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HOMETOWN: AUSTIN

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BOARD MEMBER: AT-LARGE DIRECTOR SINCE 2022

INTERVIEW BY **WILL KORN**
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THERE WAS NO SINGLE DEFINING EVENT THAT MADE WANTING TO BE A LAWYER CLEAR. But I did love to read and some of my first heroes were lawyers, like Gandhi, Mandela, Gus Garcia, and (the fictional) Atticus Finch. Maybe that planted the seed. More concretely, I think my involvement as a student leader at the University of Texas at Austin and the Harvard Kennedy School put me in contact with friends and mentors that made a legal career seem like a natural fit for me. So, there was no master plan in my case, but I was blessed with the opportunity to become the first attorney in my family, with a law degree from the Boston University School of Law.

THE GOVERNMENT IS OUR CLIENT, AND GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS ARE CHARGED WITH PROTECTING THE PUBLIC. I think that experience is something unique we bring to the table.

GET INVOLVED! I think local bar associations are a great way to connect with others with similar interests and to give back to your local community.

I'M AN AT-LARGE DIRECTOR, APPOINTED BY STATE BAR OF TEXAS IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT LAURA GIBSON. I look at State Bar service as another platform to give back. Prior to my current position, I was president of the Cameron County Bar Association, after having served in several positions locally. I'm also a former officer of my county's young lawyers association and a current officer with the State Bar of Texas Hispanic Issues Section. Given my background, my priority is the same as it was at the local level: making sure we're giving value to our members and building a better leadership pipeline.

AS AN OFFICER OF THE HISPANIC ISSUES SECTION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS AND CO-CHAIR OF THE SECTION'S CLE COMMITTEE, WE MET THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HEAD ON. We were not able to meet in person, but we still wanted to stay connected. To meet that need, we made new connections and partnered with local bar associations from around the state to coordinate a very well-attended virtual monthly CLE series. Those connections have since served as a leadership pipeline. And during that time, we initiated the highly successful virtual LAWtería program to raise funds for legal aid in Texas.

SELF-GOVERNANCE IS A PRIVILEGE HANDED TO US, AND WE'RE THE CURRENT STEWARDS CHARGED WITH PROTECTING THAT LEGACY. And part of that charge is remembering that—while we're all Texans—we live in one of the most diverse states in the United States; culturally, economically, politically, and geographically. Those differences can at times be challenging but that diversity is a strength and worth protecting when it comes to decision-making. E Pluribus Unum.

ONE TOP ISSUE FACING TEXAS ATTORNEYS TODAY is ensuring civility and mutual respect while we work on the complex and divisive issues of our day.

MY FELLOW STATE BAR OF TEXAS DIRECTORS AND I HAVE IMPROVED THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN TEXAS by providing a platform, particularly in committee and section work, to work on the issues facing our bar and state. I would encourage any attorney with a passion for service to reach out to your bar leadership about getting plugged in. We need your energy and ideas!

MOST OF MY FREE TIME is taken up driving our two sons (ages 12 and 15) to their tennis, cross country, and flag football practices and games. Or helping them prepare for an upcoming academic competition. But I wouldn't have it any other way! **TBJ**