SCBA
SMITH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

The Advocate

SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

Volume 28, Issue 7

www.smithcountybar.com

2024 - 2025

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A Letter from the SCBF President

Mandy Nelson

It is a new year, and with the new year comes resolutions, hopes, and a fresh start.

Last year, my family moved into a "new to us house" that came with a beautiful piano. Having grown up taking piano lessons as a little girl, I resolved to get out my old piano books and practice. After practicing my piano, I remarked to my husband how I wished I had learned to play more instruments. So, for my 44th birthday, my husband - who would never be caught dead in a jewelry store - picked out a new guitar for my birthday present. Learning to play said present has been challenging, exciting, and humbling. Luckily for me, my much cooler and more talented older brother is a guitarist and singer songwriter, and he has taken pity on me with some virtual lessons.

This new challenge has been a good distraction for me as news of strife, division and the breakdown of collegiality and the rule of law fills my news feed, my social media and my mind. It is easy to become disheartened and believe that nothing I can do can make a difference.

However, a person much wiser than I recently reminded me that when I feel hopeless, I should keep it local. I can work to build community and make a difference in MY community, right here in Smith County. I can do this by giving my time and resources to the Smith County Bar Foundation.

If I see a disregard for the rule of law on the national level, then I can work locally to promote the rule of law and constitutional principles right here in Smith County. Each September, the Smith County Bar Foundation organizes Constitution Day at Tyler Junior College, where a guest speaker is invited to speak about our constitution and its importance in our society today for local middle, high school and college students. In May, the Smith County Bar Foundation helps organize and fund Law Day, which promotes the rule of law in our county.

If I am disheartened by the tide of young people more interested in becoming social media influencers than policemen, lawyers, or social workers, then I can work to inspire young people locally to begin a career in the legal profession. The Smith County Bar Foundation funds a yearly scholarship for a student with ties to Smith County who is working towards a degree in the legal profession.

If I read in the news about those who can't or don't know how to exercise their rights, then I can work to promote access to justice locally. Each Spring, the Smith County Bar Foundation organizes and funds the People's Law School, where Smith County residents can get a DYI crash course on navigating the Courts, landlord/tenant law, immigration, and other important topics. Additionally, the Smith County Bar Foundation coordinates a volunteer attorney program together with Lonestar legal aid to help provide pro bono representation to those in our community who need it.

In 2025, I hope that you will join in my resolve to keep it local and make a difference in Smith County by supporting the Smith County Bar Foundation.

Mandy Nelson

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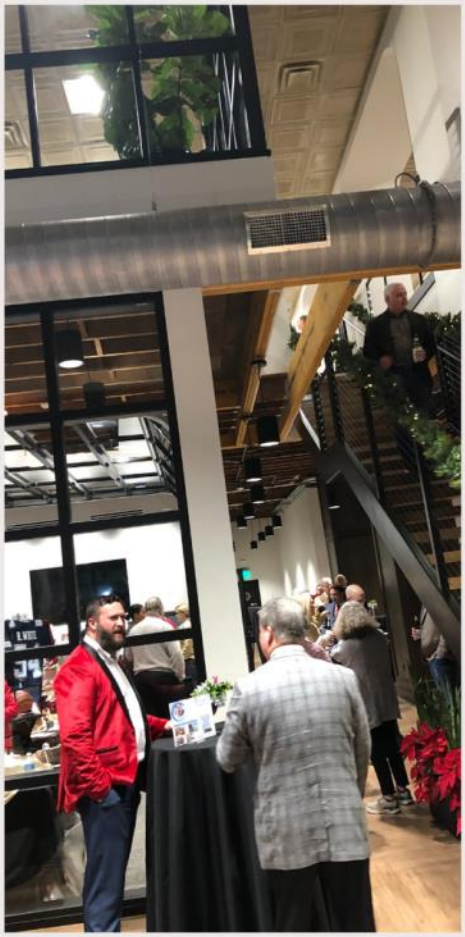
Catering by Azalea Catering Company

2025 HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

MENU



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Nominations are now being accepted for the 2025

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
AND THE
CRISTY ARSCOTT LIBERTY BELL AWARD

The **Award of Excellence** is given annually to a member of the SCBA who has significantly contributed in a positive way to the community and, at the same time, raised the profile of the profession. It was first presented to the Honorable Judith K. Guthrie on Law Day 2007.

The Liberty Bell Award, officially renamed the **Cristy Arscott Liberty Bell Award** in 2020, is given to an outstanding non-lawyer in Smith County who has made the most selfless contribution to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of justice in his or her community. The Award recognizes community service that promotes a better understanding of government, encourages a greater respect for the law and the courts, stimulates a deeper sense of individual responsibility to help citizens recognize their duties and rights, contributes to the effective functioning of our institutions of government, and instills better understanding and appreciation of the law.

NOMINATIONS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE SMITH COUNTY BAR OFFICE OR EMAIL BETH FILLA AT ED@SMITHCOUNTYBAR.COM BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025.

FORMER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE HONOREES

Hon. Judith K. Guthrie, 2007
Mike Coker, 2008
Deborah Race, 2009
Ron Vickery, 2010
Hon. Diane V. DeVasto, 2011
Jim Huggler, 2012
Shannon Dacus, 2013
Tom Brown, 2014
Rosemary Jones, 2015
David Hudson, 2016
Robert H. Wilson, 2017
Tab Beall, 2018
Ron Schoenbrun, 2019
Debby Gunter, 2020 - 2022
G. Patrick Black, 2023
John C. Hardy, 2024

FORMER LIBERTY BELL AWARD HONOREES

Rev. Dr. David A. Galloway, 2000
Children's Advocacy Center, 2001
Casa for Kids, 2001
Hon. Larry Craig, 2002
Bridgette Franklin, 2003
Betty Whitten, 2004
Lynn R. McGinnis, 2005
David M. Long, 2006
Sheriff J.B. Smith, 2007
Cristy Arscott Keul, 2008
Dee Brock, 2009
Vanessa E. Curry, 2010
Clay Alexander, 2011
Donna Ashby, 2012
Mike Lantz, 2013
Sheriff Larry Smith, 2014
Janice Caldwell, 2015
Michael Morton, 2016
Terri Smith, 2017
Lana Peacock, 2018
Lois Rogers, 2019

Cristy Arscott Liberty Bell Award Honoree
Barbara Bass, 2020-2022
Tyler Junior College, 2023
Denise Hawk, 2024

THE SCBA WELCOMES YOU TO OUR NOVEMBER CLE AT WILLOW BROOK COUNTRY CLUB:

PROTECTING FROM BURNOUT:

Take care of the Linchpin or the whole wheel falls apart!

PRESENTED BY

CHRIS LEGG, LPC

ALETHIA FAMILY COUNSELING CENTER

JANUARY 24, 2025

Willow Brook Country Club | 12 -1

Lunch included with registration fee.

[1.00 ethics hour]

Due to increased credit card processing fees on our website, feel free to email your registration information to ed@smithcountybar.com and bring a check or cash to the event!

SCBA
SMITH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

The SCBA is an accredited sponsor, approved by the State Bar of Texas, Committee on MCLE. This course has been approved in the amount of 1.0 credit hour of professional responsibility.

Ready to take the next step in your law career and become a Judge?

High School Mock Trial competitions are happening on **January 25** and we need volunteers to be judges!!

Sign up today and see what it's like to be on the other side of the bench!

Sessions are approximately 2 hours each. The event will be held at the Smith County Courthouse; first competition begins at 8 am. Email Beth for more details!

beth@smithcountybar.com

SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

MISSION STATEMENT

Furthering justice and promoting the rule of law by providing resources and education to our community

The Smith County Bar Foundation is the charitable arm of the Smith County Bar Association. The Foundation was formed by a group of visionary leaders, focused on preserving and furthering justice in Smith County and the continued promotion of the rule of law.

Join us in keeping this dream alive and growing! Send in your check (PO Box 7248 Tyler, TX 75711); scan the QR code; or email Beth for more options!

Join the President's Circle!

Make a difference for the people of Smith County and the SCBF!

SCBA AND THE TYLER AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE!

The Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to present free learning opportunities in January!

Hear from fellow SCBA members, Richard Lottman and Eric Kolder. Registration is free through the Tyler Chamber's eventbrite page!

41ST ANNUAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK BY DR. RAY PERRYMAN • JANUARY 9, 2025

BONUS SESSION PRESENTED BY

LAVENDER WARR

THE GREAT WEALTH TRANSFER

MASTERING THE UNPRECEDENTED SHIFT IN BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

1:30 P.M. W.T. BROOKSHIRE CONFERENCE CENTER

AN $84 TRILLION ECONOMIC TIDAL WAVE IS UNDERWAY. BABY BOOMERS ARE ESTIM
OWN AS MANY AS 65% OF AMERICAN SMALL BUSINESSES – THAT'S 4 MILLION BUSIN
AS THESE OWNERS RETIRE, AND WITH 3 OUT OF 4 OF THEIR BUSINESSES EXPECT
CHANGE HANDS IN JUST THE NEXT 10 YEARS, AN UNPRECEDENTED WEALTH TRANSI
RAPIDLY RESHAPING INDUSTRIES AND INTRODUCING EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNI

JOIN US AFTER DR. PERRYMAN'S KEYNOTE FOR A PANEL-OF-EXPERTS DISCUSS
ADDRESSING THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ACCOMPANYING THE

OUR MODERATOR AND PANELISTS WILL PROVIDE:

- PRACTICAL, REAL-WORLD INSIGHTS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS AND INVESTORS O PLAN AHEAD AND POSITION YOURSELF FOR SUCCESS;
- GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS ON HOW TO DELIVER PIVOTAL VALUE TO YOUR CLIENTS;
- INSIGHTS ON THE ROLE OF PRIVATE EQUITY.

~ PANELISTS ~

DUARDO ZALDIVAR
O-FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER, MOSAIC ETA

Eduardo Zaldivar is an experienced private equity investor and startup operator. Eduardo's expertise includes healthcare, real estate, software and technology.

RICHARD H. LOTTMANN
PARTNER, ALLEN LOTTMANN KIMMEL P.C.

With over 40 years of legal expe
Lottmann is an expert in busines
legal entity structures, risk mitig
structuring, contract preparation
disputes, asset & stock sales, and
negotiations.

ICHAEL S. THOMAS, CPA/ABV/CFF
RESIDENT, BARRETT & THOMAS, P.C.

Michael Thomas has been providing accounting and tax services since 1989. As a forensic accountant, Thomas is an expert in analyzing the financial, accounting, and tax aspects of businesses, including establishing valuations, crafting time-of-transaction tax strategies, and giving expert testimony in commercial litigation.

BERN EBERSOLE
CONSULTANT, LAVENDER WARR

As a former consultant at McKi
and principal at Long Water Op
Bern Ebersole has industry-leadi
lifecycle experience - deal sourci
structuring strategy, operational
diligence, optimal equity & debt
post-transaction governance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BONUS SESSION OR THE PANELISTS, CONTACT HENRY BELL: HBELL@TYLERTEXAS.COM.

FREE SEMINAR

a natural beauty Tyler TEXAS Area Chamber of Commerce

BUSINESS LEADERS SERIES

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

3:30-5:00 PM | GENECOV ROOM

ERIC KOLDER
Kolder Law Firm

2025 EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Join us for the 2025 Employment Law Update to find out the most important developments over the course of employment law that businesses need to know. Key statutory, regulatory, and case law developments will be discussed regarding the laws covering harassment, discrimination, retaliation, disability accommodations, wage and hours law, noncompete agreements, etc. The laws on these topics are always shifting and moving, and being up to date on the current state of affairs is vital to avoid costly pitfalls.

Eric and his wife, Mary, recently opened the Kolder Law Firm together. They are both graduates of the University of Texas School of Law and LSU in Accounting prior to that. Eric was formerly with Ramey & Flock in Tyler where he was a partner until 2023. Eric's practice focuses on employment litigation and compliance. He has represented hundreds of businesses from all over Texas for their employment and other legal needs and has proven track record of courtroom success. He and Mary look forward to continuing to serve East Texas with their employment law, commercial litigation, and probate litigation

Scan for more information from the Chamber!

ATTORNEYS FIRST INSURANCE

Attorneys First Insurance is a professional liability agency located in Palm Harbor, Florida. We sell one product - Lawyers Professional Liability Insurance. That product is also called Malpractice Insurance, or Errors and Omissions Insurance.

I am the sole owner of the agency. My partner, Deb Prendergast and I work very hard to help our clients find liability insurance at a price that makes sense for them. Our goal is to save a firm 20 - 40% of what they are currently paying.

10 years ago, I was asked to represent several great insurance companies in Texas. Since then, Attorneys First Insurance has become the agent for several hundred law firms across Texas. Our specialty focus is on small firms, 1-20 lawyers. If a lawyer is respirating and a member in good standing with the Texas Bar, we can find them malpractice insurance!

Visit our website - www.attorneysfirst.com; email me at sam@attorneysfirst.com; or call 727-799-4321.

Sam Cohen, founder

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Thank you for your continued participation with and support of the SCBA.

Visit www.smithcountybar.com to renew your membership or join a section!

We have auto renew!

Important SCB Dates

BLOOD DRIVE
January 3, *Plaza Tower, 9a - 4p*

SCBA, SCBF, SCYLA Joint Board Meeting
January 23, *Plaza Tower conf. room, 12 - 1:15p*

Region 7 High School Mock Trial
January 25, *Smith County Courthouse, 8a -5p*

New Year's Day -
Smith County Courthouse closed!
January 1

SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

The SCBF is a 501/c/3, EIN 81-0585550

Mission Statement
Furthering justice and promoting the rule of law by providing resources and education to the community.

Interested in including the SCBF in your estate planning? Have non-cash assets and would like a charitable deduction? Give me a call - we can help!
beth@smithcountybar.com

Click here if you would like to honor someone with a gift to the Foundation.

Thanks to all for honoring your loved ones

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