

What Does Leadership Mean to You?

Leaders come from all walks of life. You can find them in the boardroom, on the soccer field, in the courthouse, or in the lecture hall. They work hard and accomplish goals—and they inspire others to dream big.

In 2008, the State Bar of Texas and the Texas Young Lawyers Association founded LeadershipSBOT, a yearlong training program for up-and-coming Texas lawyers. The academy has been a phenomenal success, with many graduates having gone on to become leaders in the bar, their firms, and their communities.

We asked the members of the 2017-2018 LeadershipSBOT class to tell us about leadership and what it means to them. Here are their responses.



REKHA AKELLA

Associate Attorney
Creel Law Group
Austin

Effective leadership means not only having the ability to take initiative and direct but—more importantly—having the ability to genuinely listen to others.



DESIREE M. BEDASA

Associate Attorney
Angela Faye Brown & Associates
Austin

Leadership is about understanding one's individual strengths and weaknesses and using that knowledge to help others achieve the impossible.



HERBERT SPENCER HILL

Associate Attorney
Curl Stahl Geis
San Antonio

Leadership is not reducible to a single definition, but at its core, leadership means subordinating one's self-interest to the interests of the group as a whole.



HALEIGH JONES

Associate
Gardere Wynne Sewell
Dallas

Leadership is the ability to be the first person to make the right decision, even when it's the hardest decision and takes you down the path of greatest resistance.



RACHEL E. KELLY

Senior Associate
FordHarrison
Dallas

Leadership means more than an individual simply possessing the requisite knowledge, skill, or the ability to rally people; it also means having the desire and capability to empower and encourage others to lead where they can—whether that be in their churches, at their schools, or in their communities.



CHRISTOPHER D. PINEDA

Assistant United States Attorney
U.S. Attorney's Office,
Southern District of Texas
(Brownsville Division)
Brownsville

Every leader has two crucial roles: first, to help the organization clearly identify what vision and goals will best serve the community it seeks to serve; and second, to help turn those goals and vision into a reality with focus, integrity, grit, and teamwork.



DAISY CHAPARRO

Personal Injury and Employment
Litigation Attorney
Flores Tawney & Acosta
El Paso

Leadership is having the courage to explore new horizons in hopes of effectuating positive change. We are all guaranteed to fail from time to time, but a true leader strives to inspire others to continue giving in spite of life's failures.



KAYLA LANDEROS

City Attorney
City of Temple
Temple

Leadership is not one ability or characteristic, it is many, and effective leadership is different in every situation. A good leader identifies those abilities and characteristics that will be effective in his or her situation and adapts to it. A successful leader will adapt to each situation with integrity, strength, and grace.



TENNESSEE W. WALKER

*Partner
Patterson Law Group
Fort Worth*

To me, leadership means inspiring positive change through service.



TERESA MESSER

*Principal Attorney
Law Office of Teresa Messer
Houston*

Leaders serve others and inspire others to serve.



CHRIS MEUSE

*Associate Attorney
KoonsFuller
Plano*

Leadership means setting a positive example through selfless service.



MATTHIAS KLEINSASSER

*Partner
Forshey Probstok
Dallas, Fort Worth*

Leadership is willingness to stand for what is just, even when that position is unpopular.



AUSTIN STEVENSON

*Assistant City Attorney
City of McAllen
McAllen*

Leadership means selflessly seeking to build genuine, empowering relationships to humbly and diligently serve the needs of one's community, organization, or profession.



JACQUELINE FRANKLIN

*Associate Attorney
Barker & Fancher
Corpus Christi*

Leadership is a practical skill that is very adaptable. It can take on many forms and present itself in different ways. Everyone's style of leadership is diverse, but all styles have a common theme: Inspiration. If you can inspire, you can lead.



DANIEL N. LOPEZ

*Felony Assistant District Attorney
Cameron County
District Attorney's Office
Brownsville*

Leadership is helping your team surpass its goals through effective communication, organization, attitude, and teamwork.



AZIZA ANN TRAVIS

*Staff Attorney—Housing,
Consumer and Public Benefits Unit
Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas
Fort Worth*

To me, leadership is the capacity to listen, learn, and inspire others while having the confidence in your own abilities.



OMAR ANTONIO SAENZ

*Associate
Colvin, Saenz, Rodriguez
& Kenamer
Brownsville*

A leader sees followers and leads; leadership is seeing better leaders and inspiring them to lead.



REGINALD WILSON

*Associate
Norton Rose Fulbright
Houston*

Leadership is the ability to adapt and put aside personal aspirations for the betterment of the team.



HERIBERTO R. MONTALVO

*Associate—Energy and
Natural Resources Litigation
Reed Smith
Houston*

Leadership is the ability to inspire others to better understand and accomplish a shared vision.



MICHAEL RAZEED

*Legal Counsel
Shell Oil Company
Houston*

Leadership means bringing out the best in others to achieve common goals.