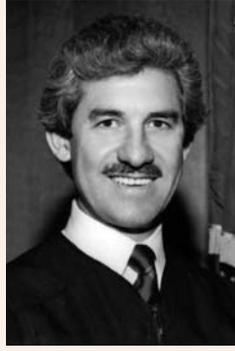
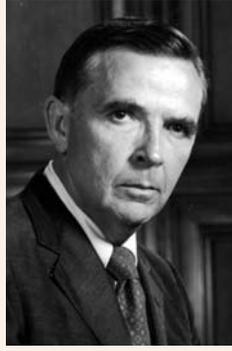




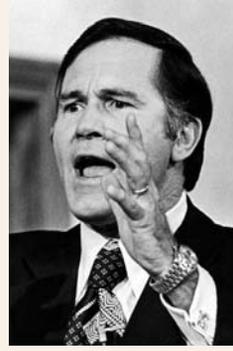
Kleber Miller



Hon. Raul Gonzalez



Joe Reynolds



"Racehorse" Haynes



Sarah Weddington

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# My Heroes Have Always Been Lawyers

BY HARPER ESTES

Tom Brokaw captured the nation's attention several years back with his book, *The Greatest Generation*. He reminded Americans of the heroes among us from the World War II generation and known to us as ordinary people: fathers, brothers, uncles, and friends. What constitutes a hero is somewhat subjective, but Benjamin Disraeli provides some guidance: "The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example."

Many of us grew up with fictional lawyer heroes such as Atticus Finch and Perry Mason. Later, as we came to understand our nation's history better, we became aware of lawyers who had made a difference, from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams to Abraham Lincoln and Thurgood Marshall. Finally, throughout our careers, most of us have come to know and admire lawyers we would classify as heroes for one reason or another.



Hon. Royal Furgeson, Jr.



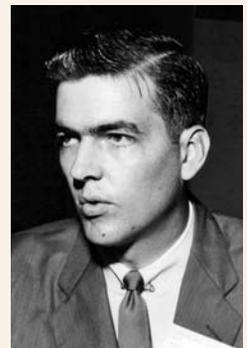
"Blackie" Holmes



Charles Smith



Hon. Edith Jones



Gibson Gayle, Jr.

Van Hilley, a former State Bar director from San Antonio, recognized this. He conceived an idea to preserve some great examples, not just for posterity, but for Texas lawyers practicing today so that all of us can learn from lives well lived and careers well executed. The project, Texas Legal Legends, is being coordinated by TexasBarCLE. Under the leadership of Hedy Bower, a program attorney with TexasBarCLE, we have identified some of these legal legends and videotaped interviews with them that cover their backgrounds, stories, and what they think of the changes to and the future of our profession. With the creative help of Paul Burks, TexasBarCLE's director of video production, this raw material is being turned into videos that are entertaining, thought-provoking, and historically significant.

Texas Legal Legends is a work in progress. Although we will not be able to film interviews with every lawyer deserving inclusion, we hope to do as many as we can and to share their stories with you. We began the process with lawyers who have provided leadership in defending the rule of law, promoting professionalism, and ensuring access to justice for those who otherwise could not protect their rights. The lawyers interviewed represent outstanding examples of service to country, state, community, profession, and others. To date, we have completed 12 interviews and need to do many more to preserve a broad and diverse spectrum of stories that represent the great traditions of the legal profession in Texas.

The following are but a few of the interesting facts contained in these interviews:

- Houston lawyer Joe Reynolds is one of the few U.S. Marines to have survived the first landing at Iwo Jima in World War II and the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in Korea;
- Former Texas Supreme Court Justice Raul Gonzalez was the first Hispanic elected to statewide office in Texas;
- Austin lawyer Sarah Weddington's first contested hearing as a lawyer happened to be presenting oral argument to the U.S. Supreme Court;
- Richard "Racehorse" Haynes' proudest accomplishment as a lawyer was pro bono defense of a building supply worker accused of theft and not a case about which books were written or movies made;
- Houston lawyer Gibson Gayle, Jr., besides being a past president of the State Bar of Texas, has served in the American Bar Association House of Delegates for 50 years;
- Dallas lawyer James "Blackie" Holmes co-authored the Texas Lawyer's Creed; and
- U.S. District Judge Royal Furgeson, Jr. led the El Paso Bar to start a program where every member commits to two pro bono cases a year.

Others interviewed include Martin Allday of Austin (now deceased), Kleber Miller of Fort Worth, Charles Smith of San Antonio, David Hall of Edinburg, and Judge Edith Jones of Houston. If there is a Texas lawyer you would like to see considered for this series, please contact Hedy Bower at [hbower@texasbar.com](mailto:hbower@texasbar.com) and provide her with the name, contact information, and a brief statement about why this lawyer is your hero.

Through these interviews, we can learn of the many great lawyers of the past and be reminded of what a great privilege it is to be a Texas lawyer. There are also lessons to be learned that are important to the future of the profession. Many of these heroes know one another and began their careers when the State Bar of Texas was much smaller. Whether it is because of or in spite of this, each lawyer interviewed is proud to be a lawyer, enjoys the practice of law, has a high regard and deep respect for judges and the lawyers they practice with and against, and cares deeply about preserving the rule of law to maintain the freedoms we enjoy. Each is committed to service and views the law not as a job, but as a higher calling.

It would be too easy for us to say that these living legends practiced in a simpler time. They did not. Many endured hardships that make the issues of today seem less significant. Yet, in spite of the dangers and hardships, these lawyers stayed true to the ideals that first called them to the Bar.

One of the great privileges I had while serving as president of the State Bar of Texas was meeting with and interviewing these legal legends. I hope that you will check the State Bar's website ([www.texasbar.com/legends](http://www.texasbar.com/legends)) from time to time so that you too can meet these heroes by watching the interviews. (Videos will be added as they are completed.) From each of these lawyers, we have the "inheritance of a great example." It's up to us to make the most of it.

We all hope to enjoy good reputations as lawyers, which is important. But far more important is character. Abraham Lincoln said, "Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it. The tree is the real thing." These lawyers are the real thing.

My heroes have always been lawyers, and still are, it seems.



### **HARPER ESTES**

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