

Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle sworn in as justice of the Texas Supreme Court



Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle became the newest justice of the Texas Supreme Court during a ceremony on October 30 at the Texas Supreme Court, where Gov. Greg Abbott administered the oath. “This is a great day for the court because this court is adding an extremely illustrious member of the bar here in the state of Texas,” Abbott said. “It makes what I consider to be the premier supreme court in the United States even more exceptional.” Huddle, who grew up in El Paso, was appointed by Abbott to replace Justice Paul Green, who retired in August. She will serve the remainder of his term, which ends December 31, 2022. “The rule of law demands many things of our judicial system and of each of the justices who works in it—neutrality, independence, impartiality, fairness, and above all a commitment to faithfully applying the Constitution and other laws as they are written and not as we think they ought to have been written,” Huddle said. Huddle’s formal investiture will be held at a date to be announced.

JUDGE EMILY MISKEL TO RECEIVE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST AWARD FOR JUDICIAL EXCELLENCE

Judge Emily Miskel, of the 470th District Court in Collin County, will receive the National Center for State Courts 2020 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. The Rehnquist Award is the highest honor bestowed to a state judge by the National Center for State Courts. It honors a state court judge who demonstrates the outstanding qualities of judicial excellence, including integrity, fairness, open-mindedness, knowledge of the law, professional ethics, creativity, sound judgment, intellectual courage, and decisiveness. “The National Center is honored to present the Rehnquist Award to an innovative state court judge who met the challenge of using technology to make jury trials a reality during the pandemic,” NCSC President Mary McQueen said in a press release. “Judge Miskel is not only a trailblazer in this area, but an extraordinary judge who has been recognized for her outstanding work on the bench.” Miskel held the nation’s first fully remote hearing and first fully virtual bench trial during the COVID-19 pandemic. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. will present Miskel with the award at an event later this year.

TLAP LAUNCHES NEW STORIES OF RECOVERY VIDEO SERIES

The Texas Lawyers’ Assistance Program has launched a video counterpart to its “Stories of Recovery” series featured on the Texas Bar Blog. “This ‘Stories of Recovery’ will be one with diverse stories but many of the things about these stories are similar, which is the path to recovery,” TLAP Director Chris Ritter said. “I hope that this can be an inspiration to those, such as myself, who were hopeless and thought there wasn’t a way out.” The first video in the series featured a one-on-one conversation with Jo Ben Whittenburg, of Orgain Bell & Tucker, and TLAP attorney Erica Grigg. Each interview includes candid accounts of the path to recovery. Whittenburg talked about overcoming troubles with alcohol and advancing beyond the stigma of alcoholism. Grigg shared her story about stress, anxiety, and depression that she “managed” with alcohol, which eventually led to a suicide attempt. The videos will be released on the second Monday of each month. TLAP offers confidential assistance for lawyers, law students, and judges with substance use or mental health issues. Call or text TLAP at 800-343-8527 (TLAP) or find more information at tlaphelps.org.

TEXAS WOMEN’S BAR ASSOCIATIONS PAY TRIBUTE TO JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG

The Dallas Women Lawyers Association, State Bar of Texas Women and the Law Section, Texas Trial Lawyers Association Women’s Caucus, and Texas Women Lawyers hosted a tribute on October 30 in honor of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died on September 18, 2020. Texas Supreme Court Justices Eva Guzman and Debra Lehrmann, State Bar of Texas President-elect Sylvia Borunda Firth, and Texas Women Lawyers President Deborah Cordova spoke at the program celebrating Ginsburg’s life, work, and legacy. The speakers reflected on influential events in Ginsburg’s life and her achievements as a law professor, civil rights advocate, and judge. A recording of the program can be viewed at dallaswomenlawyers.org/a-texas-tribute-to-justice-ruth-bader-ginsburg/.

DALLAS BAR ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF CHARITY MADNESS

The Dallas Bar Association Community Involvement Committee announced the Family Place and the Grant Halliburton Foundation as winners of the Charity Madness event, an annual event to give charities recognition as well as funds and donations. First-place winner the Family Place has been a leader in the work to stop family violence since 1978. Second-place winner the Grant Halliburton Foundation works to strengthen the network of mental health resources available for children, teens, and young adults; promotes better mental health; and provides suicide prevention services. This year the event was virtual and modeled in the style of the NCAA’s March Madness bracket. For more information about the Family Place, go to familyplace.org. For more information about the Grant Halliburton Foundation, go to granthalliburton.org. For more information about the Dallas Bar Association, go to dallasbar.org.

JOSHUA G. BORDERUD TO RECEIVE AMERICAN INNS OF COURT SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR AWARD

Joshua G. Borderud, director of Baylor Law School’s clinical programs, was selected to receive the Sandra Day O’Connor Award for Professional Service from the American Inns of Court. “I am honored to be selected for the Sandra Day O’Connor Award for Professional Service,” Borderud said in a press release. “The work of mentoring law students in service to others is a joy. I am grateful to the American Inns of Court for validating the good work of our students who serve those in need through the legal clinics.” Borderud graduated from Baylor Law in 2009 and began his legal career as a prosecutor in Milam County. He served as an assistant district attorney and prosecuted criminal cases and was a legal adviser to the county judge. In private practice, Borderud was a civil litigator for Pakis, Giotes, Page & Bursleson in Waco, where he was also active in civic affairs, local bar service projects, and volunteer work at the Baylor Law Veterans Clinic. In 2016, he returned to Baylor Law as the first full-time clinic director. Under Borderud’s leadership, the Veterans Clinic allows students, law school faculty and staff, and local lawyers to offer pro bono aid to McLennan County’s military veterans and their spouses. **TBJ**