



QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES



Rebekah Steely Brooker



Alfonso Cabañas

The following interview with TYLA president-elect candidates **Rebekah Steely Brooker** of Dallas and **Alfonso Cabañas** of San Antonio is included to educate young lawyers as they prepare to vote. Biographies were included in the March issue (p. 269) and are available on the State Bar website, texasbar.com/elections. Votes for TYLA president-elect and district directors can be cast via paper ballot or online from April 1 to April 30, 2013. Attorneys eligible to vote will be mailed an election packet that includes a paper ballot. The deadline to cast ballots is 5 p.m. CST on April 30.



Why do you want to be president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association?

BROOKER

Simply put, I want to make a difference. I have seen firsthand the tangible impact that TYLA makes in the community locally and statewide. Growing up, my mother always reminded me of the Parable of the Faithful Servant—"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." With this echoing in the back of my mind, I have always felt more fulfilled—personally and professionally—when given the opportunity to give back.

As a first-generation college graduate, I am not just fulfilled by service but compelled to service. While I have enjoyed pro bono opportunities throughout my career, TYLA has provided me a vehicle to help people beyond just the practice of law. As the public-service arm of the State Bar of Texas, TYLA creates and implements relevant and impactful community education and service projects year after year. I hope to continue and grow this tradition. And as a member service organization, TYLA seeks to discover where young lawyers in Texas most need our support and provide them with relevant resources.

I believe that I am uniquely qualified to serve as president of TYLA from my knowledge and love of Texas—growing up in East Texas, going to school in College Station, and now living in Dallas—to my perspective and commitment to serving our young lawyers and our communities. With this background, I can provide the leadership necessary for TYLA to positively impact how communities experience lawyers and how young lawyers experience the bar.

CABAÑAS

I want to continue to bring young lawyers in Texas the great networking, volunteering, and public service opportunities that TYLA has available. As president, I would like to increase TYLA's reach by offering a different variety of programs that are geared exclusively for young lawyers going through a transition phase in their careers. Lastly, I would like to increase TYLA awareness by creating and promoting projects that are at the forefront of current events.

What, in your opinion, are the top three issues facing young lawyers in Texas and what role should TYLA play in addressing those issues?

BROOKER

The United States continues to recover from a depressed economic period. The legal profession was hit particularly hard from layoffs to a dramatic oversupply of lawyers. In this economic climate, the three most pressing issues facing young lawyers in Texas are employment, professional development, and personal health.

Law students and recent graduates find it exceedingly difficult to get a job, particularly one sufficient to repay their educational debt. In addition to the practical realities of unemployment and underemployment, these young lawyers battle with limitations on their professional growth or health concerns from stress and depression. Ultimately, these young lawyers may leave the legal profession to find a better paying job or a healthier work-life balance. TYLA's priority should be engaging, developing, and retaining this generation of young lawyers in the legal profession.

TYLA can help young lawyers by providing resources—such as job boards, job fairs, professional networking, or other opportunities—designed to help young lawyers find employment or develop the relationships necessary to find employment. TYLA also has a wealth of resources, such as *Office in a Flash* and *Ten Minute Mentor*, which it can continue to develop and update to help young lawyers start their own firms, continue their professional development, or balance the ever-increasing demands of practicing law with a fulfilling personal life.

CABAÑAS

The top three issues facing young lawyers in Texas are job dissatisfaction, law school loan repayments, and the option of choosing alternative careers to law. TYLA should address job dissatisfaction by providing young lawyers with career guidance through a mentorship program. TYLA should be more proactive in providing scholarship resources to law students and educating young lawyers about loan repayment programs through public sector jobs. Finally, TYLA should prepare projects or programs to inform young lawyers about alternative careers outside of the legal profession.



Discuss the TYLA project or program in which you most enjoy participating.

BROOKER

The most fulfilling TYLA project for me was my first. I volunteered to serve on a TYLA committee concerning family and elder law. Despite simply being a committee member, I had the opportunity to co-create and co-author *Dealing with Dementia*, a pamphlet designed to educate caregivers and families about legal issues relevant to dementia, such as guardianships, powers of attorney, advanced directives, estate planning, and other issues. I helped TYLA publish this pamphlet shortly after my father-in-law passed away after years of battling Alzheimer's disease. Personally, *Dealing with Dementia* gave me a certain peace because I knew that TYLA had created a solid resource to help families answer the hard questions and address the difficult issues that my family had also confronted.

CABAÑAS

I enjoy volunteering with the San Antonio Battered Women's Shelter and educating victims about their legal rights through the *Healing the Wounds* project and video. We have presented this video at the shelter the past four years with great success. Every time we do this presentation, the women housed at the shelter are thankful for the video and the information provided in the video. Additionally, each time we present, we bring a hairstylist who works on the women's hair, a makeup artist to do their makeup and provide tips on putting on makeup, and candy and goodies for the children who are housed in the shelter.

How do you balance your personal life with your professional life?

BROOKER

Honestly, as a practicing lawyer, wife, and mother of three, maintaining a healthy balance is not easy. In fact, it is a constant challenge. Like the practice of law, achieving a healthy work-life balance requires diligent practice (along with a lot of coffee and under-eye concealer). Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. But no matter what, you have to keep working—undeterred—to obtain that healthy balance.

Ultimately, for me, work-life balance is a matter of priorities and perspective. Getting my priorities straight does not mean billing more hours, developing more clients, or making more money. This perspective and a willingness to work hard to prioritize my family have allowed me to achieve a healthy balance more often than not.

CABAÑAS

I never bring my work home. When I am at work, I dedicate my time to resolving client issues and growing a successful business. When I am at home, I give my full attention to my wife and son, and I leave a little time for soccer and working out.



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ELECTION RESULTS

The TYLA Board of Directors has elected the following officers for 2013–14:

Dustin M. Howell, chair-elect of the board;
Victor Villarreal, vice president;
Priscilla D. Camacho, secretary; and
C. Barrett Thomas, treasurer.

Cameron J. Cox will serve as chair of the board.



HOWELL VILLARREAL CAMACHO THOMAS

CONGRATULATIONS!