



ABOVE: Ethan Head (center), the high scorer of the July 2023 Texas Bar Examination and a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law, with (from left) Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht, Texas Board of Law Examiners Executive Director Nahdiah Hoang, Texas Board of Law Examiners Member C. Alfred Mackenzie, and Supreme Court of Texas Justice Brett Busby. PHOTO BY PATRICIA BUSA MCCONNICO

'You're Not Just Entering a Job Force, You're Entering a Profession'

Texas' newest attorneys get sworn in.

WRITTEN BY PATRICIA BUSA MCCONNICO

Family, friends, State Bar of Texas officers, representatives from the Texas law schools and the Texas Board of Law Examiners, and members of the Supreme Court of Texas and the Court of Criminal Appeals welcomed into the profession the state's newest attorneys at the New Lawyer Induction Ceremony on October 30 at Bass Concert Hall in Austin.

Speakers at the ceremony included State Bar of Texas President Cindy Tisdale; Texas Young Lawyers Association President Laura Pratt; the July 2023 Bar Exam's top scorer, Ethan Head, a May 2023 graduate of the University of Texas School of Law; Supreme Court of Texas Justice Brett Busby, who presented the Texas Access to Justice Commission's Law Student Pro Bono Awards and the Law School Commitment to Service Award; and Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht, who led the new attorney class through the Lawyer's Oath.

Tisdale told the newest attorneys that in addition to upholding the rule of law and assisting clients, most importantly, "You have the honor of practicing in a self-governing bar." She explained that as a profession, Texas lawyers have an independent grievance system and the right to vote on disciplinary rules. Tisdale recognized the first-generation lawyers in the crowd, stressed the importance of finding a mentor, encouraged the group to do pro bono legal work, and reviewed the mission of the State Bar of Texas. "You're not just entering a job force, you're entering a profession, and there is something very valuable to that," Tisdale said.

Pratt addressed the group on the role of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, or TYLA, in assisting the State Bar of Texas in facilitating the administration of justice, fostering respect for the rule of law, and most prominently, in advancing the role of lawyers in serving the public.

Head started off his speech with a quick disclaimer: "I'm not a litigator, and you are about to see why." He recognized those he

said were more deserving in recognition than he was—those who worked, raised children, or cared for a loved one while studying for the bar exam. “My path to the bar exam was free of the obstacles that many people had to navigate. So I would like to take a second and ask that the audience recognize all of the people who worked so hard to get where they are today,” Head said. “Balancing the bar with all of those responsibilities is far more impressive than anything I’ve done and is more deserving of celebration.” He invited the group to thank the people who had helped them get to where they were on this day. Head closed by congratulating the crowd.

Mackenzie, representing the Texas Board of Law Examiners, then presented the list of successful examinees to Hecht, who followed by leading the new class through the Lawyer’s Oath. He highlighted the

JULY 2023 BAR EXAM PASS RATE INFORMATION

The table below shows the number of graduates from each accredited Texas law school who took the bar exam for the first time in July, the number that passed, and the percentage that passed.

LAW SCHOOL	TESTED	PASSED	PASS RATE
Baylor	105	97	92.38%
SMU	195	170	87.18%
South Texas	216	175	81.02%
St. Mary’s	169	131	77.51%
Texas A&M	143	135	94.41%
Texas Southern	113	71	62.83%
Texas Tech	122	112	91.80%
U. of Houston	208	186	89.42%
U. of North Texas	80	56	70.00%
U. of Texas	206	191	92.72%
TOTAL	1557	1324	85.04%

importance of honoring both the U.S. and Texas constitutions and operating with civility in court proceedings. “From this day forward, you are the voice and the instrument for the rule of law, whether you are prosecuting or defending an individual charged with transgressions against society; representing a party in a civil dispute; drafting a contract, a deed, or a will; or giving other legal counsel to a client; everything you do contributes to a republic in which the rights to life, liberty, and property have displaced reliance on class, heredity, wealth, and might,” Hecht said. “You, therefore, have a special responsibility not only to those you represent but to our profession and to this great experiment in democracy. I hope your practice will be meaningful and that in the words of the great justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, ‘You will live greatly in the law.’” **TBJ**

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JUNE 20-21, 2024
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