



BY BUCK FILES

PRESIDENT, STATE BAR OF TEXAS

## It Takes Us All

I remember it well. It was in about 1990 and in Tyler, Texas. A lawyer — who was in good health and had an active practice — was going to retire at age 65. I was aghast. When I had come to Tyler in 1967, I had been told by an older lawyer that I would never have to be concerned about a retirement account or a savings account. “After all,” he said, “you’ll probably practice until about three months before you die and you’ll have enough money in your checking account to cover your expenses.”

We began 2013 with 5,555 lawyers who are 70 years of age or older. During this year, some are going to make the decision to continue practicing as they are now; some will cut back on their practice; and, others will retire. Hopefully this edition of the *Texas Bar Journal* will help our gray-ing lawyers with what they need to consider in making such decisions.

When I was making my appointments of the standing committees of the State Bar, I did not exclude older lawyers but appointed some who were well into their 70's. Each of these appointees brought with him or her years of wisdom and a track record as a leader and problem solver. Some of these had less experience with the State Bar than they had with the specialty bars e.g., Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Texas District and County Attorneys Association, Texas Trial Lawyers Association, or Texas Association of Defense Counsel. Not only are they enjoying their service, each is making a meaningful

contribution to the Bar.

Our newest members of the Bar — our TYLA lawyers — are so much fun to watch. Their enthusiasm is contagious. Under the wonderful leadership of President C.E. Rhodes and their board of directors, our young lawyers continue to show a strong commitment to both the lawyers of Texas and the people of Texas. Their latest project is entitled, *What Do Lawyers Do?* is designed to educate students about joining the legal profession. I look forward to the May issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* for an in-depth report on this program.

The group that presents me with the biggest challenge is composed of our middle age lawyers. While some are gloriously active, others believe that the time constraints imposed upon them by their law practice, families, and community activities preclude their participation in State Bar activities. For years, I was a member of that group and did not even consider running for the State Bar Board of Directors until I had begun to draw my social security benefits.

What I should do for them is to hand out some of those small discs of wood that were so popular twenty or so years ago. They were about the size of a nickel and on each side of the discs were the letters *T.U.I.T.* These seemed to be especially popular with ministers. If one of them asked you to do something and you had an excuse for not being able to do that task immediately, the minister would pull out one of these discs and say, “Let me give you one of these in order that you will

remember to do the job when you get 'round to- it.”

The State Bar needs the enthusiastic participation of all the segments of the Bar: Those who are long in the tooth; those who are in their middle years; and, our TYLA members. Working together, we can complement each other as we serve the lawyers of Texas and the people of Texas.

### MythBusters

**The Myth:** The State Bar does not promote access to justice initiatives.

**The Problem:** The needs of 20-25% of the 6 million Texans who qualify for legal aid are not being met and many sources of funding continue to decline.

**The Truth:** The State Bar, through the Legal Services Support Division, provides training for those who represent low income Texans — both to lawyers and legal services programs. The Bar also pays for legal research tools for legal aid lawyers and subsidizes malpractice insurance for legal aid programs. Pro bono opportunities are encouraged through State Bar projects such as Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans and the Emeritus Attorney Program offered to retired or inactive attorneys who wish to stay current in the law and lend a helping hand at the same time. The division works closely with the Texas Access to Justice Commission and Foundation to raise awareness and funds for legal aid through traditional fundraising and advocacy efforts.