



MY OPINION

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Texas Bar Journal Overview

A year ago, in search of adventure, I purchased a former shoe store in downtown Marshall to renovate. The store, which had been in the Kariel family for three generations and more than 100 years, consisted of two historic storefronts. I set out to rehabilitate one side as my office (the Marshall outpost of Siebman, Burg, Phillips & Smith). In the other half, I wanted to create a space where visiting lawyers could prepare for trial.

Marshall, of course, is home to the Marshall Division of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, which is one of the nation's busiest patent dockets. I knew visiting lawyers would need the infrastructure to support the latest technology. I also knew they would enjoy working in a space that reflected the history and traditions of the region they would temporarily call home.

Renovating the two buildings has been a remarkable experience. Like practicing law, each day has brought welcome developments and unanticipated challenges. When we removed the aluminum facades that were put up in the 1960s, we uncovered architectural details the grainy photographs had obscured. When we took out the dropped ceilings, we discovered not only the original metal ceiling, but also an enormous skylight that has become a focal point of the restored buildings, and

hangs above my desk as I work.

Each stage of the renovation, from demolition to reconstruction, has solved mysteries and revealed the genius and resourcefulness of our forebears. We found an old sign for the shoe store in an odd place: built into the shelves upstairs. Clearly the previous owners knew a good piece of lumber when they saw it and repurposed it to suit the need at hand.

To the bemusement of friends and family, I am simultaneously an early adopter of new technology and a nostalgic collector of all things past. It is no wonder I enjoy the *Texas Bar Journal*. In continuous publication since 1938, the magazine has evolved to meet the changing needs of the profession while maintaining the sense of community that binds us together as lawyers.

I especially enjoy those moments in life when my penchant for innovation and my reverence for tradition cross paths. For the past year, I have been chronicling the restoration of the Hub Building through a blog. In the same vein, the *Texas Bar Journal* has created an online archive of all of its content since 1938. There is no better record of the legal profession in Texas. Flipping through back issues, you realize that some issues are recurring, while others could not have been anticipated even a

few years before. (I doubt my predecessors foresaw the magazine sponsoring a Twitter novel contest.)

I am fortunate to serve on the Board of Editors with an outstanding group of lawyers. They represent diverse areas of the state and reflect diverse practices and life experiences. The Board is committed to preserving the best parts of the magazine's heritage while looking for ways to improve it. In the past year, we have run special issues on topics ranging from agricultural law to social media. In coming months, you will find contributors' takes on the effects of the economic downturn on the legal profession and an exploration of property in the 21st Century. The Texas Legislature convenes in Austin this month, which means you can look forward to another Legislative Update chronicling what happened at the Capitol and what it means for the rest of us and the clients we serve.

Restoring a building can be exasperating. When we tried to put the metal ceiling back together, we quickly realized it looked terrible and that we needed to start again. On most days, however, renovating a building, like assembling a magazine, is exhilarating. You take the best of the past — craft, skill, personality, and tradition — and adapt it to the needs of the ever-dynamic present. ✪



The Hub Shoe Store shortly after it opened in 1897; in 2009, before renovations began; and in 2010, starting its new life as the home for a law firm.