



2022-2023 STATE BAR OF TEXAS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports are included in the July/August issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* to update Texas lawyers on State Bar activities. The reports do not necessarily reflect the position or official policy of the State Bar of Texas, which is formulated by the State Bar Board of Directors or by the membership through referendum. For more information or to complete a Committee Volunteer Interest Form, go to texasbar.com/committees or call 800-204-2222 or 512-427-1516.

ADMINISTRATION OF RULES OF EVIDENCE

Angela Olalde, Chair

The Administration of Rules of Evidence Committee evaluates the Texas Rules of Evidence to ensure it matches and meets today's practice of law. The committee makes its recommendations to the State Bar of Texas, Supreme Court Advisory Committee, and ultimately the Supreme Court of Texas. In addition to researching inquiries from Texas attorneys about specific rules, the committee monitors changes to the Federal Rules of Evidence and considers whether similar changes should be recommended to the TRE. This year, the committee is analyzing inquiries into several issues, including: (1) updating Rule 606 to permit juror testimony as to whether extraneous prejudicial information was improperly brought to the jury's attention in criminal matters, (2) whether Rule 614 should be amended to ensure a witness excluded from the courtroom during trial cannot gain access to trial testimony, (3) whether Texas should adopt a residual hearsay exception similar to Federal Rule of Evidence 807, and (4) continuing recommendations to update Rules 509 and 510 to ensure consistency with statutory health care privileges. The committee also invites questions from Texas lawyers about potential amendments to the TRE. These may be submitted to the State Bar or to any committee member for consideration.

ADVERTISING REVIEW

Al Harrison, Chair

With the implementation of the revised rules and the new database and all electronic filing of submissions, Advertising Review can now track certain information based upon solicitation communications and advertising submissions. The new database and convenient online portal are accessible from attorneys' My Bar Page on the State Bar of Texas website. Attorneys are able to submit an online application requesting approval along with supporting advertisements and other documentation and pay filing fees. All communications are now

expeditiously handled through the portal. In reviewing the submissions for the year, the three top violations are: Rule 7.01(a): False and misleading communication; Rule 7.04(b): Requests for substantiation; and Rule 7.02(a): Attorney responsibility. It is important to note that while trade names are allowed if the trade name is compliant, every advertisement still needs to include the name of the attorney responsible for the advertisement. In terms of geographic location of submissions, Houston ranked as the highest number of submitted advertisements, followed by Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio. Notable other areas submitting advertisements would be Los Angeles; West Palm Beach, Florida; and San Francisco.

ANNUAL MEETING

Leslie Dippel and Randy Howry, Co-Chairs

The Annual Meeting took place in Austin at the JW Marriott. The meeting included a diverse selection of quality CLE and featured programs for everyone from the first-year associate to the seasoned professional. State Bar sections, including the Family Law, Litigation, Business Law, and Corporate Counsel sections, provided practice-specific programs and a legislative update. Friday's programming included parting remarks from 2022-2023 President Laura Gibson and 2022-2023 Texas Young Lawyers Association President Michael J. Ritter and the swearing in of 2023-2024 President Cindy V. Tisdale and 2023-2024 TYLA President Laura Pratt. Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2024 Annual Meeting in Dallas on June 20-21.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Scott Rothenberg, Chair

In May 2023, the Continuing Legal Education Committee met with the State Bar Board of Directors Professional Development Subcommittee and bar staff to propose topics for CLE programs and to discuss issues facing TexasBarCLE and Texas Bar Books. The committee continued its mission of providing

cutting-edge CLE to hardworking Texas attorneys. TexasBarCLE continues to be the go-to source for CLE for Texas attorneys. TexasBarCLE and Texas Bar Books continue to offer a variety of discounts, scholarships, and important free programming to help Texas attorneys advise and represent their clients in the areas needed most. Texas Bar Books continues to expand its offerings on the texasbarpractice.com website, which serves as the platform for Texas Bar Books and the Law Practice Management Program. The website offers lawyers a single place to explore free practice management content; shop for practice manuals, jury charges, deskbooks, and reference guides; and subscribe to online practice manuals with downloadable forms. This year, Texas Bar Books launched an online version of the Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges.

COURT RULES

Andy Jones, Chair

This year, the Court Rules Committee submitted several proposed rule changes to the Supreme Court of Texas to improve civil litigation and support access to justice. In response to feedback from the Texas Supreme Court Advisory Committee, or SCAC, the Court Rules Committee revised its prior proposal to amend Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 226a. In its original form, the committee proposed an implicit bias instruction be added to the precatory instructions for jury selection, etc. After review by SCAC, the committee revised the proposal, improved the implicit bias instruction, and returned it to the SCAC for further consideration. Additionally, the committee recommended a revision of Texas Rule of Appellate Procedure 52.9, which has been sent to the Supreme Court of Texas. Also, the Court Rules Committee looks forward to referring proposed revisions to Tex. R. Civ. P. 21(d) and 21a(e). These proposed revisions would remove the certificate of service requirement for documents served through an e-service vendor. Finally, the Court Rules Committee has seen continued discussion in SCAC of prior submitted rule revisions including parental-leave continuances,

notification of dispositive actions by e-file as well as mail, and on several rules of appellate procedure.

DISABILITY RIGHTS AND ISSUES

Daphne Silverman, Chair

The Mentorship Subcommittee, led by Hannah Cramer with Brandon Frasier as a member, created a means for both mentors and mentees to sign up to participate. Mentorship provides those experiencing disabilities for the first time in the legal field either because they are new to the field or have a new disability with a mentor who is a one-on-one resource regarding barriers they might encounter and recommendations on overcoming those barriers. The link to participate is on the State Bar website under the DRIC. The Public Education Subcommittee, composed of Janine Gorell, Dorene Philpot, and Dominique Augustus, established a bureau to speak on topics related to disability. The bureau is on the State Bar website under the DRIC. Robin Orlowski took the lead on a town hall at which people experiencing disabilities can tell their stories to educate policymakers and people involved with the judicial system about problems that need to be addressed to ensure the judicial system is accessible to those with disabilities. Sean Pevsner advises Orlowski and Cramer is assisting in the planning. The town hall will be next year. If you have a story to share, let us know.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Britney Harrison, Chair

The purpose of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is to develop and promote strategies and best practices for the State Bar of Texas in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The committee worked to identify opportunities within the organization to create an environment conducive to DEI, assisted in the creation of measurable goals, and continued the work of the Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by focusing on its 2021 report. The committee was divided into subcommittees with the objective of accomplishing concrete goals identified by the report. The

committee hosted a Law School Dean's Forum to discuss pipeline initiatives to recruit more diverse candidates to law school. Further, in efforts to obtain more diverse voices in the *Texas Bar Journal*, the committee appointed a DEI liaison to the Texas Bar Journal Board of Editors. The committee assisted the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with programming and obtaining speakers for the Train the Trainer event in Houston. Additionally, the committee focused on increasing awareness about the DEI speaker submission form in an effort to obtain more speakers for the DEI speaker bank on texasbar.com, and is developing an interfaith calendar to be disseminated to firms and the judiciary.

DIVERSITY IN THE PROFESSION

Farah Kamal, Chair

The Diversity in the Profession Committee had a wonderful start this year with a continued goal to have increased participation in the State Bar of Texas by diverse attorneys. All members jumped right into helping and planning existing and proposed goals for year 2022-2023. The Texas Minority Law Student Program, or TMLS, had two very successful programs this year—one held in October 2022 at St. Mary's University School of Law and another on March 30, 2023, at UNT Dallas College of Law. The committee also planned the 20th annual Texas Minority Attorney Program, a CLE program that was held at South Texas College of Law Houston on May 12, 2023. This program provides valuable information and resources to small firms and solo practitioners. The bar prep scholarship program had another successful year. With so many remarkable applications it was difficult to make the selections. The committee awarded bar prep scholarships to 16 students.

JURY SERVICE

Hon. Steven Denny, Chair

The Jury Service Committee met monthly in 2022-2023 to ensure the importance of jury service is clearly communicated to the public and that the safe and respectful treatment of

jurors is ensured throughout their experience in the system. The committee sought partnerships with other committees to ensure integration of bar objectives. It collaborated with the Law Focused Education Committee on a project titled "Jury Service a Call to Duty," which includes a series of videos explaining the legal system and is now available here: texaslr.org/jury-service-a-call-to-duty/. The committee concluded the "Juror's Bill of Rights" (working title), which is a list of best practices for the handling of jurors throughout the jury system and are awaiting further instruction from the State Bar of Texas on how best to disseminate that information. The committee continues working on the public service announcements encouraging jurors to respond when called for jury duty and is exploring the artwork submitted for the Law Day competition put on by the State Bar and Texas Young Lawyers Association as a potential source for material. The committee continues to explore ways to assist law enforcement in identifying and preventing jury scams through public education including blog postings on the Jury Service Committee page.

LAW FOCUSED EDUCATION

Shivali Sharma, Chair

The Law Focused Education Committee is proud to announce the completion of a new children's book for elementary school students titled *Legal Beagle: The Case of the Stolen Collar*. This beautifully illustrated book walks students through a mock trial to educate them about the role of attorneys and judges in the legal system. This free book also introduces students to legal terminology and to the many different practice areas within the legal field. Committee members will promote and present the project to local schools, after-school programs, and local bar associations and encourage interested attorneys to do the same. Email Shivali.Sharma@txcourts.gov to receive a free copy of this book. The committee also (1) translated *Scrappy Explores His Community*, a children's book on civic participation, into additional languages to increase

outreach; (2) continued to partner with attorneys and local bar associations to assist in the rollout of *Scrappy Explores His Community*; (3) provided free Texas Law-Related Education materials (texaslre.org) to school districts, private school networks, and community groups; (4) supported the Texas Citizen Bee, a statewide civic education program and competition (citizenbee.org); and (5) provided free professional development and opportunities for Texas teachers.

LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Steve Bolden, Chair

The Law Practice Management Committee continued its focus to fulfill its purposes: (1) the implementation of programs conducive to the effective, ethical delivery of legal services; (2) the delivery of legal services at reasonable prices, with sufficient return to ensure viability; and (3) an increase in the management skills of State Bar members. In 2022, committee members presented CLE on scaling up practice, advertising, systems for managing a practice, the hiring and training of staff, turnover of staff and changes in the workplace, drafting engagement letters, client management, liability insurance, ethics, and how to handle mistakes. Additionally, in support of 2022-2023 State Bar President Laura Gibson's succession planning initiative, the LPM Committee is preparing a succession planning toolkit, a program for outreach to local bars, and a project to assist with linking lawyers considering transitioning out of practice with lawyers ready to upgrade their law practice. The committee also presented at the 2023 Annual Meeting, including CLE topics on law firm culture, operating agreements, planned and unplanned disruption of law practice, mental health and substance use management, ethical zealous advocacy, employment law for small firms, and ethical time management and productivity.

LAWS RELATING TO IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY

Rehan Alimohammad, Chair

The Laws Relating to Immigration and Nationality Committee of the State Bar of Texas has been meeting regularly

and discussing new measures that address the migrant crisis that continues along our border and our points of entry along with the extraordinary delays in processing cases within our borders. In October 2022, members of the committee, and other interested State Bar members, attended a tour of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, facility at the Brownsville port to learn about CBP's novel security procedures. In February 2023, the committee met with U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs officials regarding issues in processing current and future cases. In April, the committee met with leadership at the Dallas Lockbox, where most Texas immigration cases are received, to discuss current issues with processing. The committee will continue to monitor laws related to immigration and nationality with the goal to improve the quality of legal services provided to those in need and to improve the functioning of the legal system.

LAWYERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Terry Hill, Chair

This committee assists the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program, or TLAP, by creating initiatives and programming for lawyers, law students, and judges related to substance use, other mental health disorders, and overall well-being support. The Paralegal Support and Outreach Subcommittee, with the help of members of the State Bar Paralegal Division, discussed ways to increase the visibility of TLAP resources in the legal support community. As a result, TLAP staff and committee members made numerous presentations and submitted articles available to members in the legal support community. The Law Schools Subcommittee expanded outreach to law students and law school deans. Through this subcommittee, TLAP facilitated a meeting with law school deans, highlighting helping students with post-pandemic challenges. The subcommittee supported TLAP staff making presentations at Texas law schools. The Suicide Prevention and Anti-Stigma Subcommittee developed materials illuminating the importance

of using person-first mental health terminology to be distributed to bring awareness to stigma perpetuating language. The Volunteer Engagement and Docket Support Subcommittee resurrected TLAP volunteer trainings in Austin, San Antonio, Houston, El Paso, Lubbock, Dallas, and Tyler. This subcommittee is investigating ways to help support lawyers with their pending dockets who need time away from their practices to receive mental health treatment.

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN CIVIL MATTERS

Keri D. Brown, Chair

The Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee works to create and implement legal aid and pro bono programs to assure delivery of legal services in civil matters to all Texans. The committee includes attorneys and advocates from law firms, legal aid providers, law schools, corporations, and judges. Committee members are committed to enhancing access to justice. In 2022-2023, through the Pro Bono Excellence Awards, the committee recognized deserving individuals, groups, and entities performing exceptional work in the field of legal services to the poor. Seven awards were given, and honorees were recognized at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting. Throughout the year, the committee monitored issues and challenges facing the public, with committee members working to increase the opportunities that every Texan has to obtain the legal assistance they need. Current projects include an effort to increase the number of prime partner banks (banks offering increased interest rates on IOLTA accounts; see teajf.org/attorneys/choose_a_prime_partner.aspx for more information) and encouraging a "pro bono minute" at CLEs.

LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN CRIMINAL MATTERS

Jani Maselli Wood, Chair

The Legal Services to the Poor in Criminal Matters Committee studies the indigent defense system in Texas and develops recommendations for entities that are or should be involved

in the provision of quality representation to indigent persons involved in criminal matters. The committee comprises members of the judiciary, prosecution, and defense, as well as representatives of court administration, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations with a focus on indigent defense. The committee updated the State Bar of Texas Performance Guidelines for Non-Capital Criminal Defense Representation to reflect changes in the law last year. The committee has worked on having the guidelines published in different periodicals throughout the state for maximum coverage. The committee has worked on a guide for attorneys in criminal courts in dealing with indigent clients in relation to court costs, fees, and fines. Additionally, the committee is working on a guide for indigent clients and the fees that are assessed with community supervision. The committee also received excellent recommendations for its Michael K. Moore and Warren Burnett awards. The awards recognize exceptional research or writing regarding indigent criminal defense and individuals that made extraordinary contributions to improving the quality of criminal legal representation to indigent Texans.

LOCAL BAR SERVICES

Hon. C. Michael Davis, Chair

The Local Bar Services Committee enhances communication between State Bar leadership and local bar associations to assist local bar leaders in the development of their associations. Resources available from the State Bar Local Bar Services Department include speaker coordination, membership assistance, program coordination, and guidance on creating a new association. Yearly, the committee plans the annual Law Day contest, Stars of Texas Bars Awards, and the Local Bar Leaders Conference. The Stars of Texas Bars Awards recognize local bar associations for outstanding involvement and commitment to the legal profession. The winners of the annual Law Day awards are recognized on the State Bar website and in the *Texas Bar Journal*.

The Local Bar Leaders Conference is scheduled to take place July 21-22 in Houston.

MINIMUM CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Stuart Colburn, Chair

The Minimum Continuing Legal Education Committee administers minimum continuing education programs established by Article XII of the State Bar Rules and the regulations and accreditation standards promulgated therefrom. The committee serves several functions. Most frequently, providers of continuing legal education appeal State Bar of Texas staff's decisions regarding hours or accreditation. Staff receives over 48,000 applications per year from non-accredited sponsors, out-of-state attorneys seeking credit, and existing accredited sponsors. The committee determines if the presentation consists of legal education or ethics within the definition of accreditation standards. The committee has recently responded to a charge from the State Bar Board of Directors regarding recommendations on changes to the accreditation standards for CLE activities allowing (but not requiring) courses on implicit or explicit bias and wellness to count toward ethics credit.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—BUSINESS, CONSUMER, INSURANCE & EMPLOYMENT

Carlos Soltero, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Business, Consumer, Insurance & Employment Committee spent most of the bar year finalizing updates for the 2022 edition, released this year. The latest edition includes comprehensive updates to the contracts section, including an organizational update and new or expanded material on release, fraudulent inducement, multiple material breaches, and materiality. The committee collaborated closely with the Pattern Jury Charges—Oil and Gas Committee on these updates, which appear in both volumes. The 2022 edition also includes significant updates to the employment section to reflect new statutory law. The

committee has worked closely with the other civil drafting volumes on updates to exemplary damages and the discussion on proximate cause. Following the publication of the 2022 edition, the committee has continued its work and is now focused on updates for 2024. The committee will consider additional updates to the contracts section, including on the discussion of broad form and trade customs. The committee is also working on new employment updates and is undertaking a study of the charges on construction contracts to consider where revisions or new materials are needed. The committee welcomes questions and input from the bench and bar; these can be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—CRIMINAL

Emily Johnson-Liu and James McDermott II, Co-Chairs

The past year saw the successful launch of the Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges as an online publication. As part of this multiyear project, the committee streamlined the template it uses for all charges to provide Texas jurors with clearer, more concise instructions on the relevant law. Since the November 2022 launch, the committee has updated the online publication with new charges for cruelty to non-livestock animals and has prepared charges for improper relationship between student and educator, failure to register as a sex offender, and murder by alternative manner and means, to be added in the coming months. Other new material includes instructions for bilingual jurors. Practitioners are encouraged to view and comment on the committee's proposed drafts posted on the Texas Bar Practice Blog (texasbarpractice.com/2022/11/21/proposed-changes-texas-criminal-pattern-jury-charges/). Committee members are working to educate the bench and bar about the usefulness and high quality of the new online Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges. The committee welcomes questions and comments about the online product as well as suggestions for future instructions, which may be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES— FAMILY AND PROBATE

Chris Nickelson, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Family and Probate Committee is preparing additions and updates to the material in the Texas Pattern Jury Charges—Family & Probate volume for its 2024 edition. The committee is considering new PJs, including additional charges for fraud actions in divorces, a new charge for civil contempt of court, and new charges for breaches of privacy in divorces. The committee also plans to revise the commentary about burdens of proof in will contests. Possible new materials under consideration are charges for guardianships of adults, fraudulent securing of document execution, and actions in beneficiary and right of survivor designations, as well as instructions to jurors about trial testimony translated from foreign languages. The committee kept an eye on legislation from the recent session and will update the volume to account for changes in relevant statutes. Comments, questions, and suggestions for new topics for inclusion in future editions may be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES— GENERAL NEGLIGENCE, INTENTIONAL PERSONAL TORTS & WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Hon. Hyattve Simmons, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—General Negligence, Intentional Personal Torts & Workers' Compensation Committee has finished updates on the 2022 volume. These changes include new language regarding proximate cause, personal injury damages, negligent undertaking, broad form submission, pecuniary loss, preservation of error, subsequent aggravation of injury, bystander injury, and personal property damages. The committee revised the comments to PJC 4.1 and 4.2 to address statutory changes resulting from the 87th Legislature's House Bill 19 in actions involving commercial motor vehicles. This also includes the publication of a multiyear project to revise the language regarding exemplary damages, as well as inferential rebuttal

and trespass and nuisance. The committee has also started work on the 2024 edition, monitoring the 88th regular legislative session and other statutory and caselaw updates, and preparing subcommittees for notable updates.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES— MALPRACTICE, PREMISES & PRODUCTS

Michelle Robberson, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Malpractice, Premises & Products Committee submitted its 2022 edition to the bench and State Bar, capping more than 18 months of revisions, additions, and improvements to the 2020 edition. The 2022 volume contains a new question for the subsequent aggravation of an injury caused by a defendant, a new charge for bystander injury, and completely overhauled questions and commentary for exceeding statutory limits on exemplary damages. In addition, the committee revised commentary for the proximate cause instruction and for the inferential rebuttal instructions, such as new and independent cause and sole proximate cause. This edition also introduces a new standalone comment explaining new legislation regarding liability limits for health care providers during pandemics. For the 2024 edition, the committee anticipates a new jury instruction for when a jury hears evidence from a deposition, as well as optional instructions for various damages types. The committee is committed to keeping a close eye on new developments in Texas law and welcomes comments and suggestions, which may be sent to books@texasbar.com. The mission remains the same—to “get it right.”

PATTERN JURY CHARGES—OIL AND GAS

Lisa Vaughn, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Oil and Gas Committee completed its work on the 2022 volume after dozens of committee and subcommittee meetings, as well as untold number of hours researching, reviewing, and drafting. The committee has continued its outreach to other Pattern Jury

Charges volumes to collaborate on issues that overlap between volumes, including contracts with the Business, Consumer, Insurance & Employment volume and real property damages with the General Negligence, Intentional Personal Torts & Workers' Compensation volume. Following completion of updates for the 2022 volume, the committee has begun its work on the 2024 volume, in which the committee will endeavor to review, update, and add questions to the volume in its continuing quest to assist the oil and gas litigator in properly submitting to the jury a case that arises in the oil and gas context. Of special focus will be issues related to co-tenancy and confusion of goods, recovery of attorneys' fees, and damages issues. As always, the committee actively solicits and appreciates any comments and suggestions and examples of actually used jury questions, which can be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PATTERN JURY CHARGES— OVERSIGHT

Daniel Hinde, Chair

The Pattern Jury Charges—Oversight Committee worked closely with each of the other Pattern Jury Charges committees to complete work on the 2022 civil editions published this year. The Oversight Committee supported several cross-volume updates including revisions to the exemplary damages charges and comments, a comprehensive update to the contracts charges, updates to nuisance and improper use of real property damages charges, updates on proximate cause, updates on physical impairment and inferential rebuttal, and new charges on subsequent aggravation of injury and bystander injury. The Oversight Committee also reviewed and provided guidance on all other updates proposed by the volumes. This year the Oversight Committee also worked closely with the Pattern Jury Charges—Criminal Committee as it prepared to launch its new online product, which went live in the fall of 2022. The Oversight Committee provided support in updating general templates as well as reviewing substantive updates and all new

material. Now that the 2022 editions have been published, the committee will support the work of the Pattern Jury Charges committees as they begin their work on updates and materials for the 2024 editions. The Oversight Committee welcomes questions and feedback, which can be sent to books@texasbar.com.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CIVILITY

John Shaw, Chair

The Professionalism and Civility Committee has committed to meeting four times throughout the State Bar year. For the first time in more than two years, the committee had a meeting in person. It was nice to finally be able to come together again. The committee has historically taken on many projects that were in keeping with the committee's purpose; however, it made a concerted effort to refocus and concentrate efforts on two specific projects moving forward. First, the committee decided the biannual Day of Civility should become an annual program. The committee looks forward to shifting to an annual Day of Civility with expanded programming and collaboration with local State Bar affiliates to ensure that civility remains front of mind for members. The committee also decided to double efforts at ensuring the Texas Lawyer's Creed has a prominent presence in the practice of law. It plans to work on ways to help Texas lawyers insert the creed and its teachings into their practices. The committee's goal is to renew professionalism between advocates that appear to have been impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic and the isolation that it caused among us all.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Megan LaVoie, Chair

The mission of the Public Affairs Committee is to expand public understanding of the legal system and to foster relations with the news media to advance that goal. During the 2022-2023 bar year, the Public Affairs Committee worked to build upon the success of its Open Government Seminar for the 2023 State Bar Annual Meeting. The Open Government Seminar was held June

23 in Austin. The seminar consisted of two panels. The panels discussed recent legislation impacting open government during a legislative update and examined new trends in remote proceedings during the second half of the seminar. The committee also began preliminary work on planning media programs designed to connect judges, journalists, and lawyers to discuss the judicial system.

REAL ESTATE FORMS

Edmond R. McCarthy Jr., Chair

The State Bar of Texas published the 2023 edition of the Texas Real Estate Forms Manual in June. The Real Estate Forms Committee, consisting of real estate attorneys from throughout Texas, drafted updates to the practice commentary and forms. Revisions to the manual reflect recent caselaw and implementation of legislative amendments enacted during the 87th regular legislative session. The 2023 edition also provides new forms and references to State Bar CLE articles. The manual is available as three sleek softbound volumes and online, downloadable versions that offer enhanced word-processing forms and links to cases, statutes, and CLE articles. The manual provides a starting point for recognizing issues and drafting documents for real estate transactions. The goal of the committee is to provide relevant information and resources for understanding how to handle a real estate transaction. The Real Estate Forms Committee undertook a major update of the State Bar's Texas Foreclosure Manual. Under the leadership of Sara Dysart, attorneys with subject matter expertise on foreclosure issues joined members of the Real Estate Forms Committee to deliver the May publication of the 2023 edition of the Texas Foreclosure Manual.

TEXAS BAR JOURNAL BOARD OF EDITORS

Brent Benoit, Chair

The *Texas Bar Journal* is the official publication of the State Bar of Texas. In print since 1938, the magazine serves as a publication of record for the Supreme Court of Texas, a scholarly legal

journal, and the association magazine for the State Bar of Texas. Each month (except a combined July/August issue), the *Texas Bar Journal* is mailed to approximately 127,500 subscribers, is available in digital format, and is the only publication reaching every lawyer in Texas. The Texas Bar Journal Board of Editors reviews legal article submissions, develops issue topics, and helps set the general editorial direction for the magazine. In 2022-2023, TBJ examined a number of subjects of interest to Texas lawyers, including access to justice and pro bono, aerospace law, hot topics in torts, criminal law, water law, LGBTQ law, and school law. The *Texas Bar Journal* also offered an informative "Year in Review" issue.

WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION

Lynn Bradshaw, Chair

The Women in the Profession Committee advises the State Bar Board of Directors on issues impacting women lawyers. Members also serve on the bar's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and assist with programming for the annual Texas Minority Attorney Program. During the pandemic, the committee published an impact survey in the *Texas Bar Journal* to bring awareness to issues facing attorneys. The committee used data from the survey to provide resources and tools to increase professional visibility. This year, the committee responded to requests expressed in the impact survey by providing attorneys with additional networking opportunities and free CLE webinars. In March 2023, as part of Women's History Month, the committee promoted statewide networking opportunities on International Women's Day. The committee also hosted its first free CLE presented by Patricia Hayes, addressing ways all bar members can build and maintain strategic professional relationships and expand their business networks. The committee also promoted Betty Trapp Chapman's *Rough Road to Justice: The Journey of Women Lawyers in Texas* with a virtual book club. Moving forward, the committee will host additional free CLE webinars on topics including salary negotiation and non-traditional career paths. **TBJ**