



PHOTO BY PICTURE PEOPLE

# Leslie W. Dippel

**Hometown:** Killeen

**Position:** Director of Civil Litigation, Travis County Attorney's Office

**Board Member:** District 9 since 2017

[INTERVIEW BY ERIC QUITUGUA]

**THE SIMPLE TRUTH IS I GREW UP IN A FAMILY WITH SEVERAL LAWYERS AND I WANTED TO EMULATE THOSE WHOM I LOVED AND RESPECTED.**

What I can recognize now is that I am a natural-born litigator. I love the analysis and writing aspects of practicing law, and the combination of legal writing and trying cases in the courtroom is a perfect combination for me. What a privilege it is to provide this service to clients you care about.

**I AM A CIVIL LAWYER WORKING IN A PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE. I WORK WITH THE ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS OF TRAVIS COUNTY. MY PRACTICE THEREFORE NECESSARILY INVOLVES AREAS OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, CIVIL RIGHTS LAW, AND OPEN GOVERNMENT.**

As the director of civil litigation, I oversee all civil litigation against the county, and my practice has always emphasized employment law. I enjoy developing relationships for a couple of reasons: 1) I truly enjoy getting to know people and their life stories, and 2) it creates a foundation upon which so many wonderful things can grow. Employment law is a relationship-based legal practice. In this work, I recognize that an individual's livelihood, the very thing that many identify themselves by, is involved. Respecting that—and at the same time ensuring that an employer's business operations are protected—takes skill. It reminds me of the three pillars I learned in Leadership Austin: skills, issues, and relationships. When you combine all of those things, you are in your sweet spot. This is mine.

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**I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT EACH STEP IN MY CAREER WAS PART OF A GRAND ORCHESTRATED PLAN, BUT THE TRUTH IS I DID NOT DESIGN IT. I HAVE WORKED FOR A STATE AGENCY, CLERKED FOR FEDERAL MAGISTRATE JUDGES, WORKED FOR A BIG FIRM, AND WORKED AT A LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.**

The lucky combination of that experience developed me into a well-rounded lawyer. My advice to a young lawyer is that maybe you cannot manufacture and design your career path, but you can pull valuable lessons out of each experience—and together it will serve you well. A lot of your career will be based on the relationships you build and building a base of relationships is part of what the bar does. I advise just jumping in and showing up. The things you think matter don't. Being authentic and being a person of your word—that matters.

**I WANT MORE PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE AMAZING WORK THE BAR DOES FOR THEM.**

So much of it is untapped. There are so many ways to be involved. Lawyers should know the bar is more than CLE. It is with the servant leadership of hundreds of volunteers that the bar brings legal services to those who cannot afford it, connects mentors to lawyers new to the practice of law, provides avenues for health care to the membership, and supports the physical and mental health of the membership, and of course, provides superior CLE. I want to be a part of seeing that all of those benefits continue.

**AS A CHAIR OF THE INSURANCE/MEMBER BENEFITS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE STATE BAR BOARD, IT IS EXCITING TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER ALL OF THE BENEFITS THE STATE BAR INVESTS IN ON BEHALF OF ITS MEMBERS.**

If you have not reviewed them recently, go to [texasbar.com/memberbenefits](http://texasbar.com/memberbenefits) and see the many offerings, including discounts on Vonlane, website hosting, cloud-based management systems, and insurance (including for the first time, a group insurance plan), just to name a few. This committee is also working toward helping attorneys with succession planning. I am thrilled to work with dedicated lawyers like former director Greg Sampson, Laura Gibson, and State Bar staff like Research & Analysis Director Cory Squires who make this happen. This is not glamorous work; it is the nitty-gritty work that benefits Texas lawyers. I am proud of our team for their work on this important subcommittee.

**AS MEMBERS OF THE STATE BAR, YOU HAVE AN ENORMOUS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A REAL IMPACT IN ALMOST ANY AREA THAT INTERESTS YOU.**

All you have to do is show up and speak up. If you are interested in serving on a committee but not sure where to start, please reach out to your district representative on the board of directors or contact me and I'll connect you. Jump in. We are waiting for you.

**THE BAR DOES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT FOR ITS MEMBERS, BUT THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.**

We need to hear from members what is important to them and we will be as responsive as we can. Please let us hear from you. Even better, come join us! **TBJ**