



2025 - 2026

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Letter from the SCBA President



Marisa

Fellow Members,

By 1891, the Texas Supreme Court was drowning. The state's population had boomed, and disputes along with it, involving

railroads crisscrossing East Texas, land conflicts, and the end of the cattle drive era turning into litigation. Three justices were riding circuit, staring at a docket with no bottom, and something had to give.

So Texas did what Texas does when the stakes are high: it built something great. Voters approved a constitutional amendment which accomplished three structural changes. It established the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, intermediate civil appellate courts, and permanently seated the Texas Supreme Court in Austin. The legislature got to work in 1892 and stood up the first three courts of appeals in Galveston, Fort Worth, and Austin. With three intermediate appellate courts consisting of three judges per panel, justice was distributed across the geography of a state too big and too busy for any single bench to handle alone.

The idea was simple and right. Justice should be close to home, it should be consistent, and it should be handled by judges who know the region they serve. Those who drew up that 1891 amendment understood that the rule of law runs on institutional steadiness. Steady, principled review earns the trust of the people who depend on it.

Which brings me to our Chief Justice Jim Worthen, who is giving our entire Bar a gift of deep-rooted knowledge. Chief Justice Worthen is a seventh-generation Texan who grew up in Big

Sandy, practiced law in Tyler for eighteen years, joined the 12th Court in 1999, and became its Chief Justice on January 1, 2003. He has been at that helm for over twenty years. But he didn't just lead this court. He studied it deeply enough to write a law review article on the entire organizational history of intermediate appellate courts in Texas from 1892 to 2003, which was published in South Texas Law Review, Fall, 2004. The man who has quietly kept the machinery of East Texas justice running also took the time to understand exactly how that machinery was built and why it matters.

In April, Chief Justice Worthen is hosting a two-hour CLE on the history and future of the very court he has led for over two decades. This is not a CLE you attend for the credit. This is the kind of thing you attend because you will never get this chance again. And there will be no "catching it later" web replay at your desk. This is a live, in person event only.

It begins at 10:30 in the courtroom itself. Go sit in the room for a deep look at the history of the 12th Court: the justices who shaped it, the decisions that defined it, and how it has evolved in its contributions to justice in East Texas. Then from 11:45 to 1:00, the conversation moves to Willow Brook Country Club for a look at where the court goes from here.

The people who built this system in 1891 understood that good courts are built slowly, tended carefully, and handed forward with intention. Chief Justice Worthen has spent his career proving them right. Come hear him tell it.



**April is your chance to earn multiple CLE credits.
Attend this 2-part session on the 12th Court of
Appeals & earn 2 CLE hours (with ½ hour of ethics)!**

This CLE will start at the current 12th Court of Appeals in the Cotton Belt building at 10:30 am and will finish with lunch at Willow Brook starting at 11:45.

Must attend both sessions for 2 hours of CLE.

12th COURT OF APPEALS: the Past, Present, & Future



PRESENTED BY
Chief Justice James Worthen,
Twelfth Court of Appeals

APRIL 10, 2026

**Cotton Belt Building, Suite 354
1517 W. Front St. | 10:30 - 11:15 am**

Willow Brook Country Club | 11:45 am - 1:00
Lunch included with registration fee.
[.50 ethics hour]



CLE Registration

If registering through our website, please make sure to log in to your member account first! If you have problems or would like to pay at the event, email Beth at ed@smithcountybar.com.



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 2.0 credit hours of professional responsibility, if attend both sessions.

Have friends or family members that are always looking for free legal advice? Send them our way and have them register for People's Law School!

People's Law School

April 11, 2026

Tyler Junior College
(Rogers Nursing & Health
Sciences Center)

9:00 am - noon



Curious about your legal rights? Want to better understand the legal system? Join us for **FREE** classes taught by local attorneys and judges, covering practical legal topics that affect everyday life.

Register today - it's free!



SCAN to REGISTER

FREE CLASSES ON:

- Courtroom conduct
- *Pro Se* representation
- Probate issues
- Property tax protests
- and more!





SAVE THE DATE

2026

LAW DAY CELEBRATION

May 1, 2026
Cascades Country Club
5:30 - 7:00 pm

Mark your calendars for an evening celebration of our Smith County legal community, most especially Mr. Otis Carroll, Jr., the 2026 Justinian Honoree.





Sponsorship opportunities are now available for Law Day 2026! Email or call Beth for more information.
beth@smithcountybar.com
903-526-2700

BAR SPONSORS - \$2,500 (Limit 2)

- Reserved Table for 10
- Company/Logo/Personal name on table sign
- Logo & name displayed on drink stations at the event
- Sponsor name listed on program & print material at event
- Sponsor name listed on website
- Recognition from the podium during the event

DECOR SPONSORS - \$1,500 (Limit 4)

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- Company/Logo/Personal name on table sign
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- Sponsor name listed on program & print material at event
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- Recognition from the podium during the event

FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD SPONSOR - \$1,250

- Reserved Table for 8
- Company/Logo/Personal name on table sign
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- Recognition from the podium during the event

FRIEND OF THE COURT SPONSOR - \$600

- Reserved Seating for 4
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ADVOCATE SPONSOR - \$300

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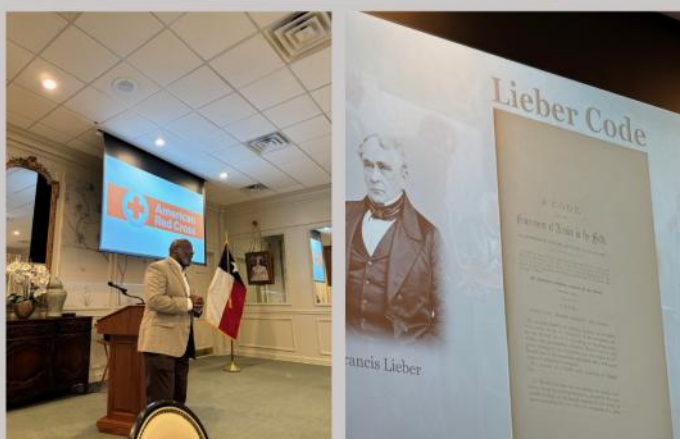
MAY 1, 2026
CASCADES COUNTRY CLUB
5:30 - 7:00 PM



MARCH CLE - Even War Has Rules

Retired Marine Staff Sergeant Ron Green, with the American Red Cross, spoke on International Humanitarian Law, rules of engagement, and associated implications at our March 13 CLE.

Thanks to Meme Thomas for the program! Have a CLE topic? Send Beth a note!



2025-26 SCBA MEMBERSHIP

HELP US FILL THE PAGE - INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN!

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Smith, Greg
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Soares, Marcio
Soin, Robert
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Spitzer, Steve
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Stiffler, Krystina
Stinson, Andrew
Stutes, Ronald
Sutton, Angela

Tarry, Micah John
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Whitehurst, Diane
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Williams, Jim
Willis, Bryan
Wood, Jeff
Wood, Morgan
Worthen, Hon. James
Wulf, Cheryl

Yarbrough, Trey
Yeager, Ruth
Young, Betty

WHY WE DO BLOOD DRIVES....

Many thanks to the 12 donors that gave 14 units of blood at the Carter BloodCare/Smith County Bar mobile blood drive! That translates to more than 40 lives being impacted by a simple process that takes less than an hour. On top of that great feeling of helping others, we also received these great sweatshirts. What cool gift should we try for next time?



Early Giving Starts
APRIL 6
SMITH COUNTY BAR
FOUNDATION



- **GO** to EastTexasGivingDay.org
- **CHOOSE** Smith County Bar Foundation
- **GIVE** a minimum of only \$10!
- **CELEBRATE** share the fun with friends & family!



*The State Bar of Texas cordially
invites you and your family
to the
New Lawyers Induction Ceremony
Monday, April 27, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.*

**Bass Concert Hall
2350 Robert Dedman Dr.
Austin, Texas**

Refreshments will be provided

**Alyson A. Martinez, President
Texas Young Lawyers Association**

**Santos Vargas, President
State Bar of Texas**

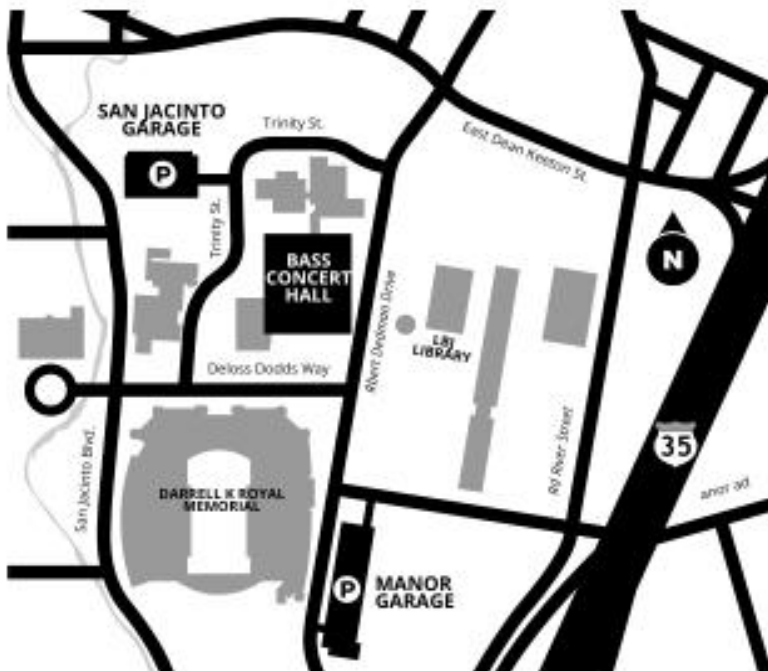
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(ENTRANCE ON TRINITY ST.)

MANOR GARAGE

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(ENTRANCES ON ROBERT DEDMAN AND
CLYDE LITTLEFIELD)





Texas Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers is an association of groups of lawyers and law students across Texas supporting each other in recovery from a wide variety of issues.

Join us for our 34th Annual Convention, June 5-7, at the Hotel Viata in Austin, which will feature personal stories of recovery, as well as discussions on addictions and mental health issues in the legal profession, wellness experiences and more!

More information and registration can be found at
<https://www.txlcl.org/>

Call for Nominations

CHIEF JUSTICE JACK POPE PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

The Texas Center for Legal Ethics is now accepting nominations for the 18th annual Chief Justice Jack Pope Professionalism Award. The Award is presented to an appellate lawyer or judge who epitomizes the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

The Award honors one of the Center's three founders, former Chief Justice Jack Pope, who was the recipient of the inaugural Award in 2009. Both active and retired lawyers and judges are eligible. The 2026 Pope Award will be presented at the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society Dinner in September 2026.

Nominations should include a one-page explanation of the nominee's qualifications, as well as the nominee's biography, resume, or CV.

Deadline for nominations: May 1, 2026.

Email nominations to:
Texas Center for Legal Ethics
info@legalethictexas.com

Mail nominations to:
Texas Center for Legal Ethics
PO Box 12487
Austin, TX 78711



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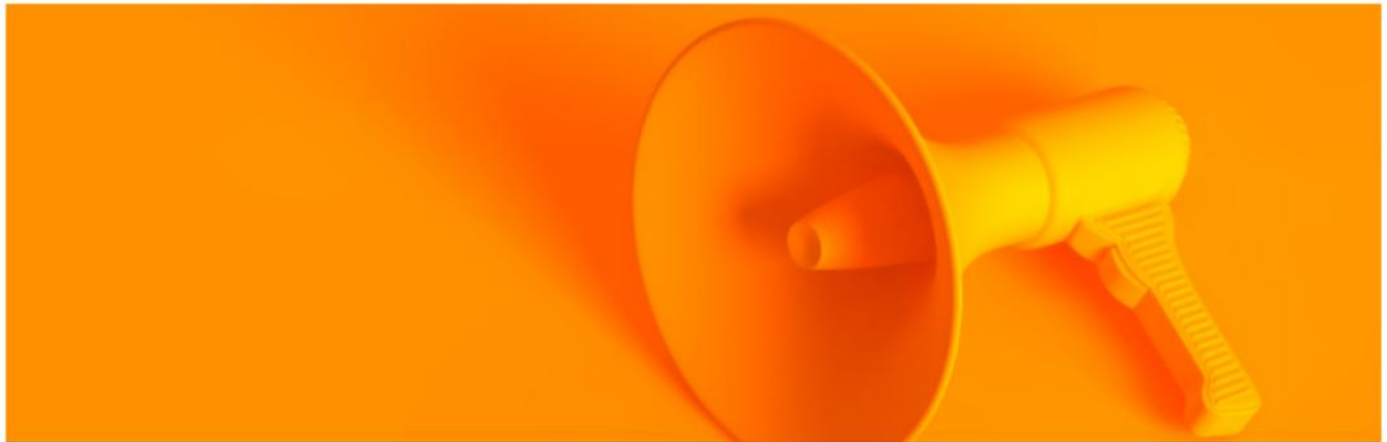
www.best-ep.com



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Vacancy Announcement - Legal Assistant (OA)



Holland, Kelly (USATXE)
Human Resources Specialist

1 min read

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Texas has posted a vacancy announcement for the following position:

Title: **Legal Assistant (OA)**

Series, Grade: **GS-0986-6/7**

No. of Positions Available: 1

Location: **Tyler, TX**

Opening Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026

Closing Date: Thursday, March 26, 2026

Who May Be Considered: DE - United States Citizens,
Merit Staffing, Government-Wide (All)

**JOB DETAILS AND APPLICATION PROCESS CAN
BE FOUND AT
USAJOBS.GOV/JOB/860829200**



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SUMMIT

TYLER AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

"A CLEAR VISION FOR GROWING AND SUCCEEDING PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY IN TYLER"

MONDAY, NOV. 16, 2026
MAYFAIR BUILDING
11:00AM - 5:00PM

NETWORKING HAPPY HOUR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

AGENDA:

REGISTRATION & LUNCH

CHET GARNER "THE DAYTRIPPER", KEYNOTE

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

"TYLER TOMORROW" PANEL

"BUILDING A CAREER WITH PURPOSE" PANEL

NETWORKING HAPPY HOUR



CHAMBER MEMBER: \$120

NON-MEMBER: \$150

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT TYLERTEXAS.COM
OR CONTACT GRANT INGRAM - GINGRAM@TYLERTEXAS.COM**



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

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

Important SCB Dates

CLE

March 13, *Willow Brook Country Club*, 12 - 1p

SCBF Board Meeting

March 18, *People's Petroleum Building*, 12 - 1p

SCYLA Board Meeting

March 19, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

SCBA Board Meeting

March 26, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

2-hour CLE

April 10, *Cotton Belt Building & Willow Brook Country Club*, 10:30 am—1p

People's Law School

April 11, *Tyler Junior College*, 9a-noon

LAW DAY

May 1, *Cascades Country Club*, 5:30p - 7:00p



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

Advertising

Interested in advertising in The Advocate?
 Call or email Beth to check out member rates and options!



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