



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIDEL RODRIGUEZ JR.

Fidel Rodriguez Jr.

Hometown: San Antonio

Position: Owner of the Law Offices of Fidel Rodriguez, Jr. in San Antonio

Board Member: District 10, Place 2 since 2016

[INTERVIEW BY ERIC QUITUGUA]

I WAS A LATE BLOOMER.

My father was a bricklayer and my mother was a secretary for the local doctor in Bishop. We struggled financially but always had food on the table and clean clothes on our back. Thanks to scholarships and grants, I joined the Corps of Cadets and finished my undergraduate degree in civil engineering at Texas A&M University. I went straight into the Air Force to serve my four-year commitment. Toward the end of my tour, I realized that I wanted to move into the field of law, where I could help injured individuals and their families.

I HAVE ALWAYS PUSHED MYSELF TO BE A “BETTER PERSON” AT WHATEVER I DO.

There is a Hebrew word in John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*, which has always been my mantra without setting specific goals. The word is “timshel,” adapted from the Hebrew “timshol,” which Steinbeck translated to “thou

mayest,” and basically stands for the proposition that we, as individuals, have the power to choose our path. As to an “aha!” moment—I am still waiting for that but not holding my breath.

MY FATHER SPOKE VERY LITTLE ENGLISH BUT WAS A PROUD AND HARDWORKING MAN.

He only wanted a fair shot at life. I realized that I had the capacity to help individuals like my dad. Bad things do really happen to good people, who will get deprived of justice unless they find a lawyer who is willing to fight for them and their families.

I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE IN THE THICK OF MATTERS.

It is easy to complain and be a Monday morning quarterback. The true test is wanting to roll up the sleeves and make the decisions. The State Bar of Texas is “our” organization. We get to decide its ultimate course through volunteers statewide.

I HAVE BEEN PUSHING FOR A UNIFORM STATEWIDE E-FILING SYSTEM.

My law firm practices in many counties throughout South and West Texas, and it sure is hard to track e-filings as each county (district and county courts included) has a different reporting system for identifying filings.

MY PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT AS A DIRECTOR IS SHOWING OTHERS THAT BEING INVOLVED IS IMPORTANT AT ANY LEVEL

both in our profession and in the community. For example, the bar has taken great strides in assisting those attorneys who are afflicted with depression or drug dependence. Thanks to former State Bar President Allan K. DuBois and others, we are reaching out with well-designed and effective programs to help those in need in a discrete manner. We need to continue to spread the word in these areas.

BE AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER.

Don’t sit back and let others do the work, as there are so many areas wherein your skills can make a difference for others. **TBJ**