



Facebook 101

One of the questions on Dallas attorney **John Browning's** mind is: "Do we have a duty to tweet?"

At a recent appearance by teen pop star Justin Bieber, a crowd of nearly 3,000 fans became unruly and aggressive, prompting officials to ask an employee of Bieber's record label to send a message over popular social media site Twitter saying the event had been canceled. When the employee refused to tweet, police arrested him.

"Social media is affecting our traditional notions like 'duty,'" Browning says. "Can someone be criminally prosecuted because of a crowd control duty to tweet?"

According to Browning, these are the kinds of questions the spread of social networking is raising "That the law does not keep pace with technology is a truism," Browning says, before adding dryly, "I don't have the Bieber Fever. I have to make that clear."

Browning, a partner in Thompson, Coe, Cousins & Irons, L.L.P. and author of the syndicated weekly column, *Legally Speaking*, has written a new book, *The Lawyer's Guide to Social Networking: Understanding Social Media's Impact on the Law*. The book is a crash course for attorneys on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

"Social media has become a cultural tsunami," Browning says. "All areas of law have been affected."

From people being served via Facebook to law schools looking at the online profiles of potential students to attorneys Googling jury candidates during voir dire, social networking is changing the landscape of law. "The book covers

a number of different categories. It has chapters for judges, attorneys, and paralegals. I wanted it to be something that had mass appeal — something that was written in an accessible manner and not in legalese," Browning says. "I want to walk the reader through the world of social media."



U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia (left), Dallas lawyer and lexicographer Bryan Garner (right), and John Browning (center) after the three won Burton Awards for Distinguished Achievement in Legal Writing in 2009.

Browning, no stranger to writing, has received several national awards for his work, including the Dallas Bar Association's Philbin Award for Excellence in Legal Reporting and the Burton Award for Distinguished Achievement in Legal Writing. This spring, he will teach a class on social media and the law at Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law.

Browning says his expertise in social media comes from his experience in the courtroom.

"I do not come from a computer or tech back-

ground — I took 'Physics for Poets' in college — but social media is an outgrowth of what I do as a trial lawyer: dig up information for a case. People share so many details of their lives on websites. I'm astonished by how much is out there."

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There are a few caveats to consider when using social media, Browning cautions. Attorneys are subject to the same ethical rules on Facebook, Twitter, and other websites as they are in real life. And, of course, users should not forget the golden rule of social media: "Do not post anything on Facebook that you wouldn't want your grandmother to see."

The Lawyer's Guide to Social Networking, published by Thomson Reuters West and featuring a foreword by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson, is available at www.amazon.com. ☆



HELPING HAITI

One year after Haiti's devastating earthquake, the Caribbean country remains in recovery. But there are increasing glimmers of hope. Take the Good Shepherd orphanage in Port-au-Prince, where Texas attorneys **Jeff Badders** and **Paul Robbins** are working to secure a safe and permanent home for the orphanage's children.

Badders, who offices in Nacogdoches, and Robbins, who offices in Lufkin, were hunting in Oklahoma when they heard the news about the earthquake. They were immediately compelled to help.

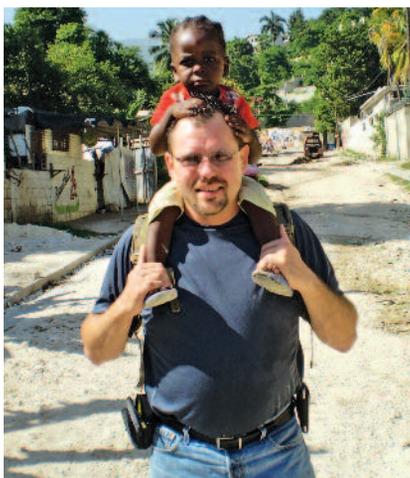
"There we were — hunting and eating well — and we saw about 150 orphans on the news who were huddled together under a tree with no tarp. These orphans didn't have anybody to help them or speak for them."

Badders and Robbins embarked on a mission to do what they could to assist in Haiti. Having helped build churches in Mexico, Robbins contacted missionaries to find an orphanage. Badders and Robbins learned about the Good Shepherd orphanage and went to work.

The two received a cold shoulder when they first approached directors at the orphanage. Having previously been contacted by several organizations promising aid that never came, the orphanage's leaders were skeptical. In fact, the orphanage was down to its last bag of beans and last two bags of rice when Badders and Robbins arrived in June.

"They didn't want more broken promises," Robbins says. "We came back the next day and they took us seriously once we started pulling money out of our shoes."

Bringing large amounts of supplies to the orphanage is not easy because of high customs taxes, so Badders and Robbins take items such as bandages, Tylenol, and thermometers in small quantities. All money donated to the pair is used 100 percent for the orphan-



Texas attorneys **Paul Robbins**, above, and **Jeff Badders** are helping orphans of the Good Shepherd orphanage in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

age — Badders and Robbins pay out of pocket for plane tickets, meals, and lodging.

With Badders and Robbins' help, the orphanage is completing construction of a girls' dormitory. Soon, the orphanage will have a security wall to prevent break-ins, as well as a boys' dorm. Badders emphasized that the children have played a vital role in helping to rebuild the orphanage, learning masonry skills they can use in the future. Badders and Robbins plan to continue visiting Haiti until the orphanage and its network of three other orphanages and four schools are reconstructed and the children have a safe place to live and learn.

Badders and Robbins' mission has not come without difficulties — Robbins has suffered from malaria and diphtheria — but the pair says the effort is worth it to help those in need. And, they say, helping doesn't have to come in the form of large monetary donations or extensive amounts of time.

"You don't have to be part of some big organization. We're just two guys who are bold and silly enough to try to make a difference," Badders says. "If everybody does a little bit, then nobody has to do a lot." ✪

TEXAS PEOPLE

Frank L. Branson, founder of the Law Offices of Frank L. Branson in Dallas, was selected by the American Bar Association's Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section as a recipient of the "Pursuit of Justice" award, which honors lawyers and judges who have demonstrated outstanding merit and a commitment to providing access to justice for all.



Patricia D. Chamblin, a shareholder in Mehaffy-Weber, P.C. in Beaumont, received the John Hannah, Jr. Award for Public Service and Service to the Legal Profession at the Eastern District of Texas Bench Bar Conference in Plano. The only award presented by the Bar Association of the Eastern District of Texas, it recognizes an attorney admitted to practice before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas who has demonstrated a superior commitment to public service.



Prof. **Gerald Reamey**, co-director of International Legal Programs at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, was awarded the Culture Medal of Honor by the City of Innsbruck, Austria, in recognition of his role in founding and directing the Institute on World Legal Problems, a summer study program operated by St. Mary's in Innsbruck. The program celebrated its 25th year of operation in 2010.



Judge **Craig Smith**, judge of the 192nd District Court in Dallas, was elected president of the Texas Association of District Judges (TADJ), a statewide organization charged with protecting the legislative interests of the 441 Texas district courts. Smith will fill one year of the unexpired term of 331st Criminal District Court Judge Bob Perkins, who is retiring from office and stepping down from his TADJ post.

