



Just Say Yes To

LEADERSHIP IN THE PRACTICE

“Don’t let what you can’t do stop you from doing what you can do.” —Ted Lasso

WHEN I RECEIVED THE PHONE CALL LETTING ME KNOW THAT I WON THE ELECTION and was the new president-elect of the State Bar of Texas, my first reactions were “Why me?” and “What do I have to offer?” I still do not know the answers to these questions, but I can tell you why I think I am here—because I took a chance and said yes.

My first opportunity to say yes was when I was asked to be on the council for the Family Law Section. After the initial questions of “What is that?” and “How much time will it take?” I gladly jumped at the chance to serve on the council and said yes. Wendy Burgower was chair of the council that year, and she took a chance on me. I will forever be grateful to her.

One of the next opportunities for me to say yes was when someone discussed with me about running to be a director on the State Bar Board of Directors. Again, after “Why me?” and “What do I have to offer?” I made the decision to say yes.

You have to understand, I grew up in Early and practice in Granbury. I was a small-town, small-practice attorney. What could I possibly offer the section and later the State Bar of Texas? The only thing I had to offer was my time and my willingness to serve, so I said yes. When I saw an opportunity to run for chair of the board of directors, I said yes. When I was asked to interview to be a candidate for president-elect of the State Bar, I said yes. When I was asked to be one of two candidates to run for president-elect, I said yes. See a theme?

Please do not think that just because I have said yes that I get what I want when I want it. The first time I said yes to interviewing to be a candidate for president-elect, I was not selected to be one of the two candidates to run. It was a tough blow to me, but I also knew the bar would be in good hands with either candidate. Fast forward two years, and I was asked to interview again. To be honest, my initial reaction was to say no; however, I kept asking myself why I was thinking no. It was because of fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of actually being one of the two candidates. Even fear of winning. After discussions with my family and soul-searching, it came down to two questions. Later in my career, would I regret not taking the chance? Did I have anything to offer the bar? The answer to both questions was yes.

I would never have known what I missed if I said no at any point along the way. I truly believe that the result of me saying that first yes has a direct correlation to me being president today. I understand the need to say no sometimes for various reasons such as time constraints, family, etc. You should not say no from fear. You will never know what you missed because you were scared.

Saying yes not only enriches your life, but it also makes you a better leader and lawyer. Our bar needs leaders who will say yes to the opportunity to be part of our self-governance, as we work together to regulate and improve the legal profession in Texas.

I am now president of the State Bar of Texas, and it all started with me saying yes.

CINDY TISDALE

President, 2023-2024

State Bar of Texas