

Supreme Court of Texas Order Preliminarily Approves Rules Governing Licensed Legal Paraprofessionals, Court-Access Assistants

The Supreme Court of Texas issued an order on August 6 preliminarily approving rules governing licensed legal paraprofessionals and licensed court-access assistants and inviting public comments. The court's new and amended rules would allow licensed paraprofessionals to represent low-income individuals facing certain issues in the areas of family law, estate planning and probate law, and consumer debt law, as well as in justice court cases. The rules also would allow licensed court-access assistants sponsored by approved legal assistance organizations to represent low-income individuals in justice court. Comments to the court regarding the new and amended rules should be submitted in writing to rulescomments@txcourts.gov by November 1. The court anticipates the rules will take effect on December 1. The State Bar of Texas Board of Directors is expected to consider providing comments on the proposed rules as requested by the court at its meeting on September 27 in Lubbock. State Bar members are encouraged to email boardofdirectors@texasbar.com to provide input to the board as it considers its recommendations on the court's proposed rules.

AMOS L. MAZZANT III NAMED 2024 BAYLOR LAWYER OF THE YEAR

Amos L. Mazzant III, U.S. district judge for the Eastern District of Texas, was honored as the 2024 Baylor Lawyer of the Year by the Baylor Law School Alumni Association during a ceremony on June 28 in Plano. "The Baylor Lawyer of the Year award is the highest honor bestowed to a Baylor lawyer each year," Baylor Law School Interim Dean Patricia A. Wilson said in a press release. "From his legal abilities and professional accomplishments to his commitment to service in his community, Baylor Law School, family, and church, Judge Mazzant represents the best of Baylor Law." Baylor Law Alumni Association President Lawrence Morales II presented Mazzant with the award. Mazzant was appointed district judge for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division in December 2014 by former President Barack Obama. He previously served as a magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Texas from 2009 to 2014. The introductions of the 2024 Baylor Lawyer of the Year were delivered by Aileen Goldman Durrett, U.S. magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Texas, and Brad J.B. Toben, dean emeritus and M.C. & Mattie Caston professor of law at Baylor Law School. In their introductions, Durrett and Toben highlighted Mazzant's exemplary service and dedication to justice, noting his profound impact on the legal community and his unwavering commitment to fairness.

SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS ORDER TO IMPLEMENT NEXTGEN BAR EXAM, SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Supreme Court of Texas issued an order on June 25 regarding the adoption and implementation of the NextGen Bar Exam and a separate Texas law component. The court expects

both to debut with the administration of the July 2028 Texas Bar Examination, according to a press release. The court issued the order following an internal study and the recommendations of the Texas Board of Law Examiners and its NextGen Work Group. The work group included BLE board members and Texas law school deans. To view the full court order, go to txcourts.gov/media/1458783/249040.pdf. Similarly to the current Uniform Bar Examination, the NextGen Bar Exam is expected to allow portable scores to be transferrable to other jurisdictions, according to the order. The court anticipates that NextGen scores earned in other jurisdictions will also be transferrable to Texas. Additionally, the court accepted the BLE's recommendation to reintroduce a graded Texas law component to the bar exam "to ensure that applicants who wish to be admitted to the Texas Bar have sufficient knowledge of important aspects of Texas law," according to a press release. The court anticipates the component will be a half-day graded exam and the change will take effect with the NextGen exam in July 2028. The National Conference of Bar Examiners has said the NextGen Bar Exam will replace the Uniform Bar Examination in some jurisdictions as early as July 2026. February 2028 is expected to be the final administration of the UBE, according to a press release. The Supreme Court invites public comments on this order through September 30, 2024. Written comments should be emailed to rulescomments@txcourts.gov. For more information about the Supreme Court of Texas, go to txcourts.gov/supreme.

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE OF LAW HOUSTON EARNS 2024 FRITZ LANHAM TRADEMARK AWARD

The State Bar of Texas presented the 2024 Fritz Lanham Trademark Award on June 21 to the Trademark Clinic in South Texas College of Law Houston's Randall O. Sorrels Legal Clinics, according to a press release. The Fritz Lanham award is given annually to recognize lawyers and businesses for their accomplishments on brand-related projects. "We have been a resource for small businesses for more than a decade. We recently filed case number 250. This impact is what the award recognizes," said STCL Professor Emeritus Phillip Page, who has taught the students in the Trademark Clinic since its inception in 2012, in a press release. The award presentation occurred during the Intellectual Property Section awards ceremony at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Dallas.

AUSTIN YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION HOSTS 24TH ANNUAL EVENING WITH THE JUDICIARY

The Austin Young Lawyers Association will host the 24th annual Evening with the Judiciary from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on September 26 at Chateau Bellevue in Austin. The event aims to introduce Austin's young lawyers to the federal, state, and local judges before whom they will practice throughout their careers. This reception has become a signature event for AYLA, providing a unique opportunity for young lawyers and judges to meet in a relaxed social environment, according to a press release. Admission is complimentary for AYLA members, members of the judiciary, and sponsors. For more information about the event and to register, go to www.austinbar.org/?pg=aylaevents&evAction=showDetail&eid=287180&evSubAction=listAll. **TBJ**