ABOVE: Daniel Dreyfus (center), the high scorer of the July 2024 Texas Bar Examination and a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law, with (from left) Texas Board of Law Examiners Executive Director Nahdiah Hoang, former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht, Supreme Court of Texas Justice Brett Busby, and Texas Board of Law Examiners Vice Chair Teresa Ereon Giltner. PHOTO BY ERIC QUITUGUA

'We Are All Striving to Uphold the Same Oath'

Texas welcomes its newest lawyers.

WRITTEN BY **ERIC QUITUGUA**

Texas' newest lawyers were sworn into the legal profession on October 28 at the University of Texas Bass Concert Hall in Austin. Welcoming the new class were the Supreme Court of Texas, Court of Criminal Appeals, and State Bar of Texas. Joining the courts and bar were the Texas Board of Law Examiners, law school deans, and friends and family as newly minted attorneys took the Lawyer's Oath.

State Bar of Texas President Steve Benesh encouraged the audience to participate in pro bono work that assists underrepresented community members. He also emphasized the importance of identifying mentors from places such as inns of court or local and state bar associations. "But as you seek to be inspired, remember you too are an inspiration to some," Benesh said. "Seek out not only those who can help you but also those whom you can help."

Texas Young Lawyers Association President Hisham Masri congratulated the new attorneys before highlighting a few TYLA resources such as its wellness website, podcasts, and first-year attorney checklist. He drove a message of collaboration, referencing the game Hearthstone and its ranking system for players. "In many ways, our lawyers are the legends of our society," Masri said. "Like those players who reach 'legend,' lawyers must rely on their skill, knowledge, hard work, and good decision-making to

succeed. The best players often collaborate, support one another, and work tirelessly to achieve significant outcomes."

The bar exam's high scorer was recent University of Texas School of Law graduate Daniel Dreyfus, who struck a theme of civility in law practice. The profession, Dreyfus said, affords the advantage of friendship. Through common experience such as taking the same bar exam or taking the same oath, there is common ground to be found, he said. But the practice of law is adversarial, Dreyfus said. "The stakes are real, and we have ethical obligations to advocate for our clients," he said. "I hope that in the coming years, we remember that we are all striving to uphold the same oath and that, hopefully, we are still friends."

Former Supreme Court of Texas Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht closed out the ceremony, administering the Lawyer's Oath for the 72nd and last time. Hecht, who retired from the bench at the end of December 2024, told the now officially sworn-in attorneys that everything they do contributes "to a republic in which the rights to life, liberty, and property have displaced reliance on politics, class, heredity, wealth, and military might."

"You therefore have a special responsibility not only to those you represent, but to our profession, and to this great experiment in democracy," Hecht said. "Your summons to the bar is an enormous calling. 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

JULY 2024 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	146	139	95.21%
SMU	219	199	90.87%
South Texas	227	208	91.63%
St. Mary's	195	145	74.36%
Texas A&M	155	151	97.42%
Texas Southern	137	104	75.91%
Texas Tech	132	113	85.61%
U. of Houston	218	198	90.83%
U. of North Texas	83	60	72.29%
U. of Texas	306	295	96.41%
TOTAL	1818	1612	88.67%