

# STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*December 2, 2009*

**Professional Liability Insurance Disclosure** — In October and November, the State Bar Board of Directors held a series of public hearings around the state on whether lawyers should be required to disclose to clients whether or not they carry professional liability insurance, and, if they do have a duty to disclose, the best method for that disclosure. The hearings took place in San Antonio, Harlingen, Houston, El Paso, Dallas, Lubbock, and Austin. Audio recordings of the hearings are available at [www.texasbar.com/plidisclosure](http://www.texasbar.com/plidisclosure), as are written summaries of the testimony from each hearing and background materials. The Board will vote on these issues during its Jan. 29 meeting and then forward its recommendation to the Supreme Court of Texas.

**Proposed Changes to Disciplinary Rules** — The Supreme Court is accepting comments through the end of the year on proposed amendments to the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. The amendments were printed in the November issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* with the Court's order and an overview written by the Court's rules attorney. A redlined version of the proposed changes is available on the Supreme Court and State Bar of Texas websites. Comments can be sent to [kennon.peterson@courts.state.tx.us](mailto:kennon.peterson@courts.state.tx.us).

**State Bar, FindLaw to Discontinue MyTexasBar.com** — The State Bar and FindLaw will discontinue the MyTexasBar.com service on Dec. 15, 2009. After a long and successful partnership, this is a mutual decision of both parties, which are working to streamline and improve services to members and customers. State Bar members will continue to have access to their member accounts and free legal research on My Bar Page on TexasBar.com. (The State Bar's free legal research service, Casemaker, was recently expanded to include all 50 states and an expanded federal library.) MyTexasBar users who registered for @justice.com email accounts will be able to access those accounts directly at Justice.com. For more information on the discontinuation, visit [www.texasbar.com/findlaw](http://www.texasbar.com/findlaw), email [webmaster@texasbar.com](mailto:webmaster@texasbar.com), or call (800)204-2222, Ext. 1711.

**Minority Director Nominations Sought** — Nominations are being accepted for two minority director positions on the State Bar Board of Directors. The deadline for nominations is Dec. 15. Persons interested in being nominated for the position should submit a nomination letter, resume, and letters of recommendation. For more information, contact Candiss Held at (800)204-2222, Ext. 1416.

**Committee Appointments** — Standing committee appointment applications are being accepted by President-elect Terry Tottenham for the 2010-2011 bar year. Members can access an online interest form at [www.texasbar.com/committees](http://www.texasbar.com/committees) through Dec. 4. Unless otherwise noted, appointments are for three years.

**Disability Issues Committee Seeks Mentors** — The State Bar Disability Issues Committee is looking to pair Texas law students who have disabilities with practicing attorneys who have disabilities. For more information or to volunteer, contact committee member Shannon Brady Geihlsler at [sbg@sbgaal.com](mailto:sbg@sbgaal.com).

**Audit Success** — The State Bar has once again received an "unqualified" opinion on its yearly financial audit (for fiscal year 2008–2009). This is the highest audit opinion the State Bar can receive. In addition, the State Bar's internal audit has been completed with no "findings" or "recommendations."

**Recognition for Access to Justice Leaders** — Betty Balli Torres, executive director of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, has been elected president of the National Association of IOLTA Programs (NAIP). The organization consists of directors and other leaders of IOLTA programs in the United States and Canada. *The American Lawyer* recently honored Texas Access to Justice Commission Chair Harry Reasoner with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Reasoner has practiced with Vinson and Elkins in Houston for 45 years.

**Nester Chairs National CLE Summit** — TexasBarCLE Director Pat Nester served as executive chair and moderator of the ALI-ABA/ACLEA Critical Issues Summit, which took place in Scottsdale, Ariz., last month. More than 150 lawyers, judges, law deans, law professors, CLE professionals, and MCLE regulators discussed the next best steps in improving lawyer education from the transition from law school to law practice through mentoring opportunities to career-long CLE participation. The summit resulted in dozens of recommendations, 16 of which were adopted by the assembled group as the most promising and important. A successor to the Arden House conferences, which, beginning in the 1950's, built the blueprints for organized CLE, the summit took advantage of technology unavailable to its predecessors, webcasting two plenary sessions on the future of the legal profession and the impact of technology, and communicating with participants and others through a specially purposed website, [www.equippingourlawyers.org](http://www.equippingourlawyers.org), where the recommendations and supporting materials for the summit, including the findings of a nationwide survey on CLE, are available to all.

**State Bar Book Club Makes New Selection** — Dozens of State Bar staff members have signed up to participate in discussions of the latest selection in the State Bar's book club, *The Cure* by Dan Paul and Jeff Cox. Executive Director Michelle Hunter and Administration Division Director Al Cumming will lead the sessions, which begin this week. CDC regional offices can participate by video conference. According to *Publisher's Weekly*, this collaborative effort by Dan Paul, a former strategic planner for CEO Jack Welch at General Electric, and business writer Jeff Cox is a story that illustrates the business principle of the "bound-aryless" company pioneered by Welch. It contains sound advice and is informative and instructive.

**Local Bar News** — The Fort Bend County Bar Association raised more than \$10,000 at its annual golf tournament, which exceeded the goal and allowed the association to make more donations than expected. Fort Bend Lawyers Care received \$5,000 to enhance free legal services to the indigent. Richmond Rosenberg Helping Hands received \$5,000. Helping Hands provides food, clothing, shelter and assistance to families in financial crisis. On Nov. 16, the Bell County Bar Association sponsored its second annual Adoption Day. This year's theme was "The Wizard of Oz: There's No Place Like Home." A yellow-brick road led the way to the bench for the 32 children who were adopted. Fifteen attorneys, four judges, and 20 paralegals volunteered their time to assist with the adoptions and to write wills.

**By the Numbers** — The October "jeans day" at the Texas Law Center, through which employees could pay for the opportunity to wear jeans, raised \$631 for the Alzheimer's Association.

## 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 and promote diversity in the administration of justice and the practice of law.

