



Handling the HOLIDAYS

WE'VE COME TO THE END OF A MOST UNUSUAL AND CHALLENGING YEAR. Even as I extend a hearty “Happy Holidays” to all Texas lawyers, I know this season can be unhappy for many of us—even when we’re not facing a pandemic and a recession.

During my time as a police officer, I found the highest rates (and some of the most violent cases) of domestic violence occurred during the holiday season. My time as a criminal defense attorney has confirmed that for many, the holidays add additional stress to our already stressful lives. When we add in the stresses that we as lawyers are already facing in 2020, the Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program provides a lifeline.

TLAP offers confidential help for Texas lawyers, judges, and law students with stress and anxiety, depression, substance use, and other mental health issues. You can contact TLAP 24/7 by text or phone at 800-343-TLAP (8527)—or find a wealth of online well-being resources at tlaphelps.org.

I want to highlight a few TLAP resources that are especially timely:

- For people feeling isolated, struggling with a mental health issue, or in need of recovery support, TLAP maintains a list of Well-Being Resources for Remote Living at texasbar.com/tlaphelps/remote-well-being.
- TLAP’s Remote Well-Being Wednesday program in November focused on “How Lawyers Can Handle the Holidays.” You can watch the program at the link immediately above.
- TLAP now has a video counterpart to its “Stories of Recovery” series featured on the Texas Bar Blog. These monthly videos include candid accounts of the path to recovery. Follow TLAP on Facebook (@TLAPhelps) for the latest event updates, including Zoom login information.

The Year Ahead

I have updated you in recent columns on the work of my various presidential task forces and work groups, and I expect the months ahead will include even more activity. The State Bar Board of Directors will meet virtually at 9 a.m. CST on January 22 for its quarterly meeting, and you are all invited to watch the meeting, sign up to speak, and submit written comments about the items before the board. We are here to serve you and want your input.

I look forward to reporting more progress in 2021 as we work to support Texas lawyers and the legal profession. Until then, take care of yourselves and enjoy the holidays.

LARRY MCDUGAL

President, 2020-2021
State Bar of Texas