



Former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht (center) received a standing ovation from the court's justices and attendees following his final oral arguments on December 5 in the Supreme Court of Texas courtroom. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

Nathan L. Hecht hears final oral arguments, ends 36-year tenure on Supreme Court of Texas

Former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht heard the final three oral arguments of his 36-year tenure on the state's highest bench on December 5 in the Supreme Court of Texas courtroom. Hecht, who retired at the end of December, and the court heard the cases *Leibman v. Waldroup*, *Kensington Title-Nev., LLC v. Texas Department of State Health Services*, and *Seward v. Santander*. Former Supreme Court of Texas justices and chief justices were invited to attend the *Seward v. Santander* argument, as well as a surprise celebratory luncheon following adjournment. As Hecht was attempting to adjourn the court for the last time, Senior Justice Debra Lehrmann stopped him to offer a special tribute to his tenure that brought a resounding ovation in the courtroom. "We did some calculations, and this was the 2,779th argument that Justice Hecht has heard during his tenure on this court. Unfortunately for the state of Texas, it is the last," said Lehrmann, who referred to Hecht's tenure as "an end of an era." "We appreciate you being here to commemorate this great man who has done so many great things for so many people for so long. Thank you, Chief Justice Hecht." Hecht, a 1974 graduate of Southern Methodist University School of Law, is the longest serving member in the history of the Supreme Court of Texas. He began his judicial career with an appointment to the district court in 1981 and then to the court of appeals in 1986. In 1988, Hecht was first elected to the Supreme Court of Texas and was reelected six times in total. He became the court's chief justice in 2014 and was reelected to the position in 2020.

TEXAS MUNICIPAL COURTS EDUCATION CENTER CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Last fall, the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC) celebrated 40 years of providing judicial education to municipal judges and court personnel throughout Texas, according to a press release. In 1984, the Texas Municipal Courts Association created TMCEC to provide continuing education to municipal judges as well as specialized training for municipal court staff, including court clerks and prosecutors. Now one of the largest organizations of its kind in the U.S., TMCEC delivers municipal court-specific instruction to more than 5,000 people annually, according to a press release. TMCEC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is primarily funded by a grant from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. The center helps municipal courts maintain professional competence through direct technical and legal-related assistance, publications, legislative updates, and multi-day seminars. For more information about TMCEC, go to tmcec.com.

TEXAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION HONORS FORMER SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS CHIEF JUSTICE NATHAN L. HECHT

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) celebrated 40 years of access to justice for low-income Texans at a luncheon on December 2 with the Supreme Court of Texas. TAJF also honored former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht, who retired at the end of December, for his years of leadership and contributions to access to justice with the Kleinman Award, its highest honor. The Kleinman Award, established by the TAJF in 1995 and named after TAJF's first chairman, Harold F. Kleinman, is awarded to those whose commitment to public service and outstanding character make them true leaders in access to civil justice, according to a press release. The award is not given annually. Sen. Judith Zaffirini presented a resolution on behalf of the Texas Senate honoring Hecht. For more information about TAJF, go to teajf.org.

BAYLOR LAW'S CHRIS JAEGER NAMED CO-WINNER OF AALS SCHOLARLY PAPER COMPETITION

Baylor Law School Professor Chris Jaeger has been named a co-winner of the American Association of Law Schools (AALS) Scholarly Papers Competition for his research paper titled *The Hand Formula's Unequal Inputs*, according to a press release. This honor is awarded annually to junior faculty members at AALS member schools who have demonstrated remarkable scholarship, with selections made anonymously by a committee of established scholars. This award also highlights the role of research at Baylor Law School, where faculty scholarship bridges theory and practice. Jaeger's research addresses a core issue in tort law: How lay jurors interpret the idea of "reasonableness." "As a junior scholar, this recognition is both humbling and motivating," Jaeger said in a press release. "It's encouraging to know that my research contributes to broader conversations about tort law and the practical application of legal theory."

TEXAS ADVOCACY PROJECT RECEIVES \$25,000 GRANT FROM TEXAS BAR FOUNDATION TO EMPOWER ABUSE VICTIMS

The Texas Advocacy Project (TAP) will use a \$25,000 Texas Bar Foundation grant to create a series of short-form legal education videos designed to help survivors of power-based abuse navigate the Texas legal system. The videos will show victims their legal rights and responsibilities. The project, accessible through TAP's online platform over the next 12 months, is "expected to make a significant impact on accessibility to legal resources for underserved populations," according to a press release. The video series will also provide a valuable tool for TAP attorneys and staff. For more information, go to texasadvocacyproject.org.

DALLAS BAR ASSOCIATION ELECTS 2025 OFFICERS

The Dallas Bar Association elected its slate of 2025 officers during its Annual Meeting on November 7 at the Arts District Mansion in Dallas, according to the December 2024 issue of DBA's *Headnotes*. Jonathan Childers, of Lynn Pinker Hurst & Schwegmann, was elected president-elect and will serve as the DBA's 117th president in 2026; Sarah Rogers, of Thompson, Coe, Cousins & Irons, was elected first vice president; Stephanie Culpepper, of Lument, was elected second vice president; Javier Perez, of Crain Brogdon, was elected secretary/treasurer; and current President Bill Mateja, of Sheppard Mullin Richter, will assume the position of immediate past president. Vicki Blanton, of AT&T, will serve as DBA president in 2025. **TBJ**