2024-2025 STATE BAR OF TEXAS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports are included in the July/August issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* to update Texas lawyers on State Bar activities. The reports do not necessarily reflect the position or official policy of the State Bar of Texas, which is formulated by the State Bar Board of Directors or by the membership through referendum. For more information or to complete a Committee Volunteer Interest Form, go to texasbar.com/committees or call 800-204-2222 or 512-427-1516.

ADMINISTRATION OF RULES OF EVIDENCE

Justin Hinderliter, Chair

The Administration of Rules of Evidence Committee evaluates the Texas Rules of Evidence (TRE) to ensure it meets today's practice of law. The committee makes recommendations to the State Bar of Texas, Supreme Court Advisory Committee, and the Supreme Court of Texas. In addition to researching inquiries from Texas attorneys about rules, the committee monitors changes to the Federal Rules of Evidence and considers whether similar changes should be recommended to the TRE. This year, the committee is analyzing inquiries into several issues, including: (1) updating Rule 606 to permit juror testimony as to whether extraneous prejudicial information was improperly brought to the jury's attention in criminal matters, (2) whether Rule 614 should be amended to ensure a witness excluded from the courtroom during trial cannot gain access to trial testimony, (3) whether Texas should adopt a residual hearsay exception similar to Federal Rules of Evidence Rule 807, (4) whether Texas should revise Rule 611 concerning illustrative aides, (5) whether the Texas rules have sufficient safeguards against "deepfake evidence," and (6) evidentiary issues arising from use of artificial intelligence. Questions about potential amendments to the TRE may be submitted to the State Bar or to any committee member for consideration.

ADVERTISING REVIEW

Jason Honeycutt, Chair

The Advertising Review Committee assists attorneys with proposed submissions to ensure compliance of advertisements and solicitation communications with Part VII of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. The staff and committee review approximately 3,200 submissions annually with a concentration of submissions being television and internet-based advertisements. While the overwhelming majority of submissions are from Texas, advertising review receives submissions from firms in California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Minnesota. As defined in the rules, the committee strongly encourages pre-review of all attorney advertising. This helps attorneys and law firms in reducing costs associated with possibly changing advertisements that have already started to be disseminated. Attorneys face a non-filer fine if they do not file their advertisement or solicitation communication through the advertising review portal, which is found on every attorney's My Bar Page. Ultimately, the advertising review staff is available to be consultive on any advertising issues with the goal of having attorneys disseminate advertising that is compliant with the disciplinary rules.

ANNUAL MEETING

Lamont Jefferson, Kristal Thomson, and Marty Truss, Co-chairs

The Annual Meeting took place in San Antonio at the JW Marriott Hill Country Resort & Spa. The meeting included a varied selection of quality CLE and featured programs for everyone, from the first-year associate to the seasoned professional. State Bar sections provided practice-specific programs, including the Family Law Section, Litigation Section, Business Law Section, and Corporate Counsel Section. The meeting featured four dynamic keynote speakers: former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson presented Thursday at the Bar Leaders Recognition Luncheon, Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Jimmy Blacklock spoke Friday at the Bench Bar Breakfast, and former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht and U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit Judge Priscilla Richman presented at Friday's General Session Luncheon. Friday's programming included parting remarks from 2024-2025 State Bar of Texas President Steve Benesh and 2024-2025 Texas Young Lawyers Association President Hisham A. Masri and the swearing in of 2025-2026 State Bar President Santos Vargas and 2025-2026 TYLA President Alyson A. Martinez. Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2026 Annual Meeting in Houston on June 11-12.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Sarah Clower Keathley, Chair

In April 2025, the Continuing Legal Education Committee met with the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors Professional Development Subcommittee and bar staff to propose topics for CLE programs and to discuss issues facing TexasBarCLE and Texas Bar Books. The committee continued its mission of providing cutting-edge CLE to hardworking Texas attorneys. TexasBarCLE continues to be the go-to source for CLE for Texas attorneys and is currently in the process of developing a new CLE product called "Practice Skills Short Takes," which the committee anticipates rolling out soon. TexasBarCLE and Texas Bar Books continue to offer a variety of discounts, scholarships, and important free programming to help Texas attorneys advise and represent their clients in the areas needed most. Texas Bar Books continues to expand its offerings on the texasbarpractice.com website, which serves as the platform for Texas Bar Books and the Law Practice Management Program. The website offers lawyers a single place to explore free practice management content such as the Succession Planning Toolkit. Texasbarpractice.com is also where lawyers can go to shop for practice manuals, jury charges, desk books, and reference guides and where they can subscribe to online practice manuals with downloadable forms.

COURT RULES

Christy Amuny, Chair

This year the Court Rules Committee continued to propose rule changes to help improve civil litigation, including revisions of the rules governing the justice of the peace courts. These include revisions to Texas Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 500.2(p) (clarifying the definition of "judgment") and proposing 500.2(ac) (clarifying dismissal with or without prejudice on discovery sanction orders). The committee also recommended revisions to Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 306(a) (clarifying the periods to run from the signing of a judgment), and 224, 225,

229, and 231-234 (updating these rules to be in line with changes to the Texas Government Code by incorporating existing language in Texas Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 292). The committee recommended revisions of Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure Rule 9.9(e) to clarify the duty to protect unredacted sensitive data. The committee continues to work on revisions to rules applicable to justice of the peace courts and any other suggestions that come in from practicing attorneys and judges.

DISABILITY RIGHTS AND ISSUES COMMITTEE

Daphne Silverman, Chair

The Disability Rights and Issues Committee provides resources for attorneys and members of the public who are experiencing disabilities. The Event Subcommittee put on a CLE at which people learned about avenues lawyers can take to help clients and lawyers with disabilities in the courtroom. Sean Pevsner and Mary Allen Ramprasad lead this subcommittee. If you have a story to share, contact the committee. The Mentorship Subcommittee, led by Hannah Cramer, provided those experiencing disabilities in the legal field with a mentor, a one-on-one resource to answer questions regarding barriers they encounter, and recommendations on overcoming those barriers. If you would like to be a mentor or if you would like to have a mentee, contact the committee. The Public Education Subcommittee, led by Dominique Augustus, expanded its bureau of speakers related to disability. If you would like to present a speaker or to be a speaker, contact the committee. The Active-duty Military/Veterans Subcommittee, led by Gary Manuele, published resources available through government and public interests that assist military veterans with service issues including combat PTSD, which can lead to suicide, homelessness, and criminal charges.

DIVERSITY IN THE PROFESSION

Melissa Osio Martinez, Chair

This year, the Diversity in the Profession Committee worked on several successful programs and projects. The Texas Law Student Development Program was held on February 28, 2025, at UNT Dallas College of Law. The committee also held the 22nd annual TMAP CLE program at South Texas College of Law Houston on April 16, 2025. This CLE program provides valuable information and resources to small firms and solo practitioners. The committee's Bar Prep Scholarship program had another successful year. The committee received over 40 applications from third-year law students who are studying for the bar exam. The committee awarded scholarships to 10 students.

JURY SERVICE

Jim Stouffer, Chair

The Jury Service Committee continued its work on developing and implementing programs to encourage citizen participation in the critical process of jury service. The committee continues to promote Jury Appreciation Week by providing activity and program resources to the courts and clerks throughout the state. Jury Appreciation Week was established by the Texas Legislature in 2015 and is celebrated each year during the first week of May. The committee continued work to create public service announcements by contacting public figures who have recently served on juries and are receptive to a means of bringing attention to jury service and encouraging the public to exercise the right to serve. In addition, attractive posters are being produced for distribution to courthouses for placement in public areas promoting jury service. The committee has also been busy warning citizens of increasingly creative jury and court scams through proposed presentations by court clerks and jury bailiffs throughout Texas.

LAW FOCUSED EDUCATION

Sara Giddings, Chair

The Law Focused Education Committee created roll out guides for Law Focused Education projects to make it easier for attorneys to present in the classroom. These guides can be found at texaslre.org/attorney-resources/ effective June 1, 2025. The committee also reviewed and edited the new Law Focused Education project, *Legal Beagle and his Court House Friends* coloring book. The book is designed for attorneys to distribute when they speak to a classroom. The committee also (1) provided a wide array of free professional development training opportunities for Texas teachers; (2) promoted the Texas Citizen Bee, a statewide civic education program, and served as support personnel for regional competitions; (3) provided free Texas Law-Related Education materials (texaslre.org) to school districts, private school networks, and community groups; (4) promoted LRE projects at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting; (5) continued to partner with attorneys and local bar associations to assist in the rollout of LRE materials; and (6) presented the Nancy Garms Memorial and Leon Jaworski awards to deserving recipients.

LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Greg Sampson, Chair

The Law Practice Management (LPM) Committee conducted work through five subcommittees, with succession planning as a strong focus among three. The Sale of Practice Subcommittee and the Committee on Rules and Referenda are exploring the addition of a comment to the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, clarifying that the rules do not prohibit the sale of a law practice. The Succession Planning Outreach Subcommittee made several presentations on succession planning and worked with local bar associations to better address sudden cessations and encourage members to designate a custodian. The Succession Planning Toolkit Subcommittee supplemented the Succession Planning Toolkit with content on temporary cessations and practical tips for attorneys serving as custodians. The Emerging Practice Trends Subcommittee developed the AI Platform Evaluation Checklist, a service confidentiality agreement for online platforms; the e-Discovery Resource Guide; and educational videos. The LPM CLE-Track Subcommittee presented topics during Annual Meeting

on ethical online advertising and software considerations for small to mid-size firms, partnership agreements, drafting engagement letters, conflicts checks, ethical and legal issues in social media, grievances, practical guidance for custodians, AI training for attorneys and staff, protecting client confidentiality in emerging technology, and how to handle a breach to a law firm.

LAWS RELATING TO IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY

Ruby L. Powers, Chair

The Laws Relating to Immigration and Nationality Committee organized three key events, alongside regular meetings, to promote collaboration and information sharing. In January, the committee hosted a tour in Hidalgo, including a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol presentation with the port chief of staff; a visit to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services field office; and a panel discussion on immigration. The committee also visited Brownsville to discuss border challenges with Cameron County immigration judges, new policies, and the impact of the incoming administration. This was followed by a presentation and tour of the Brownsville welcome center with city officials. On March 26 in El Paso, the committee focused on legal and humanitarian issues that included a panel discussion with local and federal representatives. On March 27, a Houston roundtable was organized, gathering private practitioners, nonprofit representatives, and board members to discuss the impact of current policies. On March 28, attendees toured the Mexican Consulate and participated in a meeting. These events reflect the committee's dedication to collaboration and addressing critical community issues. The committee will continue to monitor laws related to immigration and nationality with the goal to improve the quality of legal services provided to those in need.

LAWYERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Meridith Carpenter-Black, Chair

The Lawyers' Assistance Program Committee assists the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program (TLAP) by creating initiatives and programming for lawyers, law students, judges, and legal professionals related to substance use and mental health challenges as well as general well-being for the legal community. In 2024, TLAP celebrated its 35th anniversary. Subcommittees focused on hosting anniversary celebrations in Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas. TLAP also worked with founders and volunteers to create a video highlighting the early days of TLAP. This committee also recommended and conducted Mental Health First Aid, a training course for all committee members on intervening with people who have mental health challenges. This subcommittee also recommended TLAP ambassador training. The ambassador training focused on training volunteers on how to be a TLAP representative on behalf of or alongside TLAP staff to increase outreach across the state. The Gala Subcommittee is in the process of planning the first TLAP gala, which is tentatively scheduled to take place in spring 2026. TLAP hosted the 16th annual Law School Deans Meeting to provide a forum for deans of students to express ideas on how TLAP can support them in law student health and wellness.

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN CIVIL MATTERS

Shelby Jean, Chair

The Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee was established to address civil legal issues affecting low-income individuals in Texas. The committee is dedicated to enhancing access to justice, primarily through pro bono programs and services in collaboration with various stakeholders and legal services providers. Committee members include those who work at law firms, corporations, law schools, and legal aid organizations; judges; and solo practitioners. Its members are committed to doing work that helps ensure delivery of legal services to Texans who are unable to afford counsel to represent them in civil matters. Among the committee's 2024-2025 objectives were to promote program events that support access to justice and to recognize members of the legal profession who have been nominated for Pro Bono Excellence Awards for their commitment to providing pro bono assistance to others. The committee also selected three projects to undertake during this term including reviewing proposed rules to allow licensed paraprofessionals to represent low-income individuals and working with the Texas Access to Justice Commission (TAJC) to offer presentation topic recommendations for the annual Local Bar Leaders Conference, which is hosted by the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Young Lawyers Association, and the TAJC.

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN CRIMINAL MATTERS

Paul Chambers, Chair

The Legal Services to the Poor in Criminal Matters Committee investigates areas of the indigent defense systems in Texas and develops recommendations to ensure the best representation for indigent persons in criminal matters. The committee includes members of many disciplines in different parts of the indigent systems across the state. The committee continued its work on guidelines for dealing with unrepresented people in criminal courts and continued to disseminate, offer guidance, and investigate noncompliance with the ability to pay guidance that was adopted by the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors. The committee also awards both the Michael K. Moore Award for exceptional research or writing that deals with indigent criminal defense, recognizing significant contribution to the knowledge and practices of the bench, bar, and scholarly communities, and the Warren Burnett Award, which recognizes an organization or attorney for their extraordinary contributions to improving the quality of criminal legal representation to indigent Texans.

LOCAL BAR SERVICES

Leslie Dippel, Chair

The Local Bar Services Committee enhances communication between State Bar of Texas leadership and local bar associations to assist local bar leaders in the development of their associations. Resources available from the State Bar

Local Bar Services Department include speaker coordination, membership assistance, program coordination, and guidance on creating a new association. Yearly, the committee plans the annual Law Day contest, Stars of Texas Bars Awards, and the Local Bar Leaders Conference. The Stars of Texas Bars Awards recognize local bar associations for outstanding involvement and commitment to the legal profession and are presented at the Bar Leaders Recognition Luncheon at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting. The winners of the annual Law Day awards are recognized on the State Bar website. The Local Bar Leaders Conference is scheduled to take place July 24-25 in Houston.

MINIMUM CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Stuart Colburn, Chair

The Minimum Continuing Legal Education Committee administers minimum continuing education programs established by State Bar Rules Article XII and the regulations and accreditation standards promulgated therefrom. Most frequently, providers of continuing legal education appeal State Bar of Texas staff 's decisions regarding hours or accreditation. Staff receives over 48,000 applications per year from non-accredited sponsors, out-of-state attorneys seeking credit, and existing accredited sponsors. The committee determines if the presentation consists of legal education or ethics meeting accreditation standards. In response to attorneys from across Texas, the committee studied and proposed expanding CLE credit eligibility to include attorney participation in legal competitions. This proposal, subsequently approved by the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors, now allows attorneys to earn up to three of credit for participating in arbitration, alternate dispute resolution, mediation, transactional, client counseling, and negotiation competitions. So far, over 300 attorneys have claimed this credit. The board of directors also approved the MCLE Committee's recommendation to change the name of the required course that Texas licensed lawyers must take from "The Guide to the Basics of Law Practice" to "The Justice James A. Baker Guide to Ethics and Professionalism."

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Deborah L. Cordova, Chair

The purpose of the Outreach and Engagement Committee is to develop and promote strategies and best practices for outreach to and engagement of the membership of the State Bar of Texas. The committee identifies opportunities within the organization to create an environment conducive to involvement of attorneys of all backgrounds and locations across Texas; assists in the creation of measurable goals; and periodically reports on progress toward achieving the goals set by the State Bar Board of Directors. This year, the committee assisted the State Bar of Texas Office of Minority Affairs with brainstorming for the Train-the-Trainer program, which provides attorneys with information on how to be an effective CLE speaker and how to get involved in speaking on State Bar programs. The committee also continued planning for another Law School Deans Roundtable to build upon the success of last year's event.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—BUSINESS, CONSUMER, INSURANCE & EMPLOYMENT

Georgina Benavides, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Business, Consumer, Insurance & Employment Committee completed work on its 2024 edition and has begun developing materials for its upcoming 2026 edition. For its 2024 edition, the committee worked with the other civil PJC committees to draft new admonitory instructions on multilingual jurors and depositions. Additionally, the committee participated in a cross-volume subcommittee to study broad-form issues and *Horton v. The Kansas City Southern Railway Co*. The 2024 edition also includes new material addressing equitable remedies and specific performance. For the 2026 edition, the committee has met regularly to study updates and develop new material. The committee is working on updates relating to fiduciary duty, damages, and privacy torts. A new working group was formed to continue studying updates on construction contracts and is drafting new material based on input from practitioners and the committee's previous working group. The committee also continues to study broad-form issues and is considering future updates together with the other civil PJC committees. The committee will work closely with the other civil PJC committees and the PJC Oversight Committee on updates that impact more than one volume. The committee welcomes questions and input, which can be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—CRIMINAL

John Messinger and Hon. Alan Bennett, Co-chairs

The *Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges Online* is an online-only, subscription-based publication updated approximately every four months. By publishing quarterly, the *Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges Online* provides practitioners with practice notes and jury charges that are up to date and efficient. Updates from the year so far include substantial revisions to "Concurrent Causation" (Chapter 6) and "Violation of a Protective Order" (Chapter 25), and new charges on "Repeated Violations of a Protective Order by Communicating or Going to or Near" (Chapter 25) and "Boating While Intoxicated with a Child" (Chapter 49). Practitioners are encouraged to view and comment on the Pattern Jury Charges—Criminal Committee's proposed drafts posted on the Texas Bar Practice Blog (https://blog.texasbarpractice.com/proposed-changes-texas-criminal-pattern-jury-charge). The members of the committee strive to educate the bench and bar about the efficiency, usefulness, and quality of the *Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges Online*. The committee welcomes questions and comments about the online product as well as suggestions for future instructions, which may be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—FAMILY AND PROBATE

Anna McKim, Chair

Over the past year, the Pattern Jury Charges—Family and Probate Committee worked diligently refining additions and updates to the material in the *Texas Pattern Charges—Family and Probate* volume in preparation for the 2026 edition. The committee is considering several new charges, including an updated valuation charge, an additional characterization charge, a charge for criminal contempt of court, charges for breaches of privacy in divorces, and expanded charges for modification of conservatorship. Additionally, the committee revised the commentary on attorneys' fees in guardianships. Potential new materials under consideration are a revision of charges for guardianships of adults as well as new charges for actions involving beneficiary and survivorship designations. The committee continues to monitor legislative developments to ensure the volume reflects changes in relevant statutes. Comments, questions, and suggestions for new topics for inclusion in future editions may be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—GENERAL NEGLIGENCE, INTENTIONAL PERSONAL TORTS & WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Hon. Hyattye Simmons, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—General Negligence, Intentional Personal Torts & Workers' Compensation Committee has completed updates for the 2024 volume. These changes include updates involving workers' compensation lifetime income benefits, new comments involving disfigurement damages, mental anguish and physical pain, and personal injury damages as well as a new charge involving instructions for deposition testimony. The committee continues to monitor recent legislative statutory changes and caselaw and has started preparing updates for the 2026 volume. These include possible updates regarding wrongful death, broad-form issues, exemplary damages, and nuisance related charges.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—MALPRACTICE, PREMISES & PRODUCTS

Laura Bellegie Sharp, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Malpractice, Premises & Products Committee completed the 2024 updates and is monitoring new cases, tackling new changes, comments, and caveats for a 2026 edition. The committee welcomes practitioners alerting it with developments and suggestions. For all areas, the committee is watching and reviewing cases that affect the damage questions and is proposing adding relevant cases in comments. The committee is in the process of updating chapters 70 and 71 of the product liability charges; looking at charges that are affected by the penal code; revising comments on remarriage and anti-fracturing of non-medical malpractice claims; and monitoring cases involving the physician/patient relationship, application of vicarious liability theories to employers admitting responsibility for acts of employees, cases challenging PJC 66.7 on premises liability, tolling on actions against attorneys, and the definition of plaintiff as invitee. One of the biggest tasks will be "shepardizing" the current comments to ensure the cases are current and retiring old cases. Please contact the committee at books@texasbar.com if you have suggestions or comments.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—OIL AND GAS

Paul Simpson, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Oil and Gas Committee published the 2024 volume of pattern jury charges for oil and gas. Among changes in that volume are: a new comment on confusion of goods; a category of monetary damages recoverable in claims involving real property; updates to instructions and questions on improper use and cessation of production in paying quantities; revised discussion on willful misconduct under joint operating agreement exculpatory provisions; analysis of disputes involving multi-well leases and production in paying quantities; updated authorities, including for damages for breach of the implied development covenant; and, in collaboration with other committees, updates to: the comment on trade customs; instructions on predicate findings for specific performance and equitable relief; benefit of the bargain, remedial, and consequential damages; new admonitory instructions on deposition testimony and multilingual jurors; and a caveat noting that the volume's broad-form commentary is subject to revision in light of recent precedent. The committee analyzes cases and proposes new and updated questions and comments to help lawyers and courts formulate jury questions in oil and gas cases. As work continues on the 2026 volume, the committee welcomes comments, suggestions, and examples of actual jury questions from courts and practitioners at books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—OVERSIGHT

Daniel Hinde, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Oversight Committee supported the work of the civil and family PJC committees as they studied future updates following publication of the *2024 Texas Pattern Jury Charges*. The committee worked with each volume to complete material for the 2024 editions. New admonitory instructions covering depositions and multilingual jurors were finalized. A cross-volume subcommittee was formed to study broad-form issues and *Horton v. The Kansas City Southern Railway Co.* That work continues and the subcommittee will propose future updates. Additionally, the 2024 edition of *Family & Probate* includes updates on dissolution of marriage and reimbursement. The 2024 editions of *Business* and *Oil & Gas* include new material on equitable relief and specific performance; the *Oil & Gas* volume also includes new commentary on confusion of goods. The 2024 editions of the *General Negligence* and *Malpractice Pattern Jury Charges* include updated material addressing pain and mental anguish, and the *General Negligence* volume also includes

updates on worker's compensation. The committee worked with the PJC Criminal Committee to finalize new materials on fraud and updates to stalking charges. The online criminal charges are updated throughout the year. The committee welcomes questions and input, which can be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CIVILITY

William G. Hagans, Chair

The Texas Day of Civility in the Law and the Texas Lawyer's Creed remain the focus of the committee. In recognition of the 35th anniversary of the adoption of the Texas Lawyer's Creed, the committee contributed several articles to the *Texas Bar Journal*. The committee also reached out to judges to display the Texas Lawyer's Creed in or near their courtrooms. Through a partnership with the Texas Bar Foundation, large copies of the creed remain available to any judge who requests one. In recognition of the Texas Day of Civility in the Law, the committee obtained a joint proclamation from the Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals along with a related resolution from the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors. The committee consistently develops and shares ideas for encouraging professionalism and civility in the profession. Committee members participate in various CLEs and networking events where they provide free posters of the Texas Lawyer's Creed. To educate and encourage law student engagement in professionalism and civility, the committee sponsored the Professionalism Award to be presented at the National Trial Competition awards banquet. Efforts to promulgate the creed to newly licensed lawyers and judges are ongoing.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ryan Bauerle, Chair

The Public Affairs Committee revitalized its role this year and hosted the Open Government Seminar at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting. The seminar featured two engaging panels: a legislative update covering recent changes impacting transparency and governance, and a timely discussion on the evolving landscape of free speech on campus. These panels provided valuable insights for attorneys navigating the intersection of law, policy, and public discourse. The committee is working diligently to ensure meaningful contributions to the legal community.

REAL ESTATE FORMS

Roland Love, Chair

After the 2024 version of the *Texas Real Estate Forms Manual* was finalized for publication, work began for the 2025 version. Updates for the 2025 manual include "Succession Planning for the Solo Practitioner," the "Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act," "CFIUS," the "Financial Crimes Enforcement Network," new forms, and additional references to State Bar CLE articles. The manual is available as two softbound volumes and online, downloadable versions that offer enhanced word-processing forms and links to cases, statutes, and CLE articles. The manual provides a starting point for recognizing issues and drafting documents for real estate transactions as well as relevant information and resources for understanding how to handle varying types of real estate transactions. In particular, the 2024 manual includes commentary regarding renewable energy leases and real estate purchase agreements. Changes were made to update letters of intent, purchase agreements, and deeds of trust. New forms include the termination of condominium regimes, a surface use agreement, and statutorily required notices and documentation regarding property owners' associations and fines. Each new manual includes timely new work product representing many hours of discussion and drafting. Don't miss out—keep your practice current.

TEXAS BAR JOURNAL BOARD OF EDITORS

Angelica Hernandez, Chair

The *Texas Bar Journal* is the official publication of the State Bar of Texas. In print since 1938, the magazine serves as a publication of record for the Supreme Court of Texas, a scholarly legal journal, and the association magazine for the State Bar of Texas. Each month (except a combined July/August issue), the *Texas Bar Journal* is mailed to approximately 134,285 subscribers, is available in digital format, and is the only publication reaching every lawyer in Texas. The Texas Bar Journal Board of Editors reviews legal article submissions, develops issue topics, and helps set the general editorial direction for the magazine. In 2024-2025, *TBJ* examined a number of subjects of interest to Texas lawyers, including discipline, ethics, and civility; family law; transactional law; wellness and the practice of law; solo/small firm practice; and discovery. *The Texas Bar Journal* also offered an informative "Year in Review" issue.

WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION

Paige Mims, Chair

The Women in the Profession Committee continued building on its mission by developing programs and materials addressing issues impacting women lawyers. The committee held its second annual virtual book club last October, moderated by former Supreme Court of Texas Justice Eva Guzman and featuring three Texas women judges: Chief Justice Darlene Byrne, of the 3rd Court of Appeals in Austin; Presiding Judge Leah Robertson, of the 385th Judicial District Court, Midland County; and Presiding Judge Elisabeth A. Earle, of the County Court at Law #3, Travis County. They discussed a topic titled "Her Honor: Stories of Challenge and Triumph from Women Judges." Last December, the committee presented a virtual CLE titled "No One Right Way to Be a Lawyer," which focused on exploring different career paths for attorneys beyond traditional practice and featured three women lawyers using their J.D. in non-traditional areas as a recruiter, a marketing manager of a law firm, and a CLE programming attorney. In March, the committee helped to promote statewide networking opportunities on International Women's Day. The committee encourages those who would like to participate in the committee to submit an interest form available at texasbar.com/committees. **TBJ**