



ABOVE: 2012-2013 State Bar of Texas President Buck Files with Thomas Boyle, who placed first in the editorial contest.

Justice for All

Students from across the state celebrate Law Day.

BY LOWELL BROWN

One image showed black and white children drinking from the same water fountain. Another, a sturdy tree trunk etched with the words, "Our roots unite for equality for a better world." Images depicting different visions of equality filled the room May 1, 2013, as the State Bar of Texas and the Texas Young Lawyers Association celebrated Law Day, a day set aside each year to honor the rule of law.

The celebration at the Texas Law Center included a display of winning entries in the bar's statewide Law Day contest, which challenged school students to produce editorials, photographs, and posters reflecting this year's theme, "Realizing the Dream: Equality for All," a nod to the fact that 2013 is the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech on racial equality and social justice.

"I saw the topic about equality and I thought, 'That's a really good topic for me,'" said Thomas Boyle, 17, who placed first in the editorial contest. "Because that's what I strive to do, try and make the playing field even for everybody." Boyle, a senior at Sharyland High School in Mission, read his winning editorial to a crowd that included other contest winners and their families, 2012-2013 State Bar President Buck Files,

and TYLA Director Dustin Howell. The editorial, submitted by the Hidalgo County Bar Association, focused on people whose work advanced human rights, including King, Rosa Parks, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Boyle said researching and writing the editorial taught him that the cliché "one person can make a difference" is actually true sometimes. "Before, I didn't think so as much," he noted. "But now I know that if you have the drive, you can change the world in some way or fashion."

Abbegael Smith, 13, placed first in the photography contest with *Hands Across America*, which depicts children's hands spread across a U.S. map. She entered the contest partly because she loves the law and is thinking about becoming an attorney, she said. A seventh grader at James L. Collins Catholic School in Corsicana, Smith captured the image by asking classmates to pose with their hands on a map. "There's a lot of different colors of their hands, and I put them across the United States to show equality," she explained. "And it didn't matter what color or what gender or anything, because at the end of the day, we're all people."

The winning editorial appears here along with several of the winning photographs and posters. To see more artwork and to watch Boyle read his editorial, go to texasbar.com/lawday.

“I have one voice. I will use it to...”

EDITORIAL BY THOMAS BOYLE

“We the people” are the words that begin the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution which shows where the power of government comes from. Abraham Lincoln continued that theme in the Gettysburg Address by stating “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Government should ensure that all Americans are given fairness and equality under the law. Although in our young history there have been setbacks to freedom for all, it is individuals with courage who have stood up and fought hard to preserve the theme of Lincoln and why one voice can be a powerful force if used appropriately.

Martin Luther King said, “I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” One day I will have children of my own and want their country to be a place where they will be given no special treatment but rather fairness and equality. This can be achieved with laws that make sense and educating the public on good values and a strong moral code.

I often wonder if one person can have an impact on the direction our country will take regarding equality. Then, I am reminded of past leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, and Rosa Parks. Stanton worked hard in organizing the

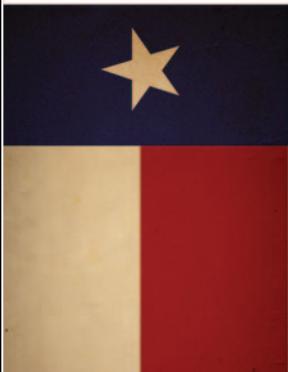
Seneca Falls Convention where she advocated for the right to vote for women. Douglass, a former slave, started a newspaper called the North Star where he talked about freedom for slaves. He was invited to the White House and gave a speech on slavery and advised President Lincoln to use Negro soldiers for the North in the Civil War. Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. After her arrest she fought the courts to end segregation on buses and won. Stanton, Douglass, and Parks all prove that one person can in fact make a difference.

Throughout my public education, I have witnessed inequality in our school system. Currently, some children have opportunities to enroll in preschool programs while others cannot. I understand the theory behind this but that doesn't make it fair. Secondly, students who fail are given extra instructional opportunities at the expense of the public while those who passed seeking to advance have to pay. I plan to meet with my legislators explaining why there should be fairness and equity for all.

Dr. King believed that character mattered. Character is not bound by color, gender, or where you were born. There are many issues facing our country where inequality is visible. They can't be tackled at the same time or by any one person, but if each person would take on just one issue, then together as a society we can realize the dream of equality for all.



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