

# STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*February 17, 2006*

The mid-year meeting of the American Bar Association was in Chicago last week. State Bar President Eduardo R. Rodriguez was on several panels discussing diversity programs, as well as disaster preparedness and response. Three Texas lawyers were honored for outstanding service to the profession and their communities: Harry Gee and Michael Marin received Spirit of Excellence Awards, and Gibson Gayle was honored with an outstanding service award by the American Bar Foundation. The Houston Lawyers Auxiliary was also recognized for its outstanding public service programs. We are proud that Texas lawyers' outstanding efforts are recognized at the ABA level.

Plans for the April board meeting are well underway. The meeting is April 21 in Brownsville. Committee meetings will be held on Thursday afternoon, April 20, and Eduardo and Paula will host bird-watching and a bar-beque for those who want to stay over Saturday night. A notice of activities should be in your mail next week.

**Five CLE Webcasts** — TexasBarCLE will present five live webcasts during the week of Feb. 20: The Next Generation of Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Litigation; Business Law Ethics; Sarbanes Oxley: We Have Only Just Begun; Clarence Darrow: Crimes, Causes, and the Courtroom; and Impeach Justice Douglas!

**Texas Foreclosure Manual** — TexasBarBooks is taking pre-orders for the second edition of the Texas Foreclosure Manual. The manual will be ready to ship to purchasers by early March. Information about pre-ordering is available in the February issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* and in an e-blast that was sent out this week to 24,760 lawyers across the state.

**Law Related Education** — The Law Related Education Conference, held in Austin, maxed out on Saturday at 200 people. Attendees contributed about 500 more books for President Rodriguez's Costa Rica library project. Most of the books came from one school in Wichita Falls, which brought in 400 volumes.

**School Finance** — The groups looking at school finance/tax reform continue to meet and the Governmental Relations Office continues to monitor those hearings. Many proposals continue to be discussed, but at this point, there is no apparent consensus. As updates occur, Governmental Relations will provide additional information.

**Stars of Justice** — The Texas Access to Justice Commission presented its Star of Justice Award to State Sen. Robert Duncan at a Lubbock bar meeting in the fall and to State Rep. Sylvester Turner at a Houston Bar Foundation luncheon in January for their support for access to justice for low-income Texans.

**Pro Bono Survey Underway** — The 2006 Pro Bono Survey is being conducted. About 500 Texas lawyers will receive telephone calls in the next few weeks asking about their pro bono service during 2005. The final report will be available by the end of March. The last telephone survey was done in 2003.

**Auditor Wanted** — The State Bar sent out requests for proposals for its financial and internal auditing services, as well as its investment management services this week. The deadline for receipt of the proposal is March 22 at 2:00 p.m.

**Texasbar.com and Member Benefits** — The Member Benefits link on the website is working. Two of our car rental member benefits providers report more than \$124,000 of business during calendar year 2005, with 45 percent of that coming directly from the website link, which was active only for the last few months of the year.

**The Texas Attorney Survey** — Status 2005 is a survey of active attorneys conducted every two years by the State Bar Department of Research and Analysis. Its purpose is to obtain information about law practice in Texas, and to obtain attorneys' opinions about the services and activities of the State Bar. The letter and survey will be mailed to 7,000 attorneys on Feb. 21 and will ask about their law practice in 2005. The results of this survey will be published later in the year as four reports: Private Practitioner 2005 Income Report, Hourly Rates in 2005 Report, Government Attorney 2005 Income Report, and Corporate/In-House Counsel 2005 Income Report. Reports will be available in November.

**Texas Family Law Practice Manual** — TexasBarBooks is working with the Family Law Section to provide free and discounted Texas Family Law Practice Manuals to attendees of the upcoming Family Law Section-sponsored pro bono seminars to encourage Texas attorneys to take on pro bono cases in the most underserved areas of the state.

**New Lawyers Discount** — To help get their burgeoning practices off the ground, TexasBarBooks has offered attendees of the New Lawyer Course a discount of 50 percent on any one TexasBarBooks' publication through the end of 2006.

**Citation Format Survey** — A survey regarding citation format was sent to 8,026 Texas attorneys in early January. With a 7 percent response rate, results from this survey will be used to make publications more useful. One interesting result: more than 50 percent of attorneys who responded use an online service (usually Lexis or Westlaw) as their source for finding and verifying Texas statutes. But more than 40 percent of the attorneys who responded still rely on the Vernon's Annotated Texas Statutes for their legal research.

**A Few Good Numbers to Consider** — During the first eight months of this fiscal year, the Client-Attorney Assistance Program fielded almost 36,000 inquiries averaging 4,500 per month, or more than 200 calls each workday. On average, CAAP refers 71 calls each month to the Chief Disciplinary Counsel — about 1.6 percent of all calls handled by the department. // So far this fiscal year, our Texas Lawyers Care program has referred 4,156 low-income persons to providers of legal services. // Our Law Related Education program has provided training for 3,153 teachers.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the State Bar of Texas is to support the administration of the legal system, assure all citizens equal access to justice, foster high standards of ethical conduct for lawyers, support and provide services to its members, enable its members to better serve their clients and the public, and educate the public about the rule of law.

