



## MY OPINION

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### All this Darkness Past

*Everybody's got a secret, Sonny,  
Something that they just can't face,  
Some folks spend their whole lives trying  
to keep it,  
They carry it with them every step that  
they take.  
Till some day they just cut it loose,  
Cut it loose or let it drag 'em down,  
Where no one asks any questions,  
Or looks too long in your face,  
In the darkness on the edge of town.*

— Bruce Springsteen  
“Darkness on the Edge of Town”

Besides being an outstanding musician and showman, Bruce Springsteen is truly a sage. The Boss' lyrics cast light on many different subjects, but they seem illuminating especially on the topics of hardship and redemption.

This year, we are focusing on three initiatives to help Texas lawyers and the clients they serve work through the hardships they face. We are setting up pro bono legal clinics around the state to assist our nation's veterans with the basic legal services they need when they return from war. We are creating a series of webcasts targeted toward our state's unemployed and underemployed lawyers. Finally, we are pursuing a major wellness initiative to ensure that Texas lawyers, judges, and law students know about the resources available to help them with dependency and mental health issues.

Each of us needs a little help from time to time. Some of us need help all of the time. With the wellness initiative, we are focusing on practical solutions so that

each of us can help reduce the stress and anxiety that seem to be part and parcel of the profession we've chosen. With simple enhancements to our daily routines, we can make sure that we are at our best so that we can best provide for our clients, colleagues, families, and friends.

The wellness initiative, which is chaired by Berry Crowley of Austin, has three major components. First, we are creating a video to increase awareness about the strategies available for dealing with anxiety, addiction, and depression. We are working with Ann Foster, director of the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program (TLAP), and Paul Burks, director of video production for TexasBarCLE, on a DVD, *Practicing Law and Wellness: Modern Strategies for the Lawyer Dealing with Anxiety, Addiction, and Depression*. The video was conceived as a companion to the powerful video my friend Martha Dickie produced during her term as State Bar president, *Practicing from the Shadows: Depression and the Legal Profession*. For more information about both videos, visit [www.texasbar.com/tlap](http://www.texasbar.com/tlap).

Second, we have arranged with TexasBarCLE to have a live speaker to discuss lawyer assistance issues during every advanced CLE course this year. I am grateful to Pat Nester and the TexasBarCLE staff for the opportunity to share messages of assistance and hope with the thousands of Texas lawyers who will attend advanced courses this year.

Finally, we are shoring up and raising additional funds for the Pat Sheeran and Michael J. Crowley Memorial Trust. The Trust provides much-needed financial

assistance for colleagues who have hit rock bottom but are committed to undergoing the necessary treatment to once again become productive members of our communities and of our profession. The State Bar has contributed \$250,000 toward the Trust this year. I hope you will follow the Bar's example by donating to this worthy cause. (You can find more information about the Trust on p. 669.)

This issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* features a series of articles about TLAP and wellness issues. Particularly moving are the “Personal Trials” contributed by anonymous lawyers, law students, and judges about their travails and paths to recovery. Please take time to read these poignant accounts. You will notice that several of the authors mention Texas Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers, groups of dedicated lawyers around the state who have struggled in the past but have committed their lives to helping those who are struggling. ✪

*I will provide for you,  
And I'll stand by your side;  
You'll need a good companion for  
This part of the ride.  
Leave behind your sorrows,  
Let this day be the last;  
Tomorrow there'll be sunshine  
And all this darkness past.*

— Bruce Springsteen  
“Land of Hopes and Dreams”