



MY OPINION

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PRESIDENT, TEXAS YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Giving Thanks and Praise

It's a shame that we compartmentalize our lives the way we do. Why should we wait until November to take stock of the things for which we are thankful? Why not sing the praises of those whose work we value all year long?

Having a time set aside for such reflection forces us to actually think about our lives and the people who are important to us. And so, with November upon us, I sit down and consider those things for which I am thankful and praise the people who made them possible.

I am thankful to be president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. This is shaping up to be one of the most rewarding years of my practice — both personally and professionally — and I have all the young lawyers of Texas to thank for that. Texas young lawyers are a generous and energetic group, and I am thankful to have the privilege of representing them this year. Even in a difficult year, our sense of community and responsibility remains strong, and I am thankful for that.

I am thankful for the warm welcome that I have received from our local affiliates. I appreciate **Priscilla Camacho** and the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association for reaching out to the TYLA board: Together, we will walk 20 miles on Nov. 6 for the Walk to Action in San Antonio to help prevent child abuse. I am thankful to the Houston Bar Association for mobilizing a committee specifically for our cyber crimes project, *R U Safe?*. Thanks to the HBA, every school in the Harris County School District will have a copy. And, of course, I am thankful for my friends at the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers for their support and encouragement this year.

I am thankful for my secretary, Donna

Savage, who does a tremendous job keeping me organized on the road and at the office. TYLA Director Tracy Brown is a cross between my own personal motivational speaker, counselor, and CFO. TYLA wouldn't run the way it does without her. Bree Trevino, TYLA's project coordinator, keeps track of the numerous TYLA projects going on at any given time and ensures that you receive TYLA's *eNews* and safeguards our law students. TYLA Office Manager Michelle Palacios not only takes all public calls at the TYLA office, but is also its creative influence. These dependable women always have a great attitude, never say no, and help make all of TYLA's projects and ideas come to fruition.

I am thankful for the opportunities that TYLA provides to all young attorneys. Some of the people who are making this happen this year are **Geoff Gannaway** and **Ken Riney**, who, along with our Community Education Committee, created lawyer and veterans pamphlets (*Resources for Lawyers Assisting Veterans*, see p. 848, and *Resources for Veterans Seeking Help*, see p. 868) to support the State Bar's *Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans* initiative. And, what better month than November (Veterans Day is Nov. 11) to thank **Terry Tottenham** for allowing TYLA to be a part of his fantastic tribute to our veterans for all that they do.

I am thankful for the impact TYLA's upcoming project, *The Little Voice*, will have on abused and neglected children. Thanks to TYLA's tireless Family Law Committee, led by **Natasha Brooks**, Texas children will be safer. A very special and heartfelt thank you to actor and advocate Victor Rivers for sharing his story and his time on this important project aimed

at educating us all about how to recognize child abuse and our obligation to report it.

Chris Rogers and **Sarah Rogers** and TYLA's Member Services Committee made *Office in a Flash* possible this year. I know many young lawyers opening up their own firms this year are thankful for the countless hours that went into this flashdrive that provides everything a lawyer needs to know about opening up his or her own practice.

Partnering for Pro Bono has made it possible for young lawyers to partner with in-house counsel so that we can all help increase legal aid services. I am thankful for the collaboration of TYLA's Low-Income Texans Outreach Committee, the Access to Justice Commission, Texas Lawyers Care, Legal Services Corporation, the State Bar Corporate Counsel Section, legal aid lawyers across the state, and in-house and law firm pro bono coordinators. Colton Lawrence, **Giugi Carminati**, and **Clint Harbour** deserve some special recognition as well.

I give thanks and praise to the TYLA officers this year — Chair **David Anderson**, Vice President **David Courreges**, Treasurer **Alyssa Long**, Secretary **Kristy Piazza**, Immediate Past President **Cori Harbour**, President-elect **Natalie Cobb Koehler**, and Chair-elect **Alfonso Cabañas**. On a personal note, I am thankful for my firm. The support I receive from Carrington Coleman gives me the freedom of time this year.

Finally, thank you to my family, who never complain about long hours and travel. And special thanks to the one without whom I could not have done this: my husband, Thomas. He has brought me joy every day for 17 years.

Although TYLA as a group has made many wonderful contributions this year, there are more great things to come — and for those, I am most grateful. ★