



I Wish I Knew **HOW TO QUIT YOU'**

FAREWELL. IT HAS TRULY BEEN AN HONOR TO SERVE AS YOUR TYLA PRESIDENT.

These columns have been one of the best parts of this experience. I've used this platform not only to pay homage to many of my favorite old-school movies, but also to raise awareness about attorney mental health, self-governance of the legal profession, the benefits of serving the bar and the public, professional development, mentor and sponsor appreciation, TYLA's free resources on these topics, and living life openly as an attorney from the LGBTQ+ community.

Two years ago, my campaign for TYLA president-elect focused on: (1) career and professional development, (2) mental health and diversity, and (3) educating the public on how Texas courts work. It was also a passion of mine to create and share TYLA resources on child and animal abuse. With the hard work of this year's TYLA Board of Directors and other volunteers, we delivered in these areas with, among other resources, our *Career Development Guide*; Attorney Marketing Video Series; Wellness Summit; *It Gets Better* video project for Texas lawyers; diversity pipeline initiatives; law student competitions; and *How Texas Courts Work*, a project supported by the Texas Bar Foundation. We also completed an animal abuse laws update and promoted our *Teach Safe. Be Safe. Learn Safe.* resource to tens of thousands of Texas teachers. To date, with all platforms and formats considered, we promoted and rolled out TYLA projects to tens of thousands of lawyers, law students, teachers, and other members of the public.

I've long feared how I'd feel at the end of this bar year. While not everyone gets the same experiences in our careers or in bar leadership, we all get an opportunity for our "something great." I have no doubts that my TYLA presidency has been, and will be, my "something great," at least for a large portion of my legal career. I wanted to leave it all on the field and be able to look back at a positive, productive year for myself and for TYLA. I'm so incredibly proud and honored to have accomplished this while working alongside TYLA's staff and amazing young lawyer volunteers. I couldn't have asked for a better year. I'm also grateful to you, the State Bar, and my firm, Schmoyer Reinhard, for supporting me through this process. It is with humility, gratitude, and all the good vibes, that I say goodbye, wrap up this adventure, and get ready for the next one.

Although I've feared ending this year thinking, "I wish I knew how to quit you," it turns out that, now, actually, I do. It's not simply by looking back and being powered by the past. It's also about being prepared for and looking forward to the future. And that future is so, so bright with an amazing bar leader, outstanding Lubbock attorney, and my good friend Laura Pratt as your next TYLA president. She's going to kill it, like 10 times better than me. Because, after all, "What, like it's hard?"

MICHAEL J. RITTER

2022-2023 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association