



ABOVE: From left, Texas Access to Justice Foundation Executive Director Betty Balli Torres, Supreme Court of Texas Justice and TAJF liaison Brett Busby, and Texas Legal Services Center Executive Director Karen Miller help open one of the state's first virtual court kiosks. PHOTO COURTESY OF TEXAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION

Texas Legal Services Center Launches Statewide Virtual Court Kiosk Project

The Texas Legal Services Center, or TLSC, a nonprofit organization funded by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, launched on April 24 the Virtual Court Access Project, a statewide pilot project aiming to improve low-income Texans' ability to receive free legal services through deploying accessible, virtual court kiosks to communities. Supreme Court of Texas Justice Brett Busby, TLSC Executive Director Karen Miller, and Texas Access to Justice Foundation Executive Director Betty Balli Torres celebrated the launch of one of the state's first virtual court kiosks in Austin. The statewide project will deploy 25 virtual court kiosks to every region of Texas to be installed inside community centers, shelters, clinics, libraries, and other high-traffic locations. For more information about the virtual court kiosks or to access legal help with TLSC, go to tlsc.org/kiosks.

CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE GALA BENEFITING VETERANS RAISES \$485,000

The Texas Access to Justice Commission, along with its co-sponsor, the State Bar of Texas, raised \$485,000 to help provide civil legal services to low-income Texas veterans during the Champions of Justice Gala Benefiting Veterans on April 25 at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin. Proceeds from the gala will be distributed by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, or TAJF. Supreme Court of Texas Justice and TAJF liaison Brett Busby presented the 2023 James B. Sales Boots on the Ground Award to Victor L. Hunt, of Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, and Maureen O'Connell, of Disability Rights Texas; the 2023 Harry M. Reasoner Justice for All Award to Thomas S. Leatherbury, director of SMU Dedman School of Law's First Amendment Clinic; and the 2023 Emily C. Jones Lifetime Achievement Award to TAJF Executive Director Betty Balli Torres.

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN CIVIL MATTERS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES PRO BONO EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNERS

The State Bar of Texas Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee has announced its 2023 Pro Bono Excellence awards winners. Hillary Holmes, of Houston, received the Frank J. Scurlock Award; Monique Lopez-Hinkley, of Fort Worth, received the J. Chrys Dougherty Legal Services Award; Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program received the Pro Bono Award; Julie Stanger, of Houston, received the Pro Bono Coordinator Award; Courtney Smith, of Houston, received the Pro Bono Support Staff Award; and Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, of Houston, received the W. Frank Newton Award.

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN CRIMINAL MATTERS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES INDIGENT DEFENSE AWARDS

Paula Michelle Moore, of Burnet, was awarded the Warren Burnett Award, which recognizes extraordinary contributions to improving the quality of criminal legal representation to indigent Texans and honors either an individual or organization for their work in the courtroom, Legislature, or in the public sphere. Moore previously served as a public defender at the North Hill Country Public Defender's Office in Burnet County.

ABA COMMISSION ON HISPANIC LEGAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES HOSTS THIRD ANNUAL CINCO DE MÚSICA

On May 4, the American Bar Association Commission on Hispanic Legal Rights & Responsibilities hosted the third annual Cinco de Música, a nationwide celebration to raise awareness of and support for the ABA Hispanic Commission. Chaired by Texas Access to Justice Foundation Executive Director Betty Balli Torres, this event featured music and spoken word by several performers, including Emilio Estefan, 19-time Grammy Award winner; Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes; Judge Peter M. Reyes Jr., of the Minnesota Court of Appeals; and singer-songwriter Jordana Talsky. Laredo-based attorney Armando X. Lopez gave a spoken word performance, and Pricilla Mora Garcia, a law student at Texas Tech University School of Law, also performed.

HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION HONORS 2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Houston Bar Association, or HBA, announced the recipients of the Justice Eugene A. Cook Professionalism Award, the Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Award, and the HBA President's Award during the HBA's annual dinner on May 11 in Houston. Judge Lee H. Rosenthal, U.S. District Court judge for the Southern District of Texas, and Reagan W. Simpson, a partner in Yetter Coleman, received the Justice Eugene A. Cook Professionalism Award; Ann Ryan Robertson, a partner in Locke Lord, received the Justice Ruby Kless Sondock Award; and former Houston Volunteer Lawyers Executive Director Anne Chandler and HVL Chair David E. Harrell received the HBA President's Award. The HBA President's Award also recognized the six co-chairs of the HBA Law and the Media Committee: Dean Leonard M. Baynes, of the University of Houston Law Center; Michelle Morris, of South Texas College of Law Houston; Professor Elsa Ransom, of Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law; Professor John Greil, of the University of Texas School of Law; Daniella Landers, of Womble Bond Dickinson; and Christopher Tritico, of Tritico Rainey. **TBJ**