



ABOVE FROM LEFT: Former Judge L. Clifford Davis with State Bar of Texas Immediate Past President Cindy Tisdale in Fort Worth. PHOTO COURTESY OF CINDY TISDALE

L. Clifford Davis Receives Presidential Commendation

Former Judge L. Clifford Davis, the oldest living African American attorney in Texas, received a Presidential Commendation from the State Bar of Texas on October 12, in celebration of his lifelong dedication to public service and integrity in the law. Davis celebrated his 100th birthday on the same day he received the commendation at a ceremony in Fort Worth. State Bar of

Texas Immediate Past President Cindy Tisdale presented him with the honor. In 1983, Davis was appointed district judge of Tarrant County District Criminal Court No. 2 by former Texas Gov. Mark White and served in that capacity until 1988. He then served as a visiting district judge and senior district judge until 2004. Prior to taking the bench, Davis assisted attorney Thurgood Marshall of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on the 1954 case that became *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that ruled that state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools are unconstitutional. In 1955, following the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Davis helped lead the legal initiative to desegregate Texas schools by filing a pair of federal lawsuits that led to the integration of public schools in Mansfield and Fort Worth. Davis, a native of Wilton, Arkansas, is in his 75th year as a licensed attorney in Arkansas and has been a licensed attorney in Texas for over 70 years. He is the recipient of numerous honors and recognitions throughout his career. Most recently, on April 8, 2024, he was named a Texas Legal Legend by the State Bar of Texas Litigation Section during a ceremony at Texas A&M School of Law.

STATE BAR OF TEXAS WINS NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

The State Bar of Texas took home two awards at the 2024 Communications Section Workshop of NABE: The Association for Bar Professionals. *Texas Bar Journal* Managing Editor Patricia McConnico received the 2024 Anne Charles Award for Distinguished Service, one of the section's top honors. The award is presented to a section member who has made a significant contribution to advancing the goals of the section through committee service or other section volunteer efforts. McConnico has been a regular volunteer for NABE and its communications section since joining the State Bar of Texas staff and becoming a NABE member in 2013. She has served on a number of committees, spoken at multiple section workshops,

and frequently shares her expertise with other members. Also, *Texas Bar Journal* Associate Editor Eric Quitugua and State Bar of Texas Digital Content Specialist Geoffrey Hinkson won a Luminary Award in the "Excellence in Special Projects" category for large bars for "Chris Spendlove's Rookie Year." The multimedia project followed Chris Spendlove, a McLennan County assistant district attorney and Baylor Law School graduate, as he navigated his first year as an attorney. NABE is a membership organization dedicated to enhancing the skills and enriching the careers of bar association professionals.

STATUE OF CHARLYE O. FARRIS UNVEILED IN WICHITA FALLS

The Wichita Falls Alliance for Arts and Culture unveiled a bronze statue of the late Charlye O. Farris, Texas' first licensed African American female attorney, on October 26 on the lawn of the Wichita County Courthouse, according to a press release. The alliance commissioned Farris' statue as part of its "Legends Project," an effort to honor North Texas legal legends and trailblazers. The statue was sculpted by Lubbock-based artist Eddie Dixon, according to a press release. Farris (1929-2010) was a Wichita Falls native. On November 12, 1953, she became Texas' first licensed



ABOVE: The bronze statue of Charlye O. Farris erected on the grounds of the Wichita County Courthouse in Wichita Falls. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANN ARNOLD-OGDEN, WICHITA FALLS ALLIANCE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

African American female attorney. On July 7, 1954, members of the Wichita County Bar Association unanimously elected Farris to serve as county judge pro tem. At the time of her election, she was believed to be the first African American judge in the South since Reconstruction. Farris passed away at the age of 80 following a legal career that spanned more than 50 years. The Texas Bar Foundation recognized her as an Outstanding 50 Year Lawyer in 2004. In 2011, the Texas Historical Commission honored her with an historical marker in front of the Wichita Falls County Courthouse. For more information about the Wichita Falls Alliance for Arts and Culture's "Legends Project" and Farris, go to wichitafallsarts.org/projects/the-legends-project-charley-o-farris.

TEXAS BAR FOUNDATION AWARDS \$871,270 IN GRANTS

The Texas Bar Foundation (TBF) announced it has awarded \$871,270 in grants to 70 nonprofit organizations during the fall 2024 grant cycle, according to a press release. "The Texas Bar Foundation continues to be one of the most impactful bar foundations in the country when it comes to enabling access to justice for all and enhancing the rule of law. Last week the Foundation awarded \$871,270 in grants, toward a record award this bar year of \$1.6 million," TBF Board of Trustees Chair Carlos Eduardo Cárdenas said in a press release. The next grant deadline is at 5 p.m. CST on January 15, 2025. For more information and to access the online application and qualifications, go to txbf.org or email Grants Manager Amy Weir at aweir@txbf.org. **TBJ**