



## *Looking Back—and Ahead*

# AS A NEW BAR YEAR BEGINS

**WELCOME TO JULY**—and a new bar year for the State Bar of Texas. This month, I am using this space to update you on the latest happenings at the State Bar, including successes from the 2022-2023 bar year and some of what's in store for the new year.

### **2023 Annual Meeting**

First, I want to extend my appreciation to the attendees, speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, volunteers, and staff who made the 2023 State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting a success. Attorneys gathered June 22-23, in Austin for two days of networking events and continuing legal education produced by State Bar sections. As great as the CLE is, my favorite event is always the celebration of our 50-year lawyers. This year, we celebrated 1,175 lawyers licensed in Texas in 1973, including approximately 100 in attendance, with a reception and recognition during the General Session Luncheon. Both my father and my uncle were 50-year lawyers, so I understand the significance of reaching this milestone. Congratulations to the new class of 50-year Texas lawyers.

### **Succession Planning Successes**

In her outgoing remarks, 2022-2023 State Bar President Laura Gibson discussed the bar's success during her term in expanding awareness of the attorney discipline system, stressing the importance of lawyer well-being, and alerting our members to the pressing need for succession planning. Under her leadership, the State Bar provided free CLE webcasts on those topics that have racked up approximately 45,000 online registrations to date. In response to the aging of the legal profession, President Gibson highlighted the need for attorneys—particularly solo practitioners—to designate a custodian attorney. As part of these efforts, on June 21 the State Bar has recognized "Designate Your Custodian Day," taking advantage of the longest day of the year to publicize the State Bar's custodian designation portal at [texasbar.com/succession](https://texasbar.com/succession). In addition, the Law Practice Management Committee is preparing a toolkit with additional resources to be available in coming months.

### **New Leadership**

The State Bar Annual Meeting always includes a transition of leadership. Cindy V. Tisdale, of Granbury, was sworn in as president, and Kennon Wooten, of Austin, became chair of the board of directors. Steve Benesh, of Austin, whom lawyers elected in April, was sworn in as president-elect and will serve in that role for a year before becoming president in June 2024. President Tisdale discussed her commitment to ensuring the State Bar continues to provide the best possible programs and services to lawyers—to help them as they help their clients—and I look forward to what the bar will accomplish under her leadership.

### **Annual Meeting Coverage**

The September issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* will feature extensive coverage from the Annual Meeting. In the meantime, you can hear interviews with many of the speakers, recorded onsite by host Rocky Dhir and the Legal Talk Network production team, on the *State Bar of Texas Podcast* at [texasbar.com/podcast](https://texasbar.com/podcast).

### **Legislative Update**

The 88th Texas Legislature's regular session ended May 29. As usual, the September issue will feature a legislative update with information on bills of interest to the legal profession.

### **Additional Accomplishments**

For more information on the accomplishments of the State Bar of Texas in 2022-2023, I encourage you to read the section and committee reports featured in this issue. Thank you to the volunteers who make up our sections and committees for the countless hours of work represented in these reports and for your dedication to the legal profession.

I am excited for the year ahead, as we work together through our State Bar to regulate the legal profession and improve the quality of legal services available to our fellow Texans.

Sincerely,

**TREY APFFEL**

Executive Director, State Bar of Texas

Editor in Chief, *Texas Bar Journal*