

# STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 15, 2009

**Professional Liability Insurance Disclosure** — This week, the State Bar Board of Directors began holding public hearings across the state on whether lawyers should be required to disclose to clients whether or not they have professional liability insurance. The Supreme Court of Texas has asked the State Bar to study the issue and make a formal recommendation to the Court by February 2010. The State Bar's officers and directors are listening to members' comments and concerns. The Board is working to ensure that all Texas lawyers are aware of the issue and that they have the opportunity to provide input. On a short timeframe, directors worked with staff to distribute letters to all of their constituents. Public hearings this week include San Antonio (Oct. 14), Harlingen (Oct. 15), and Houston (Oct. 16). Subsequent hearings will take place in El Paso, Dallas, Lubbock, and Austin. For a list of specific times and locations, as well as for background materials, visit [www.texasbar.com/plidisclosure](http://www.texasbar.com/plidisclosure). Lawyers and members of the public may post comments to Texas Bar Blog, email [statebarpresident@texasbar.com](mailto:statebarpresident@texasbar.com), or send written comments to State Bar of Texas, c/o Ray Cantu, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487. The Board of Directors will vote to make a recommendation to the Court during the Board's January 2010 meeting.

**Pro Bono Profiles Month** — The National Pro Bono Celebration will take place Oct. 25–31. Each weekday in October, the State Bar blog (<http://blog.texasbar.com>) is featuring a brief profile of a Texas lawyer who provides pro bono legal services in his or her community. Check out the home page each day and learn about exceptional Texas lawyers and the services they are providing to low-income Texans.

**Texas Legal Legends** — The first two installments in the Texas Legal Legends project are now available online. TexasBarCLE and State Bar Immediate Past President Harper Estes have teamed up to preserve and share the stories and perspectives of a series of legendary Texas lawyers. To stream interviews with James H. "Blackie" Holmes III or Sarah Weddington, go to [www.texasbar.com/legends](http://www.texasbar.com/legends).

**National Launch of TYLA Project** — Galveston lawyer **Kelly-Ann Clarke**, the current chair of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, will preside over a special screening of the Emmy Award-winning TYLA video *They Had a Dream Too: Young Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement* on Friday, Oct. 23, in Birmingham, Ala. Clarke, who was born in Jamaica, was integral to the creation of the half-hour video, which was designed to educate high school students about the civil rights struggles of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. The film, which will be distributed nationwide as this year's ABA-YLD public service project, will be screened at historic Kelly Ingram Park. For more information, visit [www.abanet.org/yld/thadt](http://www.abanet.org/yld/thadt).

**LRIS Debuts Online Referral Service** — The State Bar Lawyer Referral Information Service (LRIS) recently launched an online referral feature on the State Bar website. Consumers in non-metropolitan areas can go to [www.texasbar.com/lris](http://www.texasbar.com/lris), enter information about the type of lawyer they are looking for, and receive a referral to an attorney who is part of the referral service. The online service, which can be accessed 24 hours a day, is designed to better serve Texas citizens seeking legal assistance. The LRIS webpage also includes contact information for all of the certified lawyer referral services across the state.

**CAAP Celebrates 10 Years** — The State Bar Client-Attorney Assistance Program (CAAP) is celebrating its 10th anniversary. The program was launched on Sept. 27, 1999 as a pilot program and approved for statewide expansion in June 2000. CAAP's objective is to assist the public in resolving concerns, disputes, or misunderstandings with Texas lawyers. CAAP has assisted members of the public and lawyers in resolving minor problems affecting their relationships when the issues do not involve cognizable misconduct under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.

**TLAP Extends Judicial Outreach** — The Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program (TLAP) is helping the American Bar Association Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP) with judicial outreach. The Texas Judges' Hotline, (800) 219-6474, will now field calls from judges nationwide in an effort to provide confidential peer assistance for judges. Beginning this fall, TLAP staff members will work with the ABA CoLAP Judicial Outreach Initiative and its Peer-to-Peer Sub-Committee to help connect judges with a judge peer volunteer.

**CDC Annual Report Available** — The *2009–2010 Commission for Lawyer Discipline Annual Report* is available to view in PDF format at [www.texasbar.com/cdc](http://www.texasbar.com/cdc). The report includes highlights and initiatives from the past year, as well as an overview of the attorney grievance process.

**Guzman Apointed to Texas Supreme Court** — Gov. Rick Perry appointed **Eva M. Guzman** to the Supreme Court of Texas, making her the first Hispanic woman to serve on the Court. Guzman, who replaces Justice Scott Brister, who returned to private practice, has served on the 14th Court of Appeals in Houston since 2001. Prior to that, she served on the Harris County Family Court. A South Texas College of Law graduate, Guzman was recently named Latina Judge of the Year by the Hispanic National Bar Association.

**Volunteer and Staff Guide Available** — The State Bar of Texas *2009–10 Volunteer and Staff Guide* is now available. The guide contains contact information for State Bar and TYLA board members, section and committee leaders, staff, and other bar-related organizations. An online version is available at [www.texasbar.com](http://www.texasbar.com). To receive a hard copy, email [tbj@texasbar.com](mailto:tbj@texasbar.com).

**St. Mary's Receives ATJ Service Award** — St. Mary's University School of Law received the 2009 Law School Commitment to Service Award from the Texas Access to Justice Commission. The Commission recognized the law school's commitment to the provision of legal services to the poor as "truly exceptional." The faculty balances a rigorous teaching agenda while working with law student volunteers to service the needs of clients in three practice areas: civil, criminal, and immigration and human rights. The School of Law will accept the award at the New Lawyer Induction Ceremony in Austin on Nov. 16.

**In Memoriam** — The State Bar is mourning the loss of U.S. District Judge **Jerry Buchmeyer**, a revered jurist who for nearly 30 years compiled the humor column for the *Texas Bar Journal*. He was 76.

## 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.

