

## CHAIR'S REPORT



ELIZABETH E. MACK

### *We Have Much to Be Proud Of!*

**I**N 1925, AS A NEWLY-MINTED GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF LAW, my grandfather returned to Fort Worth to practice law with his father. His father, my great grandfather, began practicing law in Fort Worth in 1893 soon after the Texas Supreme Court created the Second Court of Appeals in Fort Worth (the First Court, in Galveston, and the Third Court, in Austin, were created at the same time as the Second Court). My great grandfather was the only Jewish lawyer in Fort Worth then, and his practice incorporated both trial and appellate work. But in the 1910s, he was forced to give up his trial practice by a Ku Klux Klan that dominated Tarrant County, that tarred and feathered non-whites and non-Protestants, and that made it clear that it would not tolerate Jews in the courtroom. By 1925, the Klan's grip on Fort Worth had loosened, thanks to the progressive reporting of the long-defunct newspaper *The Fort Worth Press*, the enterprise of a few civic leaders, the deliberate bombing of the 4000-seat Klan meeting hall, and a new city manager who fired everyone in city government who was a member of the Klan. And thus my great grandfather, with his son at his side, was safe to resume his trial practice.

When my father graduated from law school in 1961 and joined my grandfather's law practice in Fort Worth, lawyer demographics were only slightly different than in 1925. The not-yet-integrated Tarrant County Bar Association boasted more than 400 members in 1961, and only a handful of black and Hispanic lawyers practiced law in Fort Worth. Although Tarrant County saw its first woman judge soon after Dad began practicing law, many women with law degrees during those days could only find jobs as secretaries or court reporters. Not surprisingly, the face of the profession was more or less the same across the State.

How different the Bar of 2009 looks from the Bar of 1893, or 1925, or 1961. Today, the Bar and the Litigation Section are significantly closer to being representative of the community at large. We think nothing of the fact that we are multi-racial, of various religions, male and female, old and young. There is no right or wrong race, religion, or gender. We should be extremely proud of how far we have come. For my part, I am in some small way one of the faces representing the miles covered: at once I am a full-time mom of 9-year-old twins and a full-time lawyer who also happens to be Jewish. I would have struggled to find my place in Bars of previous eras simply because I am a woman, or a mother, or Jewish. Not so today.

I have served as Chair of the Litigation Section with a sense of history, as a fourth generation Texan practicing law in Texas, with gratitude for the trailblazers and progressive thinkers who made it possible for me to be here, and with a strong desire to further the work of the Section. And in that regard, we have accomplished a great deal. Here are some of the highlights:

- With the Legislative Session, the Litigation Section implemented a new e-blast, *The LS Snap*. Sent by email approximately once a week during the Session, the LS Snap provided information that Section members could use to track bills affecting trial practice and the judiciary.
- Under the editorial leadership of **Professor Lonny Hoffman** and his editorial board, the Litigation Section continued its quarterly publication of *The Advocate*, presenting symposia on topics of importance, including a Retrospective of HB 4.

- *News for the Bar*, published electronically three times a year, continues to inform the Litigation Section of more immediate issues and case law updates. Many thanks to **Geoff Gannaway** and his editorial board.
- The Litigation Section funded six individual \$4,000 summer legal internships. The 2009 recipients of the internships are **Diocesan and Migrant Refugee Service** (El Paso), **Lone Star Legal Aid** (Tyler), **Human Rights Initiative** (Dallas), **Legal Aid of Northwest Texas** (Dallas), **Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid** (Edinburg), and **Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc.** (San Antonio).
- The Section gave approximately \$28,000 in grants to the following recipients: **Advocacy, Inc.** to represent underage Medicaid recipients who are challenging the denial of medically necessary medical care; **The Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy, Inc.**, associated with the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University, for establishment of a training program for volunteer attorneys to provide pro bono representation to school children on misdemeanor “school ticket” cases; **The Housing Crisis Center** in support of its Legal Education and Services Program; **Lone Star Legal Aid** to support its trials and presentations in the 20 East Texas Counties it serves; **Mosaic Family Services** to support its Multicultural Legal Services Program, which provides direct legal services to low income immigrant victims of domestic violence and human trafficking; and **Oficina Legal Del Pueblo Unido, Inc. (OLPU) d/b/a Texas Civil Rights**, which trains trusted women members of the community and survivors of abuse to do outreach in homes, churches, community centers, and other venues to provide basic information about domestic violence and available legal and other services.
- As part of the Litigation Section’s Mentoring Program, the Litigation Section partnered with the State Bar of Texas Law Student Division to organize and present mentoring discussions at host law schools. The Program is casual, occurs over lunch, and allows law students to interact with local practicing lawyers to discuss various aspects of litigation practice.
- The Section hosted the Twenty-Fifth Annual Litigation Update Seminar in San Antonio, January 14-15, 2009, which received rave reviews.
- The Section was a major participant in providing programming for the 2009 Annual Meeting in Dallas, including co-hosting presentations by **David Brooks**, columnist for *The New York Times*; **Roger Cossack**, ESPN Legal Analyst; **Ken Starr**, Dean of Pepperdine Law School; and **Morris Dees**, Co-Founder and Chief Counsel of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Thank you to my hard-working and creative Executive Committee: Fred Bowers, Walker Friedman, Linda McDonald, Michael Smith, and Alistair Dawson. And thank you to all my Committee Chairs, and to all the Council Members, who get everything done. Thank you, thank you, thank you to the Bar staff (you know who you are), who help us implement all of our wild dreams. We could not make such an impact without everyone’s hard work.

I leave you in good hands with Fred Bowers, from Lubbock, as your Chair. Thank you again for a great year.

All the best,



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