

¡Bienvenidos!—a Warm South Texas Welcome



Recently, we had the privilege of hosting our Texas Young Lawyers Association Board of Directors meeting in deep South Texas. For those who haven't visited McAllen, it's a quick Texas two-step from the Mexico border. Its architecture is a colorful blend of historic Spanish-style, contemporary, and Texas-ranch structures. The vibrant retail and entertainment districts are host to some of the most flavorful international dishes, passionate music, and fascinating art.

The directors were serenaded by a busload of talented McAllen High School, or McHi, students dressed in vibrant traditional "charro" (mariachi) suits. The royal purple suede-like suits were artistically embroidered with golden horseshoes and floral accents. The mariachi ensemble included violins, trumpets, guitars, a vihuela, and harp. Various singers, including McHi junior Ashley Treviño, took turns performing traditional songs, including "Los Cazadores." The rich talent and passion coming from the young students was spellbinding.



From left, Texas Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa; Hidalgo County District Attorney Ricardo Rodriguez; TYLA President Victor A. Flores; and Past TYLA President Ray Thomas in McAllen.

Later, the directors were visited by Michelle Nuñez from Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. Nuñez described the organization's humanitarian mission to provide legally released migrant families with temporary and basic assistance (hygiene supplies, showers and restrooms, a cot to sleep on, sandwiches, and water) for a couple of days until they secure transportation to their final destination or are picked up by their U.S. family members. As Nuñez unpacked the complex details of this local (and national) issue, many of us were inspired by the work that Nuñez and other local government officials and leaders were doing to provide the migrants with adequate help while managing general public safety. Later that day, many of the directors toured the Humanitarian Respite Center and volunteered by cleaning the facility, preparing sandwiches, and organizing supplies.

Over the two-day meeting, various TYLA committees gave project updates for the second quarter. Directors Rebecca Patterson Linehan, Jeanine Rispoli, and Julia Rubio announced the completion of the *Texas Courts for Texas Veterans Project*.

Additionally, Director Lauren Sepulveda reported on the completion of two important legal resources for Texas attorneys: *A Lawyer's Passport to Basic Immigration Law* and the *Post-Padilla Guide*.

TYLA Chair Courtney Barksdale Perez reported on *Barristers Out for Blood*, TYLA's Halloween blood drive that was hosted simultaneously in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Fort Worth, Amarillo, San Angelo, and other cities across Texas.

Director Tim Newman shared that the Local Affiliates Committee completed the *Job Interview Guide for Law Students and Young Lawyers*, hosted a free online pre-law roadshow (*Texas Law School Insider*), completed five free CLE Roadshows, and confirmed another six free Roadshows in Amarillo, Lubbock, Corpus Christi, McAllen, El Paso, and Denton.

Other committees reported ongoing progress on exciting TYLA projects that we intend to share with everyone by early spring.

Throughout the meeting, we were welcomed by local attorneys and judges, including Texas Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa; Hidalgo County District Attorney Ricardo Rodriguez; Judge Nereida Lopez-Singlettery, of Master Court No. 1 in Edinburg; McAllen Mayor Jim Darling; McAllen City Attorney Kevin Pagan; TYLA Past President Ray Thomas; Past State Bar of Texas Board of Directors Chair Joe Escobedo; State Bar of Texas Director Luis Cardenas; and 2018-2019 Texas Bar Foundation Nominating Chair Dan Worthington. Each expressed their support and encouragement for TYLA and its mission to advance the role of the legal profession in serving the public.

This year, one of our goals was, and remains, to visit as many attorneys as possible. To help create and distribute relevant legal resources that young lawyers need, our directors need to experience the diverse sights, sounds, and legal issues impacting the different regions of this great state. Hosting our meeting in McAllen definitely provided us with that unique and memorable opportunity.

Thank you, McAllen and the Rio Grande Valley, for making us all feel so welcome. Adiós—until next time.

Better Together,

VICTOR A. FLORES

2019-2020 President,
Texas Young Lawyers Association