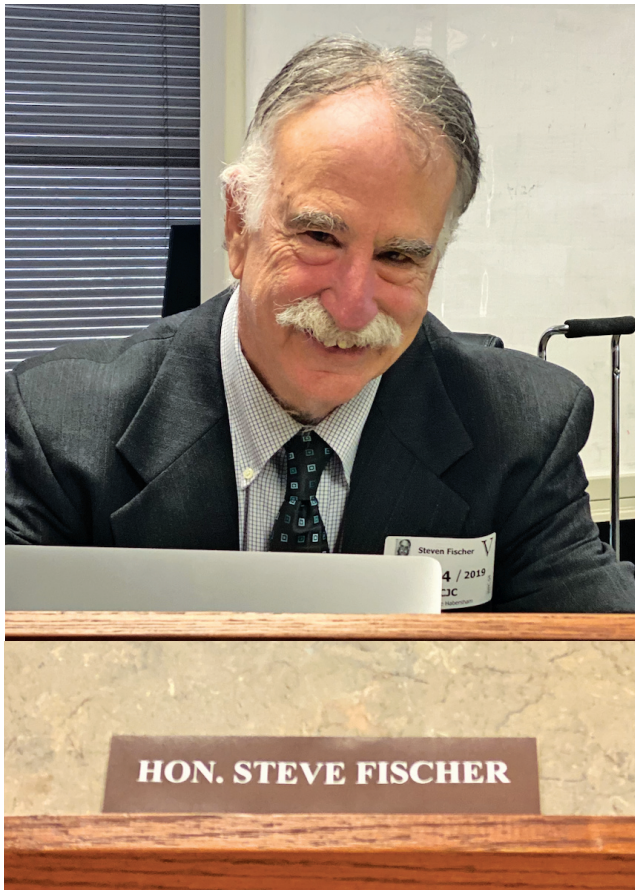


Steve FISCHER

HOMETOWN: EL PASO **POSITION:** SOLO PRACTITIONER IN EL PASO
BOARD MEMBER: DISTRICT 17 SINCE 2020

INTERVIEW BY **ERIC QUITUGUA**
PHOTO COURTESY OF **STEVE FISCHER**



HOW AND WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED TO BECOME A LAWYER?

I was 18, in jail over some protest—no funds and no living family except an 82-year-old stepdad far away and ready to give up on me. Eventually, I went to my dream school, Cal-Berkeley, and took the LSAT. One day, I received a pile of mail. LSAT: “Wow. I can get into any law school. He will be so proud!” Next was a legal letter informing me of his death.

WHAT GOALS HAVE YOU SET AND ACCOMPLISHED?

Avoiding too much trouble, outsmarting my dogs, and being a leader among lawyers. Did I accomplish them? “LOL. It’s complicated.” Wife Susan: “Steve instantaneously does and says what he thinks is right and figures the world will eventually conform. It can be hilarious—or shocking, but never boring.”

WHAT IS YOUR AREA OF LAW?

I’m omnivorous. Started out with securities law in Beverly Hills, California, but wanted something more “human” thus I descended into the hell of family and criminal law. I do many things besides law. I’ve been investing since high school, had a pistachio orchard, and love my 503-acre tree farm along the Columbia River in Washington, where I’ve planted endangered coastal redwoods and giant sequoias.

WHEN AND WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS? The 2010-2011 draconian bar referendum measures. All demanded more work, and more rules for attorneys, but no benefits. I helped lead the battle that defeated each and every one of them. I then was elected director in contested races from the Corpus Christi-Victoria district (2011) and El Paso (2020).

YOUR PROUDEST STATE BAR OF TEXAS-RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

(1) Creating the concept of independent Facebook attorney discussion groups. Texas Estate & Probate Lawyers (2012), Texas Family Lawyers (2011), Texas Real Estate Lawyers (2012), Technology for Texas Lawyers, and more. They now have 20,000 Texas attorneys. (2) Standing up for Larry McDougal’s free (but foolish) speech and preventing the State Bar from a free speech disaster. My efforts were indirectly referenced by one of the judges during oral argument before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit (at 44:10). (3) Garnering 5,622 petition signatures at courthouses around the state in the 2012-2013 presidential election. I’ve made court appearances in perhaps 80 courthouses, and I always run into “friends.” (4) My dog “Shasharoosticus”—the only canine “presenter” on a State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting agenda. (5) I’ve mostly failed at “bar reform,” sworn grievances, etc. But in January 2022, I did persuade our directors to unanimously pass my resolution in support of removing impediments to remote hearings.

WHAT’S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR DIRECTORS TO UNDERSTAND?

That the automatic “Yes,” “Aye,” and “Baa” are not appropriate responses for independent professionals. I sometimes give them hell, but many are among the best lawyers in the state and dear, lifelong friends whom I helped elect.

ADVICE TO NEW ATTORNEYS? (1) Maintain non-legal areas of interest and revenue. (2) It’s counterintuitive, but the less you charge clients, the more they will demand. (3) Opposing counsel today may be your lifelong friend tomorrow.

“SHOUT-OUTS” (1) Former Texas Young Lawyers Association President Cori Harbour-Valdez for rescuing her 14 dogs. (2) Jackson Walker in San Antonio for the years they spent courting, assisting, and hiring my son, Huey Rey Fischer. (3) The State Bar staff and CLE—great programs while sacrificing revenue by allowing me and other attorneys to present free CLE throughout the state. **TBJ**