-mail. To ensure you receive this information in a timely manner, please keep you e-mail current with us.

To submit or update your e-mail address, please contact Lacy Jemmott, Registrar, at (512) 482-8986 or lacyj@yourhonor.com.



JUDGE MENTALITY Down with Lawyer Jokes!

by Judge Jay Patterson, 101st District Court

In my tenth year as a trial judge, after presiding over hundreds of trials, I say, "Down with lawyer jokes!" It may seem like a hard sell to you. Let me ask you some questions.

First, what makes the United States so unique, so great? Here, if all else fails, who finally presides over the resolution of disputes? It is a judge in a black robe. In some countries it is a military officer or other person who answers to a dictator, a king, a queen or a warlord. In some places it is a little unclear who is in charge so it may be the toughest person or the person with the best weapons who resolves disputes.

Second, why is the United States such a better place to live and so far ahead of other countries such as China and Russia? They have smart people who work hard as we do. They have rich natural resources as we do. In China the leaders lock people up for speaking their minds. In Russia the economy is sputtering. If someone backs out of a contract, what can you do? There is no certain way to enforce contracts.

One thing the United States has that China, Russia and many other countries don't have is THE

RULE OF LAW. Some years ago a trial judge like me was locked in jail for contempt by the appellate court in San Antonio for failing to follow the law as the appellate court instructed. That was a good thing. She failed to follow the law. You ask, how can a trial judge think it is a good thing for another trial judge to be locked in jail? It was, because she failed to follow the rule of law. We judges can't just follow our whim or do whatever we feel like.

The rule of law assures us that we maintain our government

contracts and keep commerce humming.

And how do we preserve all these rights and freedoms through the rule of law? As in the Ghostbusters movies, the question is, "Who do you call?!" You call a lawyer. Each person has a right to represent herself in our courts but then has a "fool for a client." Watching pro se parties or self-representation in action reminds me of how it would be if I tried to rewire the electrical wiring in my house. Before long you could watch the smoke rising from my homestead.

In the Shakespeare play, *Henry VI*, armed characters are meeting to discuss

***"It is not for the lawyers I say,
'Down With Lawyer Jokes!'
It is for the rest of us."***

"of the people, by the people and for the people." It guarantees us freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom to peaceably assemble. It compels any government to refrain from unreasonable searches and seizures. It protects us against a government that tries to deprive us of life, liberty or property without due process of law. It gives us equal protection of laws and the right to vote and keeps us from being enslaved. It gives us the right to a trial by jury, the best way we know of to assure people they will receive a fair trial. It enables us to enforce

overthrowing the king and replacing him with one of their own and Dick the Butcher says, "The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." Quoting that statement has become a lawyer joke itself. It is printed on tee shirts and bumper stickers. Dick the Butcher said that because getting the lawyers out of the way is a necessary prerequisite to taking over a country by force and gaining power. It would disrupt maintenance of order, freedoms and individual rights.

There is no way to preserve freedom and individual rights without the rule of law. There

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is no way to preserve the rule of law without lawyers, those who are trained and experienced in knowing about the wiring of the courts. Without the rule of law and independent judges bound to follow the rule of law, bullies and powerful, selfish people could do whatever they could get away with to the rest of us and take whatever they wanted from us.

Lawyer jokes tend to encourage lawyers to live down to the lowest expectations. They are inclined to just shrug off criticism. Lawyer jokes tend to justify the lawyer who is not doing his utmost to live up to the highest standards of professional performance and ethical behavior in zealously representing clients. We need lawyers aiming for the stars, striving to be the best professional servants they can be. We need to demonstrate by our expectations that we want lawyers to be the old fashioned professionals we used to know, striving for excellence. Many are still doing that and many who are not will respond.

Over 30 years ago when I was a baby lawyer, the partners in the firm I worked for told me, "Do your very best for the client and the fees will take care of themselves." I would have crawled up the tollway on my hands and knees to get to a client to help him.


It is not for the lawyers I say, "Down With Lawyer Jokes!" It is for the rest of us. It is critical in a free society that people have confidence in our courts and justice system. They need to believe they will be fairly treated, that they will get a fair

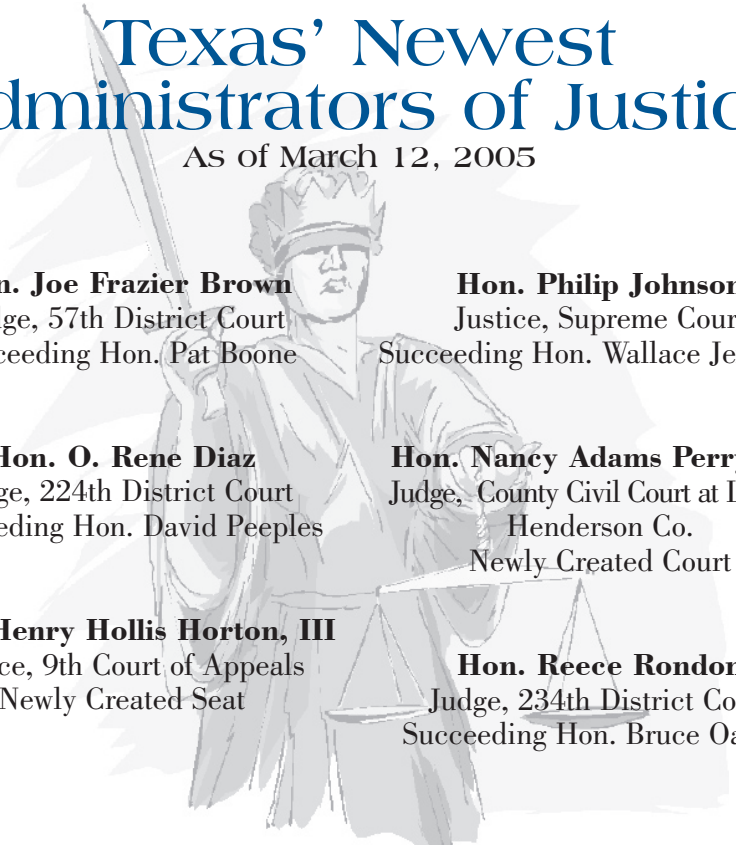
shake. They need to know that the judges and lawyers, who are officers of the courts, will be honest, fair, competent and consistent. For the sake of our freedoms, our country, our state and our community, we must demand that, and act as if we expect it, not giggle about lawyer jokes as though we expect the opposite.

The alternative is not a pretty picture. It is a picture of Charles Bronsons running around shooting those they think are guilty, road rage everywhere, people taking the law into their own hands, or cheating and lying when they do go into our courts. They will act badly because they will believe there will be no consequences.

When lawyers hang up their shingles, they say they are attorneys and counselors.

In the New Testament the word for "counselor" is the Greek word, "parakletos." Parakletos means being called to ones side to help them. It is just the opposite of what the priest and the Levite did when they saw the badly injured man lying along the road to Jericho. They went the other side and did not help. An attorney and counselor should be doing what the Samaritan stranger did, going to the side of the person who needs them and giving help.

Giving up lawyer jokes is one way we can try to show we expect lawyers to be our paraklete, our counselor, our professional helper, our preserver of freedoms, and our protector of rights. It is not for the lawyers I say, "Down With Lawyer Jokes!" It is for all the rest of us. 



Texas' Newest Administrators of Justice

AS of March 12, 2005

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| <p>Hon. Joe Frazier Brown Judge, 57th District Court Succeeding Hon. Pat Boone</p> | <p>Hon. Philip Johnson Justice, Supreme Court Succeeding Hon. Wallace Jefferson</p> |
| <p>Hon. O. Rene Diaz Judge, 224th District Court Succeeding Hon. David Peoples</p> | <p>Hon. Nancy Adams Perryman Judge, County Civil Court at Law #2 Henderson Co. Newly Created Court</p> |
| <p>Hon. Henry Hollis Horton, III Justice, 9th Court of Appeals Newly Created Seat</p> | <p>Hon. Reece Rondon Judge, 234th District Court Succeeding Hon. Bruce Oakley</p> |

valuable experience with children in the court system. However, the interdisciplinary nature of the CJA task force, which includes judges, lawyers, and representatives from the fields of medicine, social work, education, and child advocacy, will bring the CCF a broader perspective of the needs of children in our state. In addition, the program instructions for the CIP grant state the programs "should also collaborate with the Children's Justice Act program."

The CJA program instructions require the Governor to designate the agency or entity that will administer the grant. As the Board of Directors of the Texas Center has agreed to accept the transfer of CJA, appropriate contacts will be made to facilitate the move.


Future Funding

Both grants are expected to continue funding at or above the current amount through 2006, at which time reauthorization for additional three-year periods is anticipated.

Benefits of the Transfer

Both CIP and CJA have made a well-trained judiciary a priority, providing state-of-the-art training opportunities to hundreds of Texas judges on all aspects of child welfare. In this time of limited budgets and crisis in children's services, placing CIP, and if possible, CJA with the Texas Center for the

Judiciary demonstrates, in a fiscally responsive manner, the commitment and concern the Texas courts have for the welfare of our state's most valuable and vulnerable resource - our children.

The Texas Center for the Judiciary has built a solid reputation by providing the highest quality judicial training available. It has proven itself to be a leader in judicial education and in providing judicial resources to Texas judges. The addition of CIP/CJA will only enhance that mission. That the Texas Center was sought out to house these projects serves as a testament to its leadership and complements the Texas Center's stated purpose to "enhance and support the administration of justice in the State of Texas." 

Conference Roundup 2005 Winter Regional Conferences



Horseshoe Bay
Regions 1, 3, 4, 5 & 8

CONFERENCE RATING:
4.46 out of 5

"Excellent program in a fabulous setting."

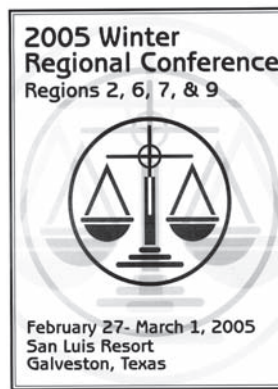
"Solid program."

"Good topics. Excellent facilities."

"An excellent conference that certainly enriched my learning and experience."

"Probably the best conference I've been to."

"One of the better conferences I have attended."



Galveston
Regions 2, 6, 7 & 9

CONFERENCE RATING:
4.63 out of 5

"Another outstanding conference."

"The best yet!"

"Good speakers - important topics."


"Very good conference - lots of useful information."

"Good topics, excellent faculty, great materials, great facility."

"All aspects were well presented and useful."

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Texas Drug Court Training & Development Conference

For judges and staff members interested in Drug Courts or DWI Courts, the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division is hosting a free two-day training in Austin on May 9-10, 2005. This training has been specially designed by the National Drug Court Institute and the Governor's Office to provide new or planning drug courts with the most essential tools to develop a successful program. Also, if you are interested in the concept but do not quite know how drug courts work, this conference will explain the key components of the drug treatment court model. Registration deadline is April 15. For more information or how to register, e-mail Colleen Benefield, Program Liaison, Criminal Justice Division, Office of the Governor, at cbenefield@governor.state.tx.us or call (512) 475-4832. 

"American Juror" continued from page 4

American Juror, TYLA divided the project into two phases. The first phase, which was funded by a grant from the Texas Bar Foundation, included creation of the American Juror video and the initial rollout.

The second phase—unveiling the web site, implementing a marketing plan, and taking the message to civic groups—is being funded through a grant from the Product Liability Advisory Council Foundation. McAtee credits State Bar President elect Eduardo Rodriguez with securing the funding for phase two. "Eduardo Rodriguez was the key from start to finish," he said. Rodriguez and TYLA President-elect Lee Ann Reno plan to expand the project during their terms in office.

"Truly, this public service, if not the most ambitious, is one of the most ambitious approaches to a societal problem TYLA has been involved with," McAtee said. "I'm not aware of a project we've worked on that comes from so many angles, using so many techniques, aimed at so many audiences."

Crump described it as the quintessential team effort. "I can't remember a project to which so many contributed," she said. "The committee has been magnificent. They've contributed countless hours and put their hearts and souls into this."

During weekly conference calls over the course of six months, committee chairs Cori Harbour, Cheryl Camin, and Tal Hammock inched the process


along. "Everyone did everything," Camin said, "but Cori took the lead on the video, I took the lead on the web site, and Tal took the lead on distribution." They were assisted by TYLA Director Bob Stokes, Chair-elect Bill Miller, and staff member Tracy Brown.

Hammock said it has been fascinating to watch the project come together and that the hard work has been well worth it. "One thing I was very pleased about is that people seemed to be paying attention," he said. "My hope, as one who tries cases, is that when panels come up, they'll feel better about the process. They'll understand. They'll be happier. As a lawyer, you don't want grumpy jurors."

As a judge, Earle wants jurors to be as excited about the jury system and the jury selection process as she is. "Some judges dread impaneling," she said. "Some enjoy it. I love listening to people. It's just fascinating to me."

Crump hopes the video will convey the enthusiasm of Earle and the other advisory panel members to jurors across the state. "We're trying to bottle up that enthusiasm. So when there isn't a Judge Elisabeth Earle at an impaneling, we still want people to be excited and to say, 'It's my duty. I want to serve.'"

Again, TYLA seems to have hit its mark. As one juror who watched the premiere of the video said, "It's general, but real positive. It made me want to serve!"

For more information, visit www.americanjuror.org. 



CONTRIBUTIONS & MEMORIALS

Thank you for your contributions

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LOOKING AHEAD

Judicial Conference Calendar

2005

Family Violence Conference
April 4–6, 2005
Galveston

Logic and Grammar for Appellate Judges
April 20–22, 2005
Horseshoe Bay

Texas College for Judicial Studies
May 1–6, 2005
Austin

Criminal Justice Conference
May 22–24, 2005
Plano

PDP Professional Development Program
June 20–24, 2005
Austin

Associate Judge Conference
July 6–8, 2005
Austin

You Asked For It, You Got It
August 3–5, 2005
Horseshoe Bay

Judicial Section Annual Conference
September 18–21, 2005
Austin

College for New Judges
November 13–18, 2005
Austin

2006

Winter Regional Conference
(Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 9)
January 22–24, 2006
San Antonio

Winter Regional Conference
(Regions 1, 2 & 8)
February 12–14, 2006
Horseshoe Bay

Texas College for Judicial Studies
April 23–28, 2006
Austin

Judicial Section Annual Conference
September 10–13, 2006
Houston

College for New Judges
December 3–8, 2006
Austin



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