



## *‘These ARE SPIRIT FINGERS’*

**IN BRING IT ON, TORRANCE SHIPMAN CONVINCES “NEW GIRL” MISSY PANTONE** to join the Rancho Carne Toros cheerleading squad. In her impassioned speech, Torrance tells Missy, “We have fun. We work hard. And we win national championships.” Having served as TYLA’s president-elect, and now as TYLA president, I have sometimes felt like Torrance Shipman.

I recently took the “captain” position of a national-award-winning team. Last month, TYLA received numerous awards from the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyer Division at its Annual Meeting in Chicago. For the 2021-2022 bar year, under the leadership of Immediate Past President Jeanine Novosad Rispoli, TYLA received not only two first-place awards for our *Civility* projects, but also first place in the Comprehensive category for overall programming. I certainly have big shoes to fill this year.

Being team captain often starts with team building, which sometimes involves impassioned pleas for others’ involvement—so here’s mine. TYLA’s public service work gives our board a unique opportunity to connect and work with other leaders throughout Texas. Not only does TYLA work hard and win national awards, but our board members also build and develop foundations for amazing careers. Past board members have gone on to serve as federal and state court judges, at both the trial and appellate levels; as general or chief legal counsel of companies large and small; and in other governmental leadership positions. Several past board members have even gone into business with each other as law partners and as in-house/outside counsel.

A key part of developing these relationships is helping each other overcome the challenges of developing innovative public service programming and striving to be the best we can be. At times, it can feel as though someone has dropped the spirit stick. So far, that’s been me realizing that some of what I thought were original project ideas have already been completed by someone else. Other times, board members have to temporarily “tap out” for work or a significant life event. But it is in our team-oriented approach that we support each other, have the flexibility to pivot ideas to maintain innovation and gain inspiration in approaching public service, and overcome the challenges we face year after year.

Although our board completes most of our public service projects, we value the contributions made by committee volunteers, interns, and other partners, as well as feedback from our members. With more involvement, TYLA can better maintain its connections with you and our respective communities and better see when our spirit fingers could use a little more spirit.

If you’re interested in joining the TYLA board, or volunteering, please reach out and let me know. I’ll do my best to find you a place on our cheer pyramid. We are incredibly proud of all our public service projects and the impact our projects have in helping others. That’s what makes all we do worthwhile, even if we come in second place at nationals.

### **MICHAEL J. RITTER**

2022-2023 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association