



## Keeping Our Noble Profession 'IN ONE PIECE'

**IT WAS TOUGH GROWING UP IN A SMALL TEXAS TOWN WHERE EVERYBODY KNEW MY FATHER.**

He was, after all, a local judge. At times and in places where I least expected it, someone would inevitably say, "Are you Judge Benesh's boy?!" That certainly made me mindful of my conduct and comments around town. But as if that wasn't enough, my dad would remind me, from time to time, about the importance of maintaining a good reputation. When I was heading out the door for the evening with friends or for a date, he would often say, "Your first name is yours, but your last name is mine, so bring it back in one piece."

In 2022, after 35 years of legal practice, I allowed someone to toss my name in the hat as a possible candidate to run for president of the State Bar . . . and two years later, here I am. I didn't do it to stroke my own ego or pad my resume. I decided to run for State Bar president because I wanted to do all I could to keep our legal profession in Texas—buffeted by the high-pressure demands of our calling and the erosion of civil discourse in our society and among lawyers—in one piece.

**DOCKET ASSISTANCE:** I would like to work with the State Bar and the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program to expand the opportunities for docket assistance to attorneys who must step back from their law practices while seeking treatment for mental health or substance use issues from local volunteer lawyers who can keep attorneys' dockets afloat and clients informed on a temporary basis while lawyers get the help they need.

**ELECTRONIC FILING:** I want to work with the Office of Court Administration, the Texas district clerks, the Texas Judicial Committee on Information Technology, and other stakeholders to standardize electronic case filings across all Texas counties. The variability of electronic filing from county to county creates a patchwork quilt of differing protocols that is unnecessarily frustrating to lawyers and their clients.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:** I would like to continue and complete the work begun by Immediate Past President Cindy Tisdale of identifying and establishing the role of the State Bar in connection with the use of artificial intelligence by Texas attorneys. The State Bar of Texas Taskforce for Responsible AI in the Law delivered its interim report to the State Bar this past January and should complete its work during my term. AI is here to stay, and we, both individually and as a profession, must embrace it. Indeed, Comment 8 to Rule 1.01 of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct states that "each lawyer should strive to become and remain proficient and competent in the practice of law, *including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology.*"

**WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT:** I would like to work with the State Bar to make its website easier to navigate and more user-friendly. Among other things, I would like for the State Bar website to include a searchable resource, accessible from the website's main page, with clear and concise answers to the most common questions asked by lawyers and the general public.

My father's admonitions about preserving my name and reputation reverberate through the decades of my life. Indeed, he is never far from me—his law license hangs above mine on the wall by my desk and his gavel rests on the shelf in my office. Let us all in this coming year commit ourselves to the tenets that keep our noble profession in one piece—civil discourse, integrity, respect, and courtesy.

### STEVE BENESH

President, 2024-2025  
State Bar of Texas



**ABOVE:** Steve's father, G.A. Benesh.  
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