

## LeadershipSBOT Celebrates

# 10 YEARS

Classes develop skills to move diverse lawyers into leadership roles.

BY ERIC QUITUGUA

In October 2008, the State Bar of Texas kicked off LeadershipSBOT, a yearlong program designed to give attorneys tools to develop leadership roles in their firms, bar associations, and communities. The program has provided leadership training to lawyers who reflect the diversity of the State Bar and has been a springboard for career success for its nearly 200 graduates, with alumni including bar directors, Texas Bar Foundation trustees, and local bar leaders.

Former State Bar President Harper Estes, who helped create LeadershipSBOT, said the program pushes its classes into public service and provides leadership opportunities for people who might not get them elsewhere. “The idea was to develop bar leaders that looked like Texas—in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender but also in practice area and geographic area—so we could have leaders from all different walks who could relate to the needs of lawyers all around the state,” Estes said. With the help of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, or TYLA, Estes planned a curriculum of team-building exercises and public service projects in parts of the state that were not necessarily served by existing leadership programs.

Each class has about 20 nominated attorneys who meet twice during the year for training and to learn about paths to leadership from guest speakers. Their team-building exercises can be light-hearted in nature—sandcastle building competitions, escape rooms, and constitutional trivia contests against high schoolers—but they are designed to foster trust among the students. LeadershipSBOT members present their service projects during the State Bar’s Annual Meeting.

Baili Rhodes, State Bar of Texas director and immediate past president of TYLA, offered advice to the 2017-2018

class, describing her journey with TYLA. Rhodes said that while LeadershipSBOT isn’t a direct pipeline to TYLA, which has several board members who graduated from the program, it is another example of where the program can lead attorneys.

“I think most people come in working at the local level and want some way to get involved and get their toes in the water but don’t know how,” she said. “This gives them a great opportunity.”

State Bar of Texas Director Rudolph K. “Rudy” Metayer, a Pflugerville city councilman and an attorney working in Austin, traces his role with the bar board to his time in LeadershipSBOT from 2012 to 2013. One project involved Metayer and his classmates building bicycles for children at a Boys & Girls Club in Harlingen. Another project saw Metayer putting together a curriculum on, and teaching young kids the tenets of, decorum, respect, and civility as people argue and make their points.

LeadershipSBOT, he said, shows its classes that the legal field will look remarkably different in 25 years and emphasizes that including viewpoints and ideas from people of diverse backgrounds will help the legal profession succeed, and, in turn, help restore people’s faith in courts and society.

Who fits the bill to help in that effort?

“A practicing attorney who loves the law, who loves people, and loves service,” Metayer said. “If you love those three things, LeadershipSBOT is for you. Frankly, the State Bar is for you—and we’ll find you a place.”

For more information on LeadershipSBOT, go to [texasbar.com/leadershipsbot](http://texasbar.com/leadershipsbot).