

2025 - 2026

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Letter from the SCBA President



Marisa

"Four score and seven years ago..."

This month, as we gather around Thanksgiving tables, I want to share a reflection on gratitude - and on words that changed a nation.

November 19, 1863, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Fifteen thousand people gather on Cemetery Hill for the dedication of a cemetery honoring the Union soldiers who fell four and a half months earlier in the war's bloodiest battle.

Edward Everett, the featured speaker, delivers a two-hour oration from memory—13,607 carefully polished words.

Then Abraham Lincoln rises and pulls two pages from his coat pocket. His law partner once observed that Lincoln was a slow, careful writer who sorted out his points and tightened his logic. Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin notes that Lincoln prepared half the speech in Washington, then completed and revised it the night before, understanding the weight of the moment.

Abraham Lincoln spoke 271 words in less than two minutes. Everett's 13,607 words—the world promptly forgot. Lincoln's 271 words—the world has never forgotten.

Lincoln took what was supposed to be a ceremonial footnote and transformed it into a powerful argument. He distilled the Union's cause into three paragraphs, linking past, present, and future. He reminded Americans they fought not

just to preserve the Union, but to prove that a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could endure. He called for "a new birth of freedom" in language as plain and powerful as the log cabin he was born in.

As lawyers, we traffic in words. We know their power to persuade, to protect, to destroy. But how often do we pause to consider whether our words are worthy of the weight they carry?

Lincoln's brief remarks were initially met with mixed reviews. Lincoln himself doubted their impact, saying "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." He was wrong.

This Thanksgiving, I'm grateful that our work as lawyers matters. Every brief, every argument, every client are opportunities to advance justice and uphold the rule of law. We are the guardians of the democratic experiment Lincoln fought to preserve.

I'm grateful for this bar association. If you're only practicing law, you're doing half the job. Serving our legal community completes our professional calling.

Take two minutes—the length of the Gettysburg Address—to reflect on why you became a lawyer. Whatever called you to this profession, recommit to it. Our democracy depends on lawyers who take their oath seriously.

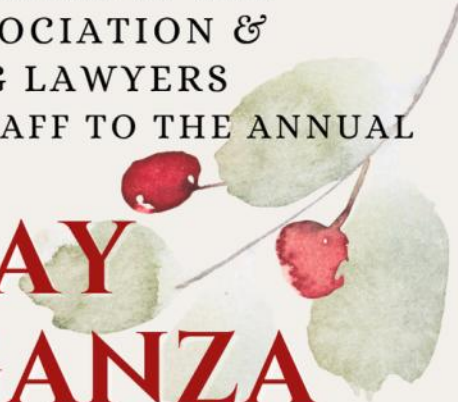
"That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Happy Thanksgiving!



THE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORES OF THE
SMITH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION &
SMITH COUNTY YOUNG LAWYERS
INVITE YOU, YOUR GUEST AND STAFF TO THE ANNUAL

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA



DECEMBER 12, 2025 | 5-8

ARCADIA BUILDING
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bring a children's book to add to courthouse bookshelves.



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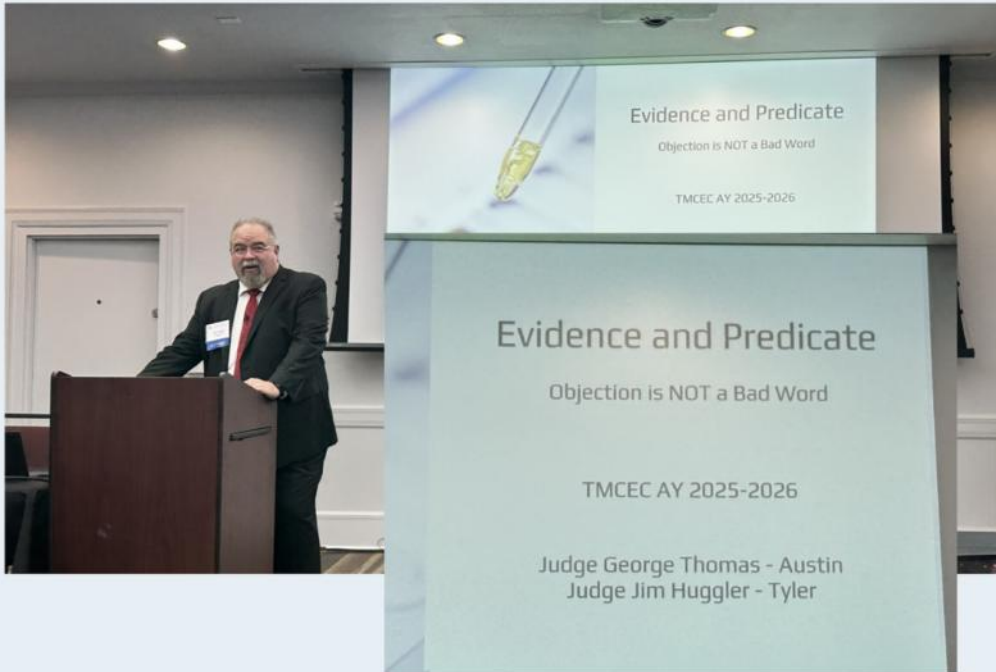
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AROUND OUR COMMUNITY



Municipal Court Judge, Jim Huggler, presenting at the TMCEC Regional Judicial Conference.



SCBA Happy Hour at ETX Brewery.

SCBA member, Alan Pigg, speaking in Austin at the Texas Workers Compensation Conference.





RECEPTION HONORING
JUSTICE GREG NEELEY

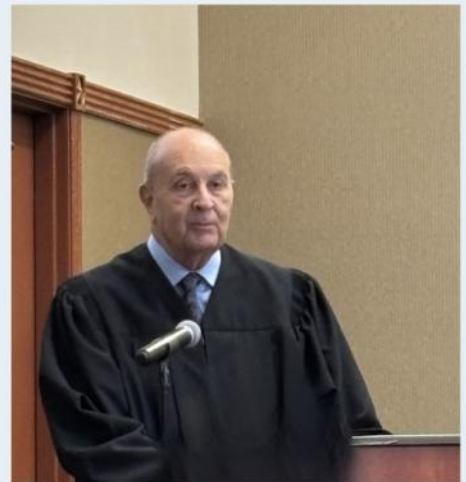
OCTOBER 24, 2025
3:00 P.M.

GREGG COUNTY COURTHOUSE
188th DISTRICT COURT
LONGVIEW, TEXAS

*Happy retirement,
Justice Neeley!*



12th Court of
Appeals,
Justice Greg
Neeley's
retirement
celebration at
the
Gregg County
Courthouse.



2025'S SPOOKTACULAR HALLOWEEN



50th
**ANNUAL
JOINT LUNCHEON
HONORING
AREA JUDGES**

**OCTOBER 24, 2025
11:30 am - 1:30 pm**

**Hollytree Country Club
6700 Hollytree Drive
Tyler, Texas**

2025 TAALP Joint Luncheon

featuring speaker

**Santos Vargos
SBOT President**

October 24, 2025 | Hollytree Country Club



2025-26 SCBA MEMBERSHIP

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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

SCBF Board Meeting

November 12, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

SCYLA Board Meeting

November 20, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

SCBA Board Meeting

November 20, *Genecov Room*, 12 - 1p

Upcoming CLE opportunities:

November 14, *Willow Brook Country Club*, 12-1p

December 5, *Willow Brook Country Club*, 12-1p

Holiday Extravaganza, December 12

SCBA Office Closed
 November 27-28



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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