

# MEETING OF

In 1940, just over a year after Texas Gov. Wilbert Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel signed into law the State Bar Act that created a unified bar, members and the meeting has morphed into two energy-packed days of continuing legal education seminars, networking, award ceremonies, passing of the guard II, while others celebrated notable figures in our country’s history, such as Abraham Lincoln. This year’s Annual Meeting recognizes the 50th anniversary in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the State Bar—just a glance into the gathering’s rich history. Through it all, the message and

## 1940s and 1950s



Throughout WWII, Annual Convention attendance dropped and many lawyers showed up in uniform. Here, future State Bar President (1948-1949) R.G. Storey (left) stands with Q.C. Taylor at the 1942 convention.



Congressman Hatton Sumners’ speech on democracy and Americanism, given at the first State Bar convention in 1940, received a two-minute standing ovation.

**“This gathering is a great event. We begin something that is entirely new, which means we will have greater and better lawyers.”**

—Fort Worth City Attorney Rhinehart E. Rouer at the 1st Annual Convention in 1940



No matter the location, annual convention-goers always had a good time—which often included dining on barbecue—such as at the 1951 Dallas meeting’s “mammoth ranch party” with a rodeo.

More than 2,000 Texas lawyers and guests attended the first-ever convention of the State Bar of Texas, held in 1940 in Fort Worth over the Fourth of July weekend. It wasn’t long, however, before the excitement for a newly unified State Bar was replaced by concerns surrounding World War II. The third Annual Convention in San Antonio, held just seven months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, saw fewer attendees and a prevalence of uniforms. The following several conventions likewise welcomed a majority of “soldier-lawyers,” and discussions focused on wartime legal aid clinics and the Judge Advocate General department. In 1945, the State Bar canceled the Annual Convention due to the “war objectives of the nation” and concerns for being “seemly even in this serious war time.”

From post-war 1947 and through the 1950s, attendance picked up (so much so that many sessions were standing room only), and noted speakers ranged from the first Texan to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, Tom C. Clark, to the father of rocket science, Wernher von Braun. Conversations turned back to general topics, such as improving the public’s perception of the profession and the slowly increasing lawyer salary; important legal developments, such as the tidelands case and imminent domain; and practical topics on real-world skills training in law school and law practice management, including the use of new technology, such as the polygraph, electric typewriter, and calculator, which were seen as “modern business machines” that would “free the lawyer from much drudgery of mechanical tasks.”

# THE MINDS

leaders of the State Bar of Texas congregated in Fort Worth over the Fourth of July weekend for the bar's first convention. Since that initial assembly, presentations, inspiring keynote addresses, book signings, and more. Over the years, some conventions reflected current events, such as World War sary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After looking through many issues and pages of the *Texas Bar Journal*, we offer this retro-meaning remain the same: practice civility, honor the profession, and uphold the rule of law. **BY HANNAH KIDDOO AND LINDSAY STAFFORD MADER**

## 1960s and 1970s

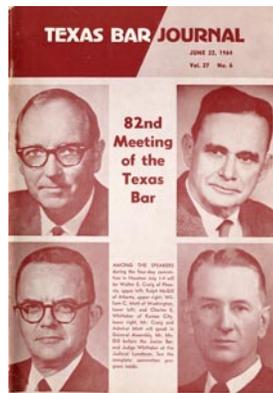
The '60s and '70s brought dramatic political and social changes, and those events heavily influenced the topics of discussion at the Annual Conventions. Everything from the Vietnam War, civil rights, and the moon landing to communist threats, Watergate, and environmental protection issues were addressed by prominent national speakers. During those 20 years, guests included U.S. senators and American Bar Association leaders, as well as vice presidents and state politicians. Influential attorneys such as Sarah Weddington, Jack Pope, and Richard "Racehorse" Haynes provided insightful presentations.

Innovation and creative thinking proved to be the norm. The 1962 convention took place in two locations, starting in San Antonio and ending in Mexico City, where Texas lawyers met with members of the Mexican Bar Association. In 1969, the convention reflected Texas law in a changing society, marked by conversation surrounding divorce, law enforcement, and protection of computer programs. The meeting in 1977 was the first time in many years that the gathering did not take place over the Fourth of July weekend, while the 1979 meeting ushered in discussions about a new State Bar Act, which added six public members to the board of directors after a sunset review.

While cases such as *Gideon v. Wainwright* and hearings on issues like legal advertising shook things up, many traditions continued, including the popular moot court competition and the changing of State Bar officers. Entertainment consisted of evenings of music, dancing, and food, while extra outings allowed for golf tournaments and sporting events, such as Texas Lawyers Night at a Houston Colt .45s baseball game in 1964.

**"I believe that there is no greater profession than the practice of law and that the best place in the whole world to practice law is Texas. I further believe that the State Bar of Texas is the best organization of its kind that has ever existed. Then you must know how extremely honored I am to assume the office of president."**

—Morris Harrell after being sworn into office in 1970



The June 1964 *Texas Bar Journal* cover.



Astronaut Michael Collins (left) addresses the assembly in 1968, sharing insight into NASA's Lunar Program: "Space is a different world now from that of the law, I guess. But I think the law will become a bigger part of it as we go down the line."



**"We live in a time of blanket condemnation ... we Americans also live in a time of freedom, prosperity, and social justice unparalleled in the history of man."**

—John Connally, addressing a crowd during the 1974 convention in San Antonio

Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William Ruckelshaus states in 1977 that U.S. businesses should be more receptive to the public's demand for cleaner air and water.



Members of Kappa Beta Pi enjoy a special breakfast during the 1970 gathering in San Antonio.

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# 1980s and 1990s

The conventions of the '80s and '90s focused on the evolution of the legal community. Discussions revolved around the increasing number of lawyers in Texas and how the State Bar could serve this growing population, as well as the importance of an effective grievance and disciplinary system to keep up with such expansion. Interestingly, the entertainment seemed to long for the old days, with rock bands often playing the hits of the '50s and '60s and an Elvis impersonator making appearances.

State Bar sections scheduled many speakers, such as political activist Ralph Nader, who talked about consumer protections at the 1981 Annual Convention's Consumer Law Section meeting. Other guests included President Ronald Reagan, who spoke in 1984 about his administration's push against crime, and former U.S. Solicitor General Ken Starr, who, in 1997, discussed the importance of juries. Other topics ranged from attorneys' fees and the election of judges to investing time and energy in becoming technologically competitive and pro bono services, which were gaining much attention throughout the '80s and '90s. During the last decade, the traditional convention format gave way to a meeting structure, with varied programming over a shorter period of time. Attendance increased, likely because of enhanced CLE and professional development seminars.

**"The rule of law is the single most important premise on which our national system is based."**

—William Sessions, director of the FBI, addresses the general assembly of the 1988 Annual Convention



Journalist Bob Woodward, a featured speaker at the 1980 Annual Convention, discussed the decision-making practices of the U.S. Supreme Court.



Local news media interview Harriet Miers, the first woman president of the State Bar, during the 1992 Annual Meeting in Corpus Christi.

**"Because we understand that the lack of respect of lawyers and the justice system does affect the rule of law, we must redouble our efforts to instill in the public an appreciation for the lawyer's role in what is the best justice system in the world."**

—Richard Pena, outgoing State Bar president, at the 1999 Annual Meeting

# 2000s and 2010s

**“The glass ceiling is not broken, but it is cracking. I am excited now. Being the third woman to be elected president of the State Bar is no longer news. People are focusing on the substance of what I am doing.”**

—State Bar President Lynne Liberato, after being sworn in during the 2000 meeting



Lisa Tatum is sworn into office by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson in 2013, making her the first African-American president of the State Bar of Texas.

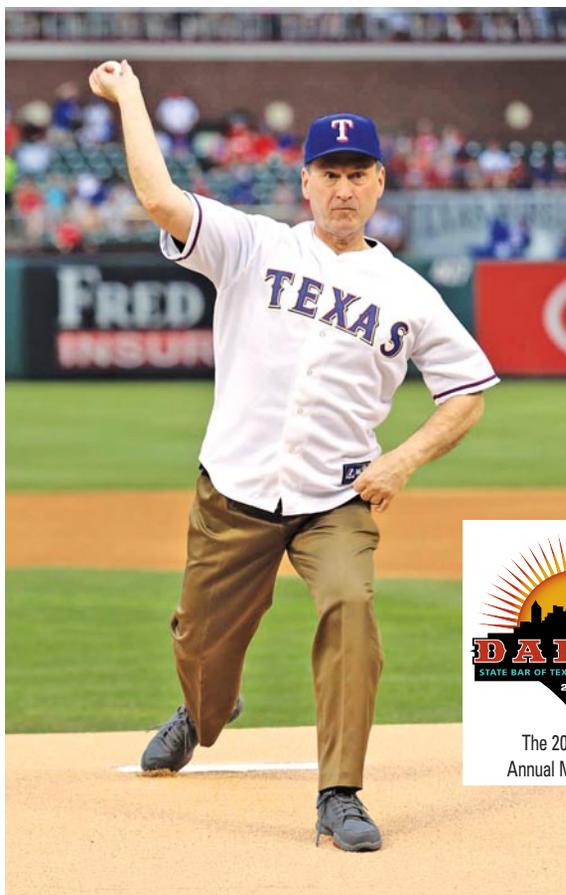
The new millennium brought a wave of technology advances that influenced the world—and certainly the State Bar of Texas. The 2001 Annual Meeting introduced attending lawyers to the newest hardware, software, and portable devices available to them and offered two days of workshops and a “High Tech Happy Hour with the Judges.”

In addition to topics such as effective communication and social media, conversations about current issues like tort reform, immigration, governmental ethics, diversity, and the future of law school took center stage. Prominent legal heads joined with Texas lawyers, including a 2001 appearance from David Boies and Irv Terrell, the attorneys who represented Al Gore and George W. Bush during the Florida election lawsuits. Author John Grisham spoke about his books and the Innocence Project at the 2007 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, while the 2008 meeting included a mayors’ panel with Houston’s Bill White, Dallas’s Tom Leppert, and San Antonio’s Phil Hardberger.

As much as the gatherings focused on timely events, many also offered the opportunity to reflect on the past. The 2005 Annual Meeting commemorated the 50th anniversary of the monumental case *Brown v. Board of Education*, with a talk led by former Dallas mayor Ron Kirk, who attended a segregated school. In 2009, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin discussed the ongoing relevance of Abraham Lincoln (and received a standing ovation). The 2014 meeting will remember the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with Lynda Bird Johnson Robb, daughter of former President Lyndon Johnson, and Mark Updegrove, director of the LBJ Presidential Library, discussing Johnson and the significance of the law. **TBJ**

**“I believe in the power of one lawyer to make a difference. If you could only imagine the power of 83,000 lawyers working together on something with a shared belief.”**

—State Bar President Harper Estes during his 2008 swearing-in presentation



While in town for the 2013 Annual Meeting, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito was invited to throw the ceremonial first pitch at a Texas Rangers’ game.



The 2009 logo for the Annual Meeting in Dallas.



John Grisham discusses his most recent book during the 2007 meeting.