



Dime Con Quién Andas y Te Diré Quién Eres **THE MENTORS WHO SHAPE WHO WE BECOME**

GROWING UP IN A MEXICAN AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD, there was a phrase I heard often: “Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres” (“Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are”). It was a reminder that the people we surround ourselves with shape who we become.

At the time, it was advice about friendships and influences. Years later, as I began my legal career, I realized how much that same wisdom applies to mentorship.

Early on, someone offered advice that sounded familiar: Find the people you aspire to be like and make them your mentors. So that is exactly what I tried to do. If I am a reflection of the company I keep, then I can say I have been incredibly fortunate. Throughout my career, I have sought mentors who care deeply about their work, find meaning in public service, and lead with integrity.

I was especially fortunate to begin my career surrounded by strong mentors. My first supervisors—Marissa Perez-Garcia, Marisela Jacaman, Virginia Aranda, and Dolores Martinez—showed me what thoughtful leadership looks like and instilled in me a deep respect for public service. Judges Beckie Palomo and Monica Notzon have always been generous with encouragement while also holding me accountable to the responsibilities that come with this profession. And colleagues like Ara Cantu and Julia Rubio became the kind of friends who remind you that the practice of law does not have to be a solitary journey.

Each of these individuals has left a lasting imprint on my life, and I am grateful for the lessons they shared along the way.

Mentorship is not just personal—it shapes the future of our profession. When lawyers guide the next generation, they strengthen the profession as a whole. That is why the Texas Young Lawyers Association has made mentorship a priority.

Throughout the year, TYLA has hosted virtual panels and webinars for law students and young lawyers across Texas. We have also visited law schools to share resources, introduce TYLA projects, and help students begin building their professional networks.

Our board has also taken opportunities to meet students where they are. At our board meetings, directors have participated in networking and mentorship events with law students, college students, and high school students. From partnering with Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston to meeting students at Cathedral High School in El Paso and fellows in the Kazen Fellowship Program in Laredo, these conversations allow students to hear directly from young lawyers about the realities of the profession.

Mentorship does not always require decades of experience. Sometimes it simply requires sharing your story and encouraging someone who is just beginning their journey.

After all, that saying from my childhood still holds true: *Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres*.

So, young lawyers, choose your company wisely.

Find a mentor. And just as importantly, be one.



ABOVE: Members of the TYLA Board of Directors during a public service project at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALYSON A. MARTINEZ

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