

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR NEW ADULTS

TYLA's signature project, *Adulthood*, closes the legal education gap on growing up.

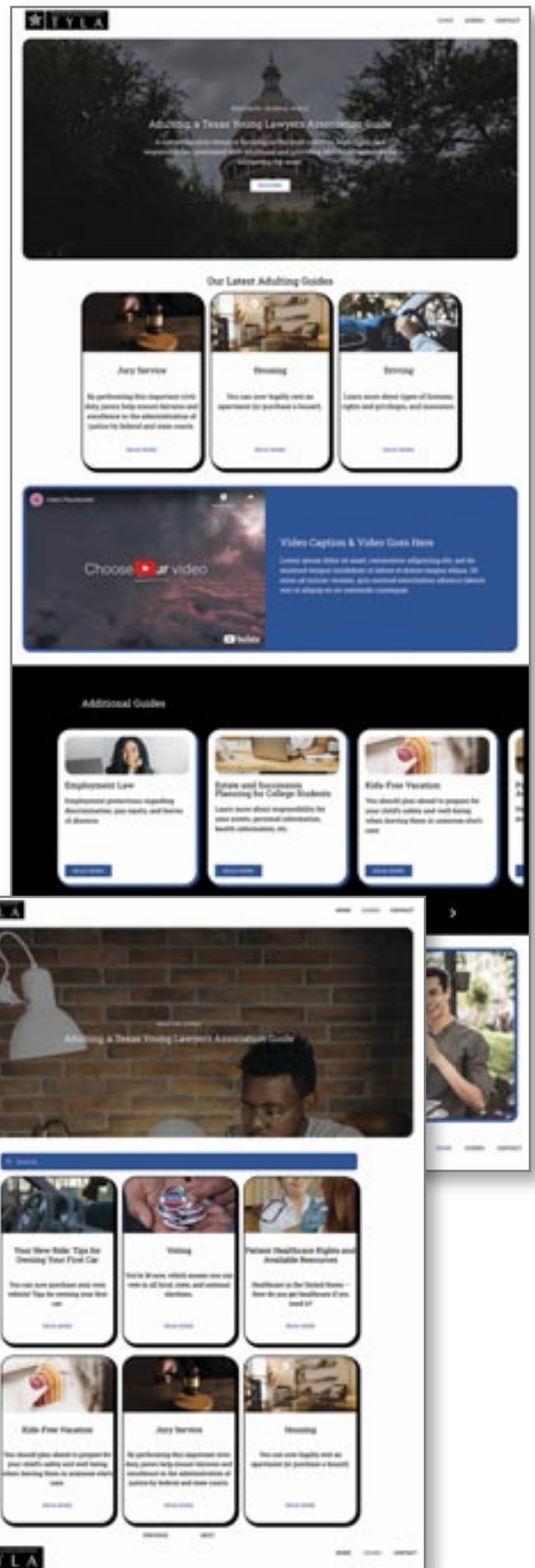
WRITTEN BY ERIC QUITUGUA

The Texas Young Lawyers Association's *Adulthood* website, adulthood.tyla.org, is live online. Backed by funding from the Texas Bar Foundation, the signature project of TYLA President Laura Pratt strives to help attorneys, educators, and newly minted adults navigate the changing application of law. *Adulthood* features short-form videos in which members of the TYLA Public Service Committee speak on an array of legal topics such as jury duty and voting. The project may fill in the gaps of knowledge between understanding basic legal structures and how they affect everyday life, Pratt said.

"The harsh reality is that many emerging adults are ill-equipped to deal with the realities of adulthood," Pratt said.

Adulthood's genesis began in Lubbock, where Pratt and volunteers from the Lubbock Area Bar Association spoke to high schoolers about common legal rights and responsibilities. Many students had a foundational understanding of the nation's legal machinations, she said. But few understood where to turn for answers to their legal questions. Motivated to teach young people beyond the time constraints of a visit in class, Pratt made it the focus of her project as president of TYLA.

Pratt enlisted TYLA directors Anietie Akpan and Ashton Butcher and the TYLA Public Service Committee, along with TYLA and State Bar of Texas staff, to create short-form, social media-friendly videos for the *Adulthood* website. The series provides new adults with a snapshot of the how-tos in several areas, including consumer protection, credit, contracts,



ABOVE AND NEXT PAGE: Photos courtesy of the Texas Young Lawyers Association



employment, health care, housing, jury duty, marriage, military service, voting, and driving.

The objective of *Adulting* focuses on emerging adults. Each topic is tailored to be most applicable to an individual in a certain age group. One video covering health care, for example, explains that a young adult can obtain health insurance through school (in college). People under the age of 26 also have the option to get coverage through their parents' plan, the video explains.

In another video, "Your New Ride: Tips for Owning Your First Car," *Adulting* gives an overview of the process of purchasing a car. Here, TYLA explains the difference between leasing and buying, the importance of car maintenance, checking with local authorities for separate requirements (in light of the passage of House Bill 3297), and requirements in Texas for liability insurance and underinsured/uninsured motorist protection.

Pratt hopes *Adulting*, along with other TYLA and State Bar resources, provides helpful information, resources, and tools, and empowers newly minted adults to navigate life decisions that could have deep legal impact.

"When you reach the age of majority, you aren't handed an instruction manual explaining your new responsibilities to others and their new responsibilities to you," Pratt said. "I probably wouldn't even have known general topics to Google to find help! Because you don't know what you don't know, I'm hopeful this project gives new adults the beginning building blocks to understand each topic and inspires them to ask more questions and use keywords to help them figure out how to deal with individual legal issues that arise in their own lives and seek counsel when necessary." **TBJ**

