

David COURREGES

HOMETOWN: CHINA SPRING

POSITION: SENIOR CORPORATE COUNSEL TO AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE OF UNIVERSITY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION IN AUSTIN

BOARD MEMBER: DISTRICT 9, PLACE 2 SINCE 2022

INTERVIEW BY **WILL KORN**
PHOTO COURTESY OF **DAVID COURREGES**



HOW I BECAME A LAWYER IS STILL A MYSTERY TO ME. I still have nightmares about multiple choice exams. *Why* is less enigmatic: I wanted to help people. I learned over time that I felt substantial satisfaction when I was able to help others achieve their goals. It seemed logical: If I wanted to spend my life helping others solve their problems, I would be best equipped to do so as a lawyer.

I WENT TO LAW SCHOOL WITH THE INTENT TO ENTER A CAREER IN LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENT LAW. I chose St. Mary's for law school partially because of its three-year JD/MPA program. After graduation, I went back to the Legislature and eventually entered private practice with a focus on legislative affairs and administrative law, which meant I really never left the Capitol. After a decade in private practice, I was approached by University Federal Credit Union about the potential of being its first-ever corporate counsel. I can without any doubt say that being in-house counsel, much less in a financial institution, had never crossed my mind. However, UFCU had garnered a reputation of being a true community partner. After my first interview, it became obvious that it was time for a change. Today I spend my time providing many of the same services that I did in private practice. There are no two days that are the same. I do not regret my decision.

MY BIGGEST PIECE OF ADVICE FOR YOUNG LAWYERS? The need for work/life balance is real—pay attention. It wasn't until my daughter was two before I realized I was missing many of the “firsts” and “onlys”—the memories and milestones that matter. I was working 90-hour weeks and wasn't building a relationship with my daughter. The realization changed my life and (hopefully for the better) that of my kid as well. I simply carved time out of my calendar every Wednesday to buy her a doughnut at Shipley's. It was me and her. We told jokes and stories, played games, and sometimes did nothing. We carried on the tradition rain or shine for nearly four years until she started elementary school. I will never regret saying yes to my daughter. *Make time for your family.*

THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH INVOLVEMENT IN THE BAR ARE EXPONENTIAL. My involvement has provided me with more opportunities than I could have imagined. I've cultivated lifelong friendships; have been mentored by some of the finest teachers, leaders, and role models in our profession; worked on projects that have positively affected generations; and have met people that we already read about in history books. I feel that it is my duty to give back to the profession that has given me so much.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS IN THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS AND OUR PROFESSION CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. While the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors represents all attorneys in the state, the prevailing issues facing the attorneys of Bailey and Bosque counties are not necessarily the same as those in Harris County. It is next to impossible to provide one-size-fits-all resources in a state as geographically diverse as Texas. We need our local bars to thrive to ensure the provision of localized and specialized resources and services for our members.

ONE OF MY MOST MEMORABLE BAR PROJECTS WAS LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 5, 2011, when former Texas Young Lawyers Association President and now Judge Karin Crump, then Austin Young Lawyers Association President Amy Welborn, then Austin Bar Association President David Chamberlain (all now former State Bar directors), and I launched the Bastrop Wildfire Response Team, which worked directly with the State Bar, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, United Ways of Texas, and members of state government, including former TYLA President Kirk Watson, to bring legal resources directly to the people who were displaced by the Bastrop County Complex fire in real time. We were able to muster hundreds of volunteers from across the state who were able to help with basic legal services, such as utility disconnections and pet reunification, and some complex issues, such as insurance fraud.

THE STATE BAR BOARD CONTINUES TO IMPROVE THE LEGAL PROFESSION BY ITS NATURE OF BEING AN ELECTED BODY OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS THAT REGULATES THE LEGAL PROFESSION. This is an increasingly unique proposition, which helps place Texas among the finest legal systems in our country. Through self-regulation, we can quickly address the unique needs of our profession, support an efficient judicial system, and eliminate barriers that stand in the way of innovation and access to justice for all Texans. **TBJ**