



GALA RAISES MONEY FOR VETERANS' LEGAL SERVICES

Some of the state's most prominent lawyers gathered April 23 in Austin for the Champions of Justice Gala, which raised more than \$338,000 to help provide civil legal services to low-income Texas veterans. The celebration, hosted by the Texas Access to Justice Commission and the State Bar of Texas, also recognized **Stewart W. Gagnon** and **James C. "Jim" Harrington**, two attorneys known for working to improve access to justice. Gagnon, a partner with Houston-based Fulbright & Jaworski, L.L.P., received the Emily C. Jones Lifetime Achievement Award for his extensive pro bono work, including more than 50 cases in 2012 alone. Gagnon, who leads his firm's family law practice group, is active with Houston Volunteer Lawyers, a nonprofit offering free legal services to low-income Harris County residents. He also chairs the Texas Access to Justice Commission Self Represented Litigants Committee and the Texas Supreme Court Uniform Forms Task Force, among other activities. Harrington, an Austin human rights attorney, received the James B. Sales Boots on the Ground Award for his nearly four decades of work litigating civil rights cases and providing legal services to the poor and disenfranchised. He is the founder and executive director of the Texas Civil Rights Project, a nonprofit that uses litigation and public education to promote civil liberty and social, racial, and economic justice. Guest speaker Lt. Michael E. Thornton, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL, thanked the bar and its members for leading the way nationwide to aid veterans and for opening the eyes of other state bars about ways to help. Another guest speaker, Paul Melton, board president for the Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars, told attendees there is no higher calling than pro bono efforts to help veterans. Above left: Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice **Wallace B. Jefferson** (left) with Stewart W. Gagnon. Above right: Jefferson with James C. "Jim" Harrington.



Houston Attorney Top Fundraiser in National Multiple Sclerosis Society Bike Ride

Houston attorney **Steve Susman** recently earned the distinction as the top fundraiser in the BP MS 150, a 170-mile bike ride from Houston to Austin that raises money for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Wearing the “No. 1” jersey, Susman finished the ride, marking the first time in nearly a decade that a top fundraiser accomplished the feat. “Fortunately, it looks like I’m going to No. 1 again this year. I’m at \$150,000; it doesn’t close until the end of July,” Susman said. “In a way I wish someone would pass me. Then I wouldn’t be tempted to do it again. I’m getting too old for this.” Susman, 72, completed his fourth BP MS 150 with 34 other members of his firm, Susman Godfrey, L.L.P. The team, which goes by the name Swift Justice, raised more than \$220,000 for the multiple sclerosis society, making them the top fundraising law firm and placing them among the top 10 teams overall. About 13,000 riders took part in the event. Susman’s firm started participating in 2006 and has raised more money and attracted more riders each year. This year’s team, led by **Trey Peacock**, included attorneys and family members from the firm’s offices in Houston, Dallas, New York, and Seattle. Above: BP MS 150 top fundraiser Steve Susman.



Texas House Honors Former Chief Justice Jack Pope on 100th Birthday

April 18 marked Justice **Jack Pope**’s 100th birthday, and the Texas House celebrated with a resolution honoring the retired state Supreme Court chief justice. Pope, an Abilene native, served as a judge on the district and appeals court levels before being elected to the Texas Supreme Court in 1964. He served there until his retirement in January 1985, after more than two years as chief justice. Pope is the longest-living state chief justice in U.S. history and appears to be the first to reach 100, said Osler McCarthy, the Supreme Court’s staff attorney for public information. During his 38 years as a jurist, Pope left a lasting imprint on state water rights, helped accomplish formal judicial education for Texas judges, advocated for a judicial ethics code, and streamlined how cases are pleaded and tried, McCarthy said. As part of the celebration, the court presented Pope with a book of notes and letters from well-wishers. Above, from left: retired Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Jack Pope and Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice **Wallace B. Jefferson**.



Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice O'Connor to Speak at Hemphill Dinner

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor will deliver the keynote speech June 14 at the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society 18th Annual John Hemphill Dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin. The El Paso native, who retired in 2006, became the first woman to serve on the court after President Ronald Reagan appointed her in 1981.

During the dinner, the Texas Center for Legal Ethics will present the fifth annual Chief Justice Jack Pope Professionalism Awards, which honor a Texas appellate lawyer and an appellate judge for demonstrating professionalism and integrity. The dinner will also feature memorial tributes to former Texas Supreme Court Justices **William W. Kilgarlin** and **Robert A. "Bob" Gammage**, who died in 2012. Proceeds benefit the society's continuing work to collect and preserve the court's historic papers, photographs, and artifacts, and also aid the society's legal studies book series and other projects honoring the court's history. To buy dinner tickets, or for more information, call (512) 481-1840 or email tschs@sbcglobal.net. More details are available at texascourthistory.org. Above: Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.



Chief Justice Speaks at White House Forum on Increasing Access to Justice

Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice **Wallace B. Jefferson** was among the panelists April 16 at the White House Forum on Increasing Access to Justice in Washington, D.C. The event, co-hosted by the Legal Services Corporation, attracted leaders of the legal profession from across the country, including chief justices of three state supreme courts. Speakers included Vice President Joe Biden, a former public defender, who called equal access to legal representation "the single right that makes every other right viable." Jefferson participated in a pro bono panel moderated by Harvard Law School Dean Martha Minow, who is vice chair of the LSC board. The event also included a second panel focused on using technology to help improve pro bono work. Visit lsc.gov for more information on the event, including videos of the speakers and panel discussions. Above, from left: Travis County District Judge **Lora Livingston**, Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson, and Texas Access to Justice Foundation Executive Director **Betty Balli Torres**.

Atticus Finch Day

Members of the Brazos County legal community gathered April 30 to celebrate the fifth annual Atticus Finch Day. The day serves as a yearly reminder of the principles exhibited by the character of Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*—passion for justice, honor, dedication to the profession, and mutual respect. Right, from left: **Larry Catlin** of Bryan, 2012-2013 State Bar of Texas President **Buck Files**, and Brazos County District Judge **Steve Smith**.

