



2025 - 2026

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Letter from the SCBA President



Marisa

We made it to May. And if you're a mom, you already know what that means.

It means you located the permission slips that were due in March. It means you sat in a gymnasium for a program that was supposed to be forty-five minutes and was, in fact, two and a half hours, and you clapped for every single child because that is what we do. It means field day and last-week-of-school energy and the feeling that summer is both a finish line and a starting gun.

To paraphrase Ferris Bueller, May moves fast. If you don't stop and look around, you could miss it.

I've been thinking about a graduation speech, but not a college one, a ninth-grade one. In 2017, Chief Justice John Roberts spoke at his son's graduation at Cardigan Mountain School in New Hampshire and proceeded to wish those boys the worst.

He hoped they would be treated unfairly, so they would know the value of justice. He hoped they would suffer betrayal, so they would understand loyalty. He hoped they would be lonely, so they would not take friendship for granted. He hoped they would fail, so they would know what it meant to get back up.

"I wish you bad luck," said the Chief Justice of the United States, at his own son's graduation.

I find that both deeply funny and deeply right.

Because as a parent, that is the tension you live in every day. You want to fix every hard thing, clear the path, call the teacher, and make sure the road ahead has no potholes, no rain, and absolutely no mean girls. But somewhere in the back of your mind, you know the hard things are what's going to make them. Strength is built by disappointments, losses and figuring it out on your own.

Justice Roberts told those boys that because they had found real friends at that school, they could face whatever came next without fear. The getting back up was easier because they didn't have to do it alone.

That is what we are trying to be here at the Smith County Bar. Not just a professional organization, but a room full of people who care about each other and about this profession. The ones who pick up the phone, share what they know, and show up.

School is wrapping up across East Texas. Kids are turning in textbooks and cleaning out lockers. Moms everywhere are signing the last of the forms and crying just a little in the parking lot.

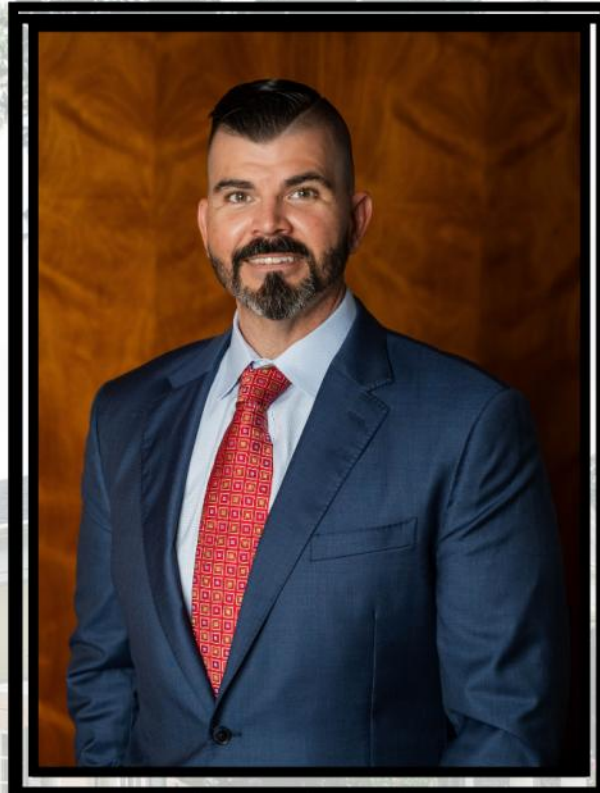
It is a lot. But you don't have to do it alone.

We hope to see you at our next meeting. Bring your tired, almost-summer self. We will save you a seat.



THE SCBA WELCOMES YOU TO OUR JUNE 2026
CLE AT WILLOW BROOK COUNTRY CLUB:

BEST PRACTICES WHEN EMPLOYING A FINANCIAL EXPERT IN LITIGATION



PRESENTED BY
JOHN MORRISON, CPA
The Morrison Firm



CLE Registration

JUNE 5, 2026

Willow Brook Country Club | 12 -1

Lunch included with registration fee.

[.25 ethics hour]

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 1.0 credit hour of professional responsibility.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HONOREES!

LAW DAY 2026

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

Honoring those who have made significant contributions to Smith County with their leadership, community service, legal professionalism, and ethical standards.



OTIS CARROLL, JR.
Justinian Award



PATRICIA COPLAN
Award of Excellence



BARBARA SKEEN
Cristy Arcscott Liberty Bell Award



NICHOLETTE WILKERSON
SCYLA Outstanding Lawyer



SRAV MURALIDHAR
Volunteer Attorney of the Year



LEATHA KOPECH
Legal Professional of the Year

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THESE OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALS!



Many thanks to our 2026 Law Day Sponsors!



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May 1, 2026

LAW DAY

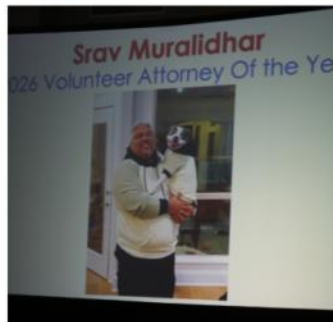
the Texas Constitution and the Rule of Law



Law Day 2026 - Cascades Country Club



Law Day 2026 - Cascades Country Club



Law Day 2026 - Cascades Country Club



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LAW DAY CONTEST WINNERS!

In conjunction with Law Day, the Smith County Bar Foundation hosts contests for area students - essay writing for high school students, photography for middle school, and poster entries for elementary students. Our top winners in each of these categories are sent on to Austin for the State Bar's competition. We are proud to announce that both of our top winners placed 3rd at the State competition! They were recognized in Austin on May 11 at a Law Day luncheon and received VIP tours of the Texas Supreme Court, Capitol building, and Governor's mansion.

Essay contest winners:

- 1st - Taryn Schutz*, Whitehouse High School
- 2nd - Sahlika Qureshi, Whitehouse High School
- 3rd - Andrew Ames, Tyler Legacy High School

Poster contest winners:

- 1st - James Hammond*, The Brook Hill School
- 2nd - Heidi Hutchinson, Owens Elementary
- 3rd - James Thomas, Andy Woods Elementary

*both placed 3rd at the SBOT competition.



8th Grade Federal Courthouse Tour & Trial



Ruth Yeager and Dustin Farahnak did another incredible job of organizing a tour – and trial – for local 8th grade students at the Federal Courthouse! Students were witness to a federal crime, when Sam Sleuth entered the building with a handgun in his briefcase. They learned about federal court procedures and systems, culminating in the trial and sentencing of Mr. Sleuth.

Big thanks to “Judge” Lucas Machicek; defense attorney, Jim Noble; prosecutor, Ryan Locker; US Marshal, Brian Leach; US Probation Officer, Molly Bryson; US District Clerk staff, Gleath Mayfield; and James Gillingham, as Sam Sleuth!



More than 200 4th graders from schools across Smith County, converged on the Smith County Courthouse to hear the trial of Jack Robinson, accused of murdering the Giant and destroying the beanstalk.

Gaye Boynton, Patricia Coplan, and members of TAALP, organized a fun and educational day for students that showcased a variety of legal professions. Many thanks to all who lent a hand - especially Judges Ellis, Jackson, Maynard, Russell & White, the SCSO deputies & bailiffs, attorneys, representatives of Smith County District Attorney's office and many others!



A Case of
murder, intrigue,
and magic
beanstalks...



CONSTRUCTION ZONE



*We are are getting
a new website!*

Please bear with us as we transition to a new website and member portal. Which may also mean that membership renewals may start a bit later than normal this year. More information will be shared as we progress down this road to a new and much more user-friendly website!

2025-26 SCBA MEMBERSHIP

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

Adams, Craig
Ainsworth, Jennifer
Alexander, Jon
Alleman, Mick
Allen, Adam
Allen, Marisa
Ames, Amy
Anderson, Ben
Anderson, Billy
Anderson, Roger
Arroyo, Belinda
Arscott, Cristy

Baker, Joel
Balfour, Joseph
Barkley, Alicia
Bartles, Cate
Beall, Tab
Beam, Joe
Bell, Patrick
Berry, John
Biggs, Kenneth
Birdsong, Lindsey
Black, Dennis
Blalock, Amy
Bonner, Ben
Boren, Mishae
Boyd, Paul
Boynon, Gaye
Bracken, Jr., Ashley
Brantley, Stafford
Bretzke, Karen
Brown, Alan
Brown, Tom
Brownlee, Kevin
Broyles, Morgan
Buckner, Alesha
Bufe, John
Bunt, Robert
Burton, CJ
Bush, David

Camp, Carrie
Campbell, Bradley
Carian, Delia
Carr, Jackie
Carroll, Marcus
Carroll, Jr., Otis
Castetter, Alex
Christie, Carey
Clark, Collen
Coker, Mike
Cook, Randall
Cool, Lily
Coplan, Patricia
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Courington, Will
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Cozby, Raymond
Craft, Brian
Craig, James
Crawford, Jennifer
Crozier, Levi

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Dacus, Shannon
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Davidson, Don
Davidson, Thad
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Davis, Hon. Michael
Davis, Robert

Davis, Stafford
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Derryberry, Daryl
DeVasto, Hon. Diane
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Dillon, Candice
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Dollahite, Keith
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Drott, Kyle
Drott, Natalie
Dutton, Kevin

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Embry, Jeff
Eskelson, Randy
Estrada, Edward
Essex, Theodore
Evans, III, Jim
Farahnak, Dustin
Ferrier, Kevin
Files, Buck
Filla, Beth
Findlay, Eric
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Nelson, Mandy
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Noteware, Danny
Nutt, Haley

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Owens, Chelsea

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Thomas, Meme
Thompson, Blake
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Trube, John
Turner, Joseph

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Thank
You!

to everyone who supported the
Smith County Bar Foundation during
East Texas Giving Day!

Because of your generosity, we raised
\$4,405 to support the programs of the
SCBF!!!

**EAST TEXAS
GIVING DAY**





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

SCBF Board Meeting

May 13, *Genecov conference room*, 12 - 1p

Family Law CLE

May 20, *321st Courtroom*, 12 - 1p

SCYLA Board Meeting

May 21, *Genecov conference room*, 12 - 1p

SCBA Board Meeting

May 28, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

MEMORIAL DAY

May 25

Smith County Courthouse and Smith County Bar offices will be closed



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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