SCBA
SMITH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

The Advocate

SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

Volume 29, Issue 2

www.smithcountybar.com

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Letter from the SCBA President

Marisa Allen

Dear Fellow Members and Friends,

Well, here we are in August already! Can you believe it? It feels like just yesterday the school year ended, and now we're watching the kids head back to school with their shiny new backpacks and wondering why we had to fill them with 47 glue sticks. There's something about this time of year that fills me with optimism about what lies ahead and gratefulness for the teachers that will be dealing with all those glue sticks.

We've got a wonderful schedule planned that'll educate, connect and inspire us. But here's my challenge to you: bring someone along! You know that attorney who's been thinking about joining? Invite them. That law school friend who just moved to town? Bring them as your guest. Our association thrives when we welcome new faces and fresh perspectives.

Speaking of what lies ahead, I want to spotlight the incredible work happening right here through our Smith County Bar Foundation. Under Matt Rowan's leadership, our foundation is building our scholarship endowment for college students interested in the legal field. We currently offer two $1,000 scholarships and are working to expand both the number and value of these awards. I encourage each of you to learn more about how you can support the foundation's vital mission.

So as we say goodbye to summer and hello to a new season of learning and growing together, I hope you'll mark your calendars. And most importantly, bring a colleague along for the journey.

Here's to a year filled with purpose and fellowship,

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

NAME, IMAGE, & LIKENESS (NIL):
Sports Law as Hot as the Texas Summer

PRESENTED BY
JUSTIN JONES
Fee, Smith & Sharp, LLP

AUGUST 8, 2025

Willow Brook Country Club | 12 -1

Lunch included with registration fee.
[1.0 hour of CLE credit, with .5 ethics]

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 .

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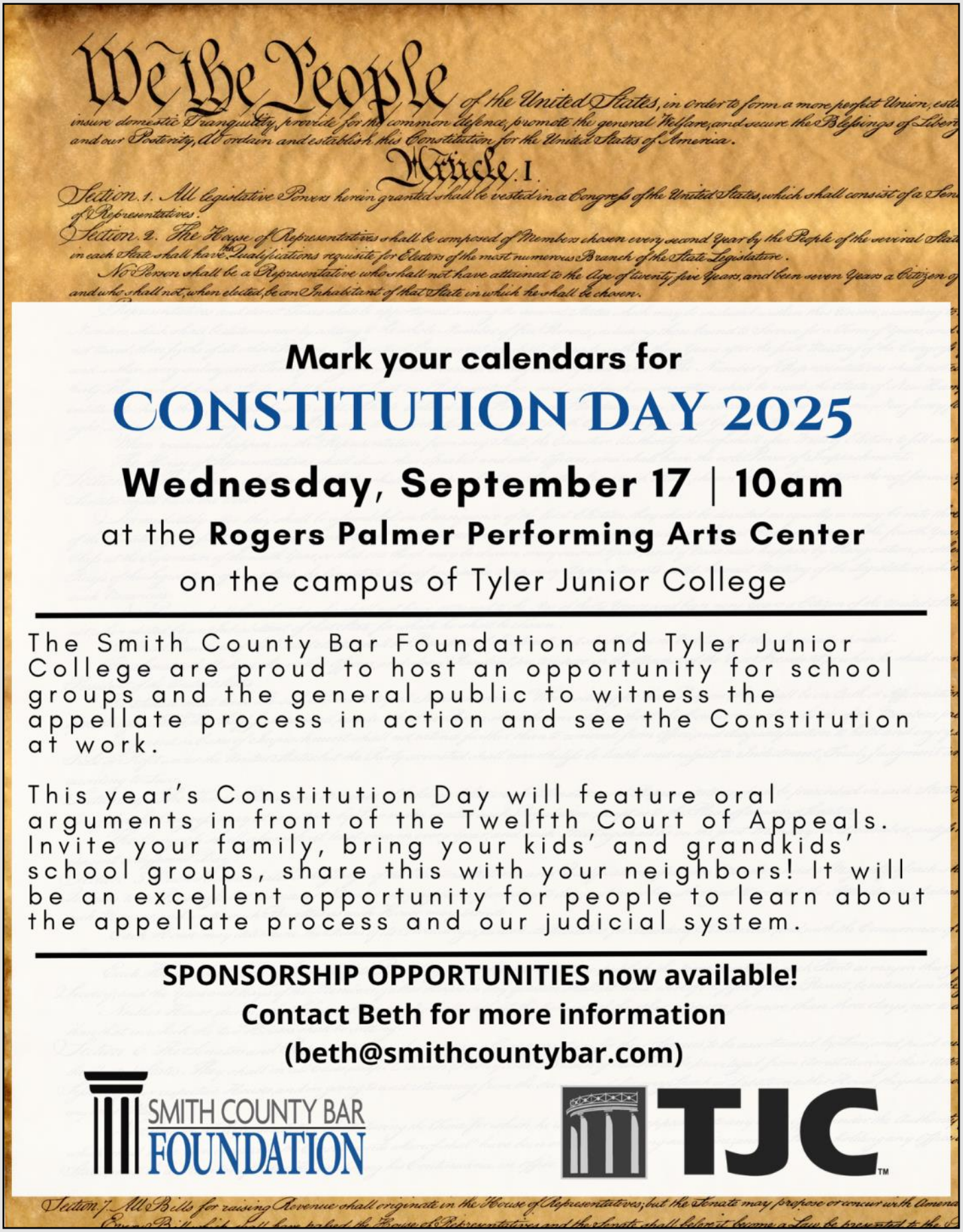
The SCBA is an accredited sponsor, approved by the State Bar of Texas, Committee on MCLE. This course has been approved in the amount of 1.0 credit hour of professional responsibility.



Mark your calendars for

CONSTITUTION DAY 2025

Wednesday, September 17 | 10am

at the **Rogers Palmer Performing Arts Center**

on the campus of Tyler Junior College

The Smith County Bar Foundation and Tyler Junior College are proud to host an opportunity for school groups and the general public to witness the appellate process in action and see the Constitution at work.

This year's Constitution Day will feature oral arguments in front of the Twelfth Court of Appeals. Invite your family, bring your kids' and grandkids' school groups, share this with your neighbors! It will be an excellent opportunity for people to learn about the appellate process and our judicial system.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES now available!

Contact Beth for more information

(beth@smithcountybar.com)

SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

TJC™

SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

CONSTITUTION DAY

September 17, 2025
on the campus of Tyler Junior College

Oral Arguments with the
Twelfth Court of Appeals

- ○ **Speaker Sponsor - $1,500** (logo preeminently displayed; premiere table for 8)
- ○ **Invitation Sponsor - $1,000** (logo on invitation; reserved table for 8)
- ○ **Constitution Sponsor - $750** (sticker in booklets; 6 reserved seats)
- ○ **Preamble Sponsor - $500** (4 reserved seats)
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- ○ **Amendments Sponsor - $150** (2 general admission lunch tickets)

Includes acknowledgement in the newsletter, website, program, event signage, and verbal recognition at the luncheon.

Name to be listed on materials:

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Payment options:

- ○ **Check enclosed**
  (make payable to Smith County Bar Foundation)
- ○ **Paid online**
- ○ **Please send invoice**

Constitution Day Opportunities

PO Box 7248
Tyler, TX 75711

903.526.2700
www.smithcountybar.com

It's Make-a-Will Month

Safeguard Your Legacy: a reminder for every Texas Attorney

As members of the legal profession, we understand the value of planning ahead, protecting our clients, and promoting access to justice. But in the rush of daily practice, we sometimes overlook the most fundamental planning step for ourselves and our families: creating a will. August is Make-A-Will Month, a timely opportunity to reflect on the importance of this foundational legal tool —not just for our clients, but for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

As attorneys, we know better than most the consequences of dying intestate. Yet, studies consistently show that a surprising number of lawyers—those of us trained to protect others—have not executed even the most basic estate planning documents for ourselves. A valid will does more than distribute assets. It appoints guardians for minor children, names executors, minimizes family conflict, and ensures that a person's wishes—not the laws of intestacy—govern the future. For those of us who work in probate and estate litigation, we have seen firsthand how costly and divisive the absence of a will can be. As members of the legal profession, we are uniquely positioned to demystify the estate planning process and help reduce the staggering percentage of Americans who remain without a will.

Let's use August as a time not just to remind—but to act. Here are a few simple steps we can take this month:

- Lead by example: If you don't have a will, take the time to make one. If you do, review it to ensure it reflects current circumstances and Texas law. Encourage your partners, associates and administrative staff to do the same.
- Educate others: Share resources with clients and colleagues to encourage basic estate planning.
- Give back: Participate in or help organize pro bono will clinics, particularly for veterans, seniors, or underserved Texans.

A will is one of the most empowering legal tools available. It speaks when we no longer can, ensures our wishes are followed, and provides clarity for those we leave behind. As attorneys, we are in a unique position to promote this message across every practice area. Let's use Make-A-Will Month to protect our own legacies—and help others protect theirs.

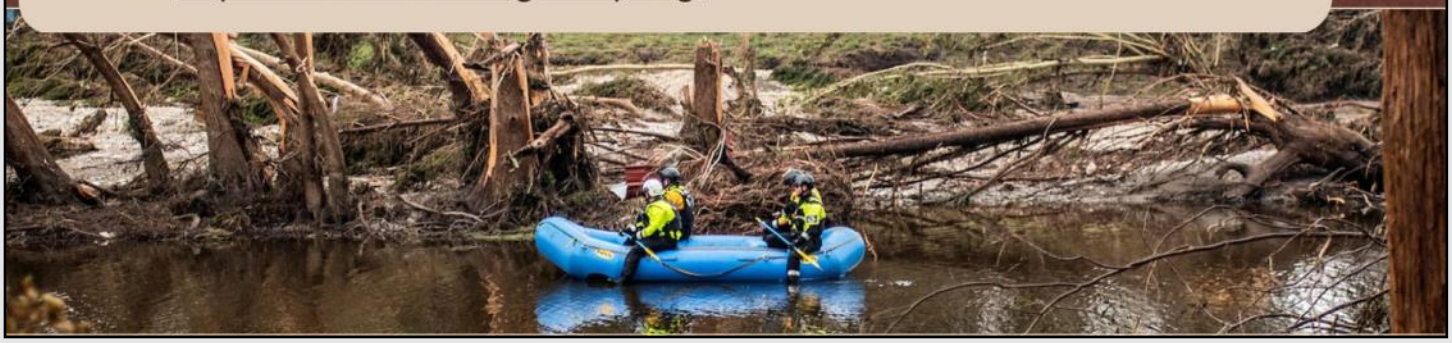
Leigh Hunt Goodson, JD, LL.M.
Member, Smith County Bar Association
President-Elect, Smith County Bar Foundation

HOW CAN WE HELP?

After a major natural disaster, many attorneys and legal professionals want to use their skills and knowledge to assist those impacted. Here are tips to consider on how to volunteer following a natural disaster.

- **Follow the Lead of Local Legal Aid Providers.** Local staff are busy assessing, formulating, and implementing their post disaster plans. Local pro bono staff will make a call to action as volunteers are needed.
- **Be Patient**. While there is urgency following a disaster, the pro bono opportunities may not be immediately available. Some volunteer opportunities may be immediate, such as attending a disaster recovery center to provide initial advice and assistance; some will happen within a couple of weeks, such as assisting with FEMA appeals and the underlying issues; and some will be long term, such as foreclosure prevention.
- **Be Prepared.** Waiting for pro bono opportunities is the best time to prepare. Educational materials are available through Texas Disaster Legal Help, a collaboration between Lone Star Legal Aid, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, and Texas RioGrande Legal Aid. These materials are designed to improve the mobilization of pro bono volunteers during the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Registration is required.
- **Sign Up for Opportunities**. Pro bono opportunities will be shared in multiple locations; however, signing up for a newsletter is the fastest way to learn about them. In addition to Texas Disaster Legal Help, you can also sign up directly with Lone Star Legal Aid, www.lonestarlegal.org/volunteer. Be sure to complete the Newsletter sign-up after registering as a volunteer.
- **Consider a Non-Disaster Case**. As legal aid staff attorney resources are diverted to serving disaster survivors, other legal needs may not be met due to limited staff resources. By volunteering on a non-disaster matter, you will be assisting in disaster relief efforts.

[Article written by Jessie G. Campbell, Lone Star Legal Aid. Find out more at https.texasdisasterlegalhelp.org]



President's Circle Appreciation

Rick's on the Square
July 2025

Thank you to all who came out to celebrate the Smith County Bar Foundation's President's Circle! Throughout our history, we have had incredible groups of donors that have seen the need to ensure access to justice and the value of having a Bar Foundation in Smith County. 2025 was no exception! We had more than 45 donors show their support and commitment to the Smith County Bar Foundation and our programs such as People's Law School, scholarships for students interested in legal professions, volunteer attorney programs, and more. President's Circle donors keep our mission alive and help us expand our programs. For 2025-26 fiscal year, we have some new things on the horizon. Keep an eye out for ways you can get involved!

Thank you, donors!

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SMITH COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION

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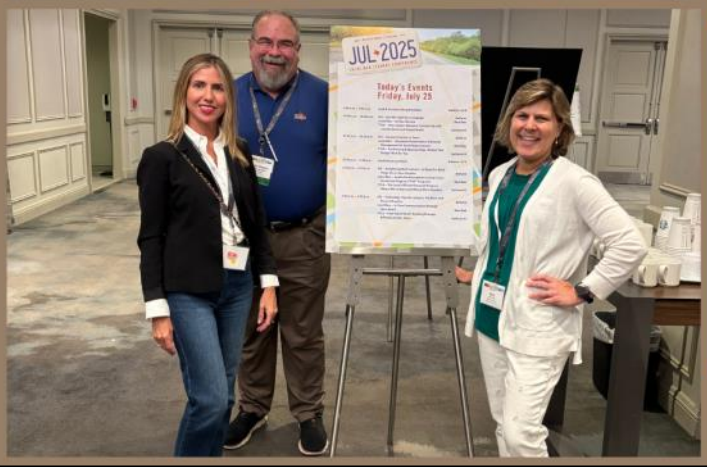
2025 LOCAL BAR LEADERS CONFERENCE

The State Bar of Texas' Local Bar Services committee hosts hundreds of Bar leaders from across the state every July. It is a great opportunity to hear from the State Bar, learn from other Bar Associations, and win some cool baskets!



Did you know that August 4 is Chocolate Chip Cookie Day? If you're looking try some darn good cookies, give the former Smith County Law Librarian, Kristen Marquez, a shout! Find her on Facebook at Kristen's Kitchen Mastery.

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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!

Important SCB Dates

National Conference of Bar Foundations
August 14-16, *Washington, DC*

SCBF Board Meeting
August 13, *Genecov Room,* 12 - 1p

SCYLA Board Meeting
August 21, *Genecov Room,* 12 - 1p

SCBA Board Meeting
August 28, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

Constitution Day

September 17, *Tyler Junior College,* 10a - 1p

SCBA Office Closed
August 14- 20

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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