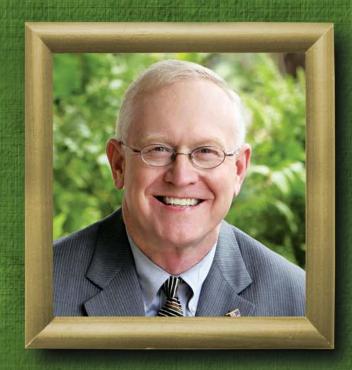
# President-elect Candidates Discuss the Issues





Bob Black

Beaumont

Debbie Bullion
Sugar Land

The *Texas Bar Journal* asked 2010–2011 State Bar of Texas president-elect candidates **Bob Black** of Beaumont and **Debbie Bullion** of Sugar Land to share their perspectives on issues facing the State Bar of Texas. (Biographical information was included in the March issue, p. 172, and is available at **www.texasbar.com**.) Votes for the State Bar of Texas president-elect can be cast by paper ballot or online from April 1 to April 30, 2010. The deadline to cast ballots is April 30, 2010, at 5 p.m. CST.

#### Why do you want to serve as president of the State **Bar of Texas?**

**BLACK** We practice in tough and challenging times. I am seeking this office because I believe that the State Bar can and should do more to help lawyers meet these challenges. I love our profession, and if elected, I would enjoy nothing more than bringing my experience, energy, and judgment to the task of helping our members in difficult times. I hope Texas lawyers will give me the opportunity to do so.

**BULLION** Because I am passionately proud of my profession and dedicated to carrying out the work of the State Bar.

The rock of my family, my father, taught me the values of hard work and community service, having devoted his entire life to a civic organization whose motto is "Service to Mankind." The heartbeat of my family, my mother, encouraged me to dream and to be passionate with regard to any endeavor I chose to undertake. Those values are part of the reason I want to be your leader and why I have spent the last 25 years dedicated to serving the profession — serving on the State Bar Board of Directors, actively participating on numerous committees and sections, and spending countless hours volunteering for CLE.

With the economic downturn and ever-changing legal landscape, many in our profession have been deeply affected. Spending the first 15 years of my practice in a medium-sized firm, with a large firm for several years, and now in a small firm with two other attorneys, I understand the challenges, struggles, and differences between each type of practice. I especially understand the challenges facing solos and small firms in these times of economic uncertainty. I believe that my experience with the State Bar and my experience in multiple types of practice have not only equipped me with the skills needed to lead this noble profession through these tough times but have provided me with a unique perspective on issues facing our profession. More important, I believe my dedication and passion for our profession is an essential ingredient for bar leadership today.

As Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Service to our profession is a passion that I gladly undertake in return for the great opportunities my profession has provided me. I will not waiver nor tire in ensuring that all attorneys are provided with superior services to assist them in building and maintaining efficient, effective, and productive law practices.

#### Of the issues facing the legal profession, which three are most important to you personally and what role do you believe the State Bar should play in addressing them?

**BLACK** We face many critical issues. Here are three areas in which I would concentrate my efforts as president:

1. Improve member services. First, we must continue to provide high-quality and cost-effective CLE to our members through our excellent, nationally recognized program. Informed and up-to-date lawyers provide high-quality representation to clients. In addition, however, we must recognize that tough economic times for many require that we significantly increase the amount of online CLE and legal research that is available free or at very low cost. The State Bar has already begun this process but we must accelerate it. We must be responsive to those lawyers who are juggling financial demands. We must also continue to focus Law Practice Management efforts on assisting solo practitioners and members of small firms.

Second, we must continue the effort to provide quality, cost-effective insurance benefits through the State Bar, including group health benefits. We must lower barriers to obtaining good health insurance, and we must do everything possible to ensure that what we offer is competitively priced.

Third, I would overhaul the Career Center. Much more can be done to help lawyers find jobs and make career transitions. We can and will also provide free, professional coaches to help these lawyers. Additionally, we also need to continue efforts to provide voluntary mentors.

- 2. Help our lawyers who suffer from depression and alcohol or substance abuse, and their families. Recent presidents of the State Bar have done a wonderful job of leading the way in this area. I would continue these programs. Martha Dickie, with whom I served as Chair of the Board of Directors, developed the DVD Practicing From the Shadows: Depression and the Legal Profession. It is magnificent and has saved lives and careers. We must never forget that people who suffer from these diseases are not only lawyers, they are human beings. State Bar Presidentelect Terry Tottenham has continued Martha's efforts and expanded them in a visionary way. I applaud these efforts and will continue these invaluable programs, including the increased funding of the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program.
- 3. We must speak up for the lawyers of the state. This encompasses action on several levels. First, we must continue to listen to the lawyers of Texas, solicit their views, and articulate those views to the Supreme Court and Legislature. Second, we must improve the image of the profession. This is most effectively done by encouraging lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to needy Texas residents. And we must convey more effectively how crucial the work of lawyers is to bettering the lives of our

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fellow Texans and our communities. These opportunities help citizens, but they help the lawyer and the profession at the same time. A spectacular example of this is the program initiated by the Houston Bar Association under President Travis Sales to provide needed services to Texas veterans. This program is being taken statewide — and should be! These programs benefit our lawyers, our profession, our legal system, and our image.

**BULLION** There are many issues facing our profession, especially in these uncertain times, but perhaps the three most pressing issues are:

1. Providing superior services and benefits to all attorneys. As a former Chair of the Member Services and Education Committee, I am passionate about the Bar's responsibility for ensuring that all attorneys are provided superior services to assist them in offering ethical, high-quality legal services and in building and maintaining efficient, effective, and productive law practices. It goes without saying that this is especially important today with the economic uncertainties so many of us face. The Bar must continue not only to provide free access to helpful materials on the Bar's website, but to find ways to inform our members of these materials. As I travel around the state, I find that most attorneys are not familiar with services provided by the Bar, such as free legal research, a free database of peer-reviewed resources to help members in starting a law practice, free online CLE classes, and free assistance in job search and networking through the Career Center. The Bar has recently posted a portal of resources to help attorneys during this economic downturn called "Resources for Tough Times." Because of these economic struggles, the Bar must remain vigilant in ensuring that we are providing assistance to lawyers facing substance abuse and mental health issues.

One of the most important services we provide and one that I am passionate about is continuing legal education. I have been very active my entire career with CLE and know the importance of providing the highest-quality programs but also know the importance from my service on planning committees of reaching out and recruiting minority attorneys to serve as speakers and course directors to ensure that our CLE programs represent all members of the Bar. We must continue to provide quality programs but must also continue to find ways to make CLE more affordable and to support and provide the necessary resources to TexasBarCLE as it moves forward in this advancing age of technology.

Providing quality education is especially important to young lawyers. I recently had the privilege of helping with the State Bar's leadership academy, *Leadership SBOT*. It was unanimous among the members of the leadership class that one of the most pressing needs of newly licensed attorneys is direction, guidance, and education. The Bar must continue to find ways to

guide and teach our young lawyers as they enter the profession.

2. Providing equal access to justice. A challenge that has faced the Bar in the past and will continue to face the Bar in the future is to ensure all citizens equal access to justice. As keenly recognized by President Roland Johnson in a recent column, "The poor will always be among us. Let it also be said of lawyers committed to helping those in need." As the Texas Lawyer's Creed reminds us, we, as lawyers, are "responsible to ensure that all persons have access to competent representation regardless of wealth or position in life."

As a trial lawyer and a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, this is especially important to me. We have learned from the past that given our proximity to the Gulf, our citizens will need assistance with hurricane relief; given our proximity to Mexico, our citizens will need assistance with regard to immigration issues; and given the very difficult economic times, our citizens will need assistance with regard to foreclosures, bankruptcy, employment, and other economic issues. We must continue to build upon programs in place such as those developed by the Texas Access to Justice Commission. We must continue to find opportunities for Texas lawyers to provide pro bono services. We must continue to support local bar associations in their pro bono efforts. We must continue to support TYLA and our young lawyers who work tirelessly across the state to provide public service to our fellow Texans and truly make a difference in our communities. And, we must continue to work tirelessly to find ways to increase funding for legal services to the poor.

3. Increasing diversity among our members and leaders. We cannot forget or ignore that State Bar members range from the Sabine River to the Rio Grande, practice in large firms and in solo practices, are from different ethnic backgrounds, are of different genders, and practice in large cities as well as in remote, rural areas. The Bar's officers and directors must not only lead this diverse group but must continue to find ways to reach out and include all its members with programs such as Leadership SBOT. The Bar must continue to promote diversity not only among its members, but, more important, among its leaders. It is my vision to have a diverse and representative bar with the participation of all lawyers in all practice areas in every geographic region of this great state.

## Each of you has served the profession in a number of capacities at a number of levels. Which of these experiences has best prepared you to lead the State Bar of Texas?

**BLACK** Being Chair of the Board of Directors of the State Bar in 2006–07 provided me with experience at the executive level.

Working with President Martha Dickie, I helped present the State Bar budget to the Texas Supreme Court. We worked with the Legislature in the 2007 session and were an effective partnership for the lawyers of Texas. Being Chair provides invaluable experience by involving one in every facet of the State Bar. In addition, I have thoroughly enjoyed being a Trustee of the Texas Bar Foundation. As Chair of the Grant Review Committee for two years, I learned a great deal about the needs of many areas of the State and helped make funding decisions to support deserving programs to help the lawyers and people of Texas.

Finally, having served as a managing partner of a small to mid-sized firm for 12 years has greatly influenced me. It has given me the opportunity to promote the richness of diversity, to advocate the advancement of women and minorities, and to create an entrepreneurial environment where lawyers can flourish. It has also given me an understanding of the struggle lawyers face in this economic environment.

**BULLION** Being an active participant in numerous professional groups and committees has equipped me with the skills and experience needed to lead the State Bar. Each of the capacities discussed below offer a unique perspective and has given me the opportunity and privilege of working with colleagues across our great and diverse state. Combined, this experience has prepared me for working together with Texas lawyers in confronting the many challenges and opportunities facing our profession. Combined, this experience has equipped me with the knowledge of the inner workings of the State Bar and has equipped me with the skills needed to lead our noble profession — formulating ideas, organizing activities, delegating tasks, and working with fellow colleagues across the State.

- 1. Serving on the State Bar Board of Directors. I just completed my three-year term on the Board of Directors in June 2009. As such, I understand the issues currently facing the Bar. I am aware of the needs of lawyers in this tough economic climate and the importance of making the Bar relevant to their practice. While on the Board, I was an active participant on numerous committees including the Executive and Administration Committees. I chaired the Member Service and Education Committee, the New Directors Orientation, and the Legislative Policy Committee. I was honored with the Outstanding Third-Year Director Award.
- 2. Serving as Chair of the Legislative Policy Committee. I not only had the opportunity to interact with the Legislature and work closely with the Bar and section leadership in putting together the Bar's legislative package, but also worked closely with the Bar staff to ensure that attorneys across the state were aware of potential legislation that could affect the legal profession through the weekly e-newsletter, the Friday Update.
  - 3. Serving as Chair of the Consumer Law Section and Board

Adviser to the Judicial, Litigation, and Consumer Law Sections. I understand the important role and service our sections provide to our members. I understand the importance of working with and supporting our sections.

- 4. Twenty-five years of dedicated service to TexasBarCLE. For my entire career I have been dedicated to insuring high quality education for Texas lawyers and promoting diversity among speakers and course directors by serving as a frequent lecturer and author and course director. For three years I served on the Professional Development Committee and currently serve on the State Bar CLE Committee. With this experience I know the importance of continuing to find ways to provide relevant, affordable CLE to all lawyers.
- 5. Serving on the Professional Ethics Committee. My appointment by the Supreme Court to the Professional Ethics Committee provides me with particular insight with regard to our ethical obligations.

#### The State Bar presidency rotates between metropolitan, nonmetropolitan, and open years. This vear's candidates are from "small" counties. What new or different perspectives can you bring to the **State Bar of Texas?**

**BLACK** As a mediator, I work with lawyers everyday. I work with their clients as well. I hear their views on their cases, on our system, and on a myriad of issues facing our profession. Many of these lawyers are sole practitioners or from small firms. Working with lawyers day in and day out grounds me and helps me understand the realities they face. I understand where lawyers are "coming from" and I understand how to help.

BULLION Practicing in a small county, without a doubt, is different than practicing in a metropolitan area. Practicing as a solo or in a small firm, without a doubt, is different than practicing in a large firm. While each may offer unique challenges, each also offers unique opportunities. I have been privileged with a statewide litigation practice that has allowed me the wonderful opportunities to work with lawyers in large firms in our major metropolitan areas and also to work with local lawyers in small remote rural areas where there is only one judge for several counties. Having been born and raised in a small town of less than 13,000 and living in Houston for many years before moving to Sugar Land, I understand the cultural differences between a small town and a big city. Having a small practice with just my husband and one other associate, I especially understand the challenges facing solos and small firms in these times of economic uncertainty. This experience provides me with a unique perspective that I can bring to the leadership of the State Bar.

### As a unified bar, the State Bar has traditionally avoided controversial issues. What approach should the president take to controversial issues?

BLACK We must confront the difficult questions of our time. This means having a candid and honest dialogue on matters of importance to our profession. There is no better example of a template for such a discussion than what President Roland Johnson did in engaging the lawyers of the state and the public on the issue of mandatory disclosure of professional liability insurance. I will follow his lead in fostering debate on important issues and with the goal of achieving consensus.

BULLION As former Chair of the Legislative Policy Committee, I am ever mindful of the boundaries and limitations of a mandatory bar in taking a position on controversial issues. However, I firmly believe that the Bar has a responsibility to its members to inform them of major issues facing our profession and to provide and encourage open and full discussions of controversial issues. The most recent example relates to the controversial issue of mandatory insurance disclosure and the steps taken by the Bar leadership to inform, listen, and engage our members. We must continue to use this process in the future to tackle controversial issues.

## The State Bar Board of Directors recently recommended to the Supreme Court of Texas that lawyers not be required to disclose to clients whether they carry professional liability insurance. How would you assess the Board's process for gathering information and educating members on this issue? How would you have voted?

**BLACK** I am opposed to mandatory disclosure of professional liability insurance. I have been opposed since the issue first came to the Board several years ago. I applaud the Board of Directors for voting 39-1 against mandatory disclosure. Even more important, I am proud of the way the Board and its leadership engaged the public and lawyers across the State on the issue. The process worked. We must trust the experience and wisdom of our members and seek both.

**BULLION** I strongly believe that it is of utmost importance that our members are not only made aware of issues facing our profession but have a voice and an opportunity to provide their input. The recent process put into place by the current bar leadership did just that. The State Bar Board spent months educating members and gathering information across the state through emails, letters, focus groups, and public hearings. The Board sought valuable input from sections and local bar

associations. The Board listened and engaged. Each director then voted as a representative of his or her district, providing a voice for the district's members. I applaud President Roland Johnson and the Board for putting this process into place. Inform, listen, and engage is a process that should be implemented in the future on major issues facing our profession.

I would have voted against mandatory disclosure of professional liability insurance. Those in favor of disclosure have argued that it is an issue of consumer protection. As former Chair of the Consumer Law Section, I disagree. It is a business decision for the attorney and the reality is that insurance is not for the benefit of the client but is to protect the attorney purchasing the insurance. I agree with the concerns expressed by the Consumer Law Section that mandatory disclosure may not only fail to advance consumer protection but may in fact undermine it. By singling out mandatory disclosure of insurance, it may signal to unsophisticated consumers that the presence of insurance is the most important consideration in retaining an attorney above education, experience, etc.

Mandatory disclosure could also be misleading. Simply informing a client that you have insurance does not mean that a client's malpractice issue will be covered by the attorney's professional liability insurance. Mandatory disclosure does not take into account post-disclosure cancellation, the implication of claims-made coverage, or policy limit reduction provisions, to name a few of the issues. As such, a client may believe they are protected when they may not be.

Being in a very small firm (three attorneys), I also agree with the General Practice, Solo, and Small Firm Section that mandatory disclosure would have a negative impact on solos and small-firm attorneys. It would impose a new financial obligation that could have the effect of putting many solos' financial survival at risk.

With mandatory disclosure, attorneys may become targets. Many clients may believe that with insurance they have a guaranteed result or an alternative avenue of recovery if they are not satisfied with the result. Finally, I have not seen any evidence of an outcry from the public for mandatory disclosure.

#### What is one action the State Bar could take to help the public understand the justice system and the roles lawyers and judges play in that system?

**BLACK** Recent State Bar presidents have made education of the public a priority, and rightly so. In addition, the Texas Young Lawyers Association has been extraordinarily successful in its efforts to educate the public. I would continue these programs, expanding those that are most successful, including President Gib Walton's *Let's Do Justice for Texas* initiative. We have a hid-

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den educational asset: Our long history. We must educate the public on the important role we pay. Our historical contributions are one way to educate.

Ongoing education is not enough, however. We must have a rapid response capability to address issues that arise when they arise. This would permit us to take the offensive more often on educating the public on the importance of our profession and the critical role played by our justice system. We must also remember that the State Bar website and the Texas Bar Journal are important assets in the continual fight to educate. I also believe we should rely on the public members of the State Bar Board of Directors to help carry our message.

**BULLION** Educating the public is paramount in helping the public understand the justice system and the roles lawyers and judges play in that system. Continuing and expanding public education initiatives such as Let's Do Justice for Texas and the YouTube video contest can help in this public education campaign. We must also continue to support the Law-Related Education Committee and TYLA in their efforts to educate the public. Attorneys should also be encouraged to actively participate in their local communities from speaking at civic organizations to helping with career days at schools to judging mock trials. As current President of our PTO and Chair of the Career Fair, I am especially passionate about educating our kids on the system of justice.

#### **How do you think the State Bar is doing at policing** the profession? What could the State Bar do to better educate the public about the lawyer discipline system and how it works?

**BLACK** The State Bar does an excellent job in administering the disciplinary process. The disciplinary system must serve the public but also the profession. We are in a difficult economic environment, for clients and for attorneys. As a bar association, we need to take action to educate and assist our lawyers on issues that can get them into trouble. We must make basic Law Practice Management courses easily available and we must be particularly attuned to the problems faced by sole practitioners and members of small firms during this time. If we will extend a helping hand to the lawyers who are struggling the most, it will help their clients, the public, and the profession.

**BULLION** The State Bar must be ever vigilant in policing the profession. Overall, I believe that the State Bar is doing a good job. I believe that the centralization of the grievance process in the State Bar Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel has been positive. The Bar must, however, continue its efforts to educate the public on how the system works. In addition to public service announcements and written materials in attorneys' offices, we need to do more to educate the public. Working with TYLA on public education projects is one avenue that should be explored.

#### What can the State Bar do to enhance ethics and professionalism among Texas lawyers?

**BLACK** As a profession, we must have a dialogue about what professionalism means — and what it does not mean. The vast majority of lawyers are ethical and professional, so much so that it is taken for granted. We need to recognize and honor professionalism in action. We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Texas Lawyer's Creed. We should emphasize the Creed in all our doings, including CLE. Ultimately, each of us must say: "This is how I want to practice; this is what I want to be." Collectively, we will succeed. Professionalism is about good character and is, in and of itself, effective leadership.

**BULLION** The vast majority of attorneys I encounter in my practice are ethical and act with professionalism. Unfortunate-



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ly, in this ever-advancing age of technology, personal contact with other lawyers is becoming rare. Losing the personal contact, I believe, has led to some treating others with less than professional courtesy. The Bar must continue to emphasize the importance of upholding high ethical standards and professionalism. The Bar should also continue to support programs aimed at addressing unethical conduct. In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the Texas Lawyer's Creed, every lawyer should be encouraged to renew their oath to "always adhere to the highest principles of professionalism" and to treat opposing counsel with "courtesy, candor, cooperation, and scrupulous observance of all agreements and mutual understandings."

## One of the State Bar's core missions is to ensure access to the justice system. What can the State Bar and individual lawyers do to ensure access to justice for Texans?

**BLACK** This is a critical issue and one that impacts the public's view of our profession. While there will always be a funding problem, the current situation is exacerbated by low interest rates on IOLTA trust accounts. I am not Ben Bernanke and thus have no influence whatsoever on interest rates. Inevitably, however, interest rates will rise and this will diminish the funding crisis some. In the meantime, we must support the initiatives of the Texas Access to Justice Commission. We must encourage lawyers to participate in pro bono programs. Most local bar associations already do an excellent job of providing and administering pro bono programs. As a State Bar, we must make this task easier. We must remember that lawyers and nonlawyers alike are suffering in this recession and that pro bono work benefits everyone. Finally, we must be vigilant for opportunities to increase funding for the TAJC and for legal aid organizations.

BULLION As I mentioned, I believe ensuring access to the justice system to all Texans regardless of wealth or position in life is one of the major issues currently facing the Bar. We must continue to build upon programs in place such as those developed by the Texas Access to Justice Commission. We must continue to find opportunities for Texas lawyers to provide pro bono services. We must continue to support local bar associations in their pro bono efforts and encourage lawyers to participate. We must continue to create incentives for increasing voluntary pro bono activities. We must continue to support TYLA and our young lawyers who work tirelessly across the state to provide public services to our fellow Texans and we must continue to work tirelessly in finding ways to increase funding for legal services providers.

#### What should the Bar do to guide and prepare the next generation of lawyers?

**BLACK** We must partner with the TYLA to educate, educate, educate. First, I believe the State Bar and TYLA are doing an excellent job of this. President Harper Estes originated *Leadership SBOT* several years ago. As a Trustee of the Texas Bar Foundation, I voted to fund this excellent program with grant money. President Roland Johnson has developed *After the Bar Exam* and *Transition to Practice*, two additional programs that are specifically designed to help new lawyers. TYLA also does a fine job of helping to prepare the new generation of leaders and lawyers. *Ten Minute Mentor* is a brilliant innovation and is but one example of the visionary approach of TYLA.

We must, however, assist, prepare, and educate all of our members, particularly in this economic environment. Recessions affect all of us.

**BULLION** Our young lawyers are the future of the legal profession. With a majority of law students graduating without job opportunities and being forced to hang their own shingle, it is of paramount importance that these young lawyers are provided superior services to assist them in building and maintaining efficient, effective, and productive law practices. We must educate our young lawyers about resources that are currently available and continually strive to create and implement new programs.

Leadership SBOT provides leadership training to an ethnically and geographically diverse group of attorneys who aspire to be leaders in the State Bar and their communities. It is a wonderful program that should not only be continued but should be expanded. One of the most pressing needs of newly licensed attorneys is direction, guidance, and education from a mentoring-type program. This is especially true in this difficult economic environment. Programs such as After the Bar Exam and Transition to Practice: A Mentoring Initiative for Local Bar Associations initiated by Roland Johnson also should be continued.

## How do you think the economic downturn will affect the practice of law in Texas? What should the State Bar be doing for lawyers and their clients?

**BLACK** This is the deepest recession in the legal profession in my 30 years of practice. As a managing partner of a small to mid-sized firm, I have had to adjust to this reality, just as many lawyers have across the state. While the State Bar cannot change the economic situation, there are things we can do to make life easier for our members:

1. Significantly increase the amount of online CLE and legal research available free. This helps many lawyers directly. This

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helps their clients indirectly. It is particularly appropriate that we do this now given the reduction in self-study hours permitted, beginning in 2011.

- 2. Continue to improve member benefits for our lawyers, specifically, provide reasonably priced group health insurance for our members, their firms, and their families. If we cannot achieve it, we should report to our members why it cannot be accomplished.
- 3. Search for opportunities to deliver more service at no additional cost to our members. We owe this to our members but it is acutely important now. This means freezing prices or even reducing them where we possibly can. We must be acutely aware that many of our lawyers are struggling and that we must deliver as much value as we can to our members at the lowest cost possible.

**BULLION** These are tough economic times and the depressed economic climate has and will continue to have a negative effect on the practice of law in Texas. The reality is that there is less business and fewer job opportunities, clients who are unable to pay for legal services, and lawyers who have been forced to reduce their overhead in order to survive these stressful financial times. As I mentioned earlier, the Bar must continue not only to provide free access to helpful resources on the Bar's website but must continue to find ways to inform our members of these resources. These resources include free legal research, a free database of peer-reviewed resources to help members in starting a law practice, free online CLE classes, and free assistance in job search and networking through the Career Center. The Bar has recently posted a portal of resources to help attorneys during this economic downturn called appropriately "Resources for Tough Times." This resource needs to be continually updated and expanded to provide the most current information to our members.

The stress and anxiety associated with this depressed economic climate is to be expected. The Bar must remain ever vigilant in ensuring that we are providing assistance to lawyers facing substance abuse and mental health issues through educational programs provided by the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program. We should continue to distribute the wonderful and informative DVD Practicing from the Shadows: Depression and the Legal Profession initiated by former President Martha Dickie.

#### How important are your community activities to balancing your life as a lawyer? Which of your community activities have you found most fulfilling?

**BLACK** Balance is hard to achieve for lawyers and I am no exception. I am a sucker for stray animals and am involved in a number of organizations that help them. I was president of the Humane Society of Southeast Texas for seven years and did everything from payroll to cleaning cages to raising several hundred thousand dollars a year to fund our shelter. Despite my penchant for adopting too many pets personally, this was immensely rewarding though emotionally draining. My dogs greet each day with joyful enthusiasm; the cats are enthusiastic about being fed! This may explain why I greet everyday with enthusiasm, after three cups of coffee, but am always on a diet.

**BULLION** Being an attorney with an active litigation practice is competitive and demanding. Service to my community is not only rewarding, but essential to balancing my life as a lawyer. Working with children, as room mom, team parent, and confidante, is by far the most fulfilling. I am committed to excellence in the public education of children, devoting countless volunteer hours to local schools, serving as president of the PTO, a member of the Community Based Leadership Team, and chair of the Career Fair.

#### What do you do for fun?

BLACK I am an avid baseball fan and have been all my life. I have learned much from my heroes, Nolan Ryan (the Astros' loss was the Rangers' gain) and Derek Jeter. Both demonstrate character and leadership in all they do. They accept life's glories and tribulations with equanimity. In addition, I read everything from newspapers to murder mysteries to history. Reading both relaxes and informs me.

**BULLION** My family is the centerpiece of my life. We enjoy traveling, snow skiing in the winter, and snorkeling in the summer. My husband and I love supporting and watching the kids compete at cheer competitions, play volleyball, swim, and run track. I love capturing our family adventures, accomplishments, and memories through photography and scrapbooking. ©