

# TCWLA LEGAL MATTERS

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRAVIS COUNTY WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

March 2009

## Technology Tools for Your Practice

Please join us at noon on March 18 for our CLE luncheon. This month we are pleased to have John Sirman, State Bar of Texas Webmanager, present on Technology Tools for Your Practice. The role of technology in the legal profession has changed significantly in recent years and we continue to rely more and more heavily on our software, digital files, emails, cell phones and computers. As attorneys we want to stay as up to date as possible on the latest technology trends so that we can manage our practices as efficiently as possible. John will speak to the various ways we can use these tools to help our practices. We have requested 1.0 credit hours of CLE from the State Bar.

The meeting will be at Scott, Douglass & McConnico, L.L.P., 600 Congress Ave., 17th Floor, Austin, Texas 78701. Please visit our website at [www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org) to RSVP and order lunch on line.

## *Technology Tools for Your Practice*

With John Sirmon

**Date:** March 18th, 2009

**Time:** 11:45- 1:00

**Where:** Scott Douglass &  
McConnico, 17th Floor  
600 Congress

**CLE:** 1.0 Applied For  
(CLE is \$15 for non-members)

Lunch is \$15

Shrimp Alexis—(Large shrimp sautéed with black olives, fresh tomato, onions and basil in olive oil. Tossed with linguini, parmesan and a dash of red pepper ),

Dried cranberry and blue cheese salad (Mixed field greens with dried cranberries, blue cheese and walnuts.)

Served with bread, iced tea, and cupcakes!

Please RSVP by Monday,  
March 16th at  
[www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org)

Brown Baggers Welcome

## *TCWLA Scholarship Winners*



*Rande Herrell, Rachel Stone, Amie Rodnick, Karla Vargas and DeDe Hebner  
For more on our scholarships and this year's winners, please turn to page 5*

## 2009 Judicial Reception

TCWLA held its annual Judicial Reception at Green Pastures on February 26<sup>th</sup>. This event provides a great opportunity for members of the Bar to mingle with the judiciary. Over 30 of our judicial honorees attended, among them the Honorable Dale Wainwright, Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, the Honorable Woodie Jones, Chief Justice of the Third Court of Appeals, and the Honorable Lee Yeakel, United States District Judge. The elegant atmosphere of Green Pastures, accented by soft piano music, provides a relaxed atmosphere for networking. As in years past, a luscious seafood buffet provided an array of delicacies to tempt the palate accompanied by cocktails. Attendance was great as usual. We give special thanks to our sponsors, without whom this event would not be possible.

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## ***FROM THE PRESIDENT*** **March 2009**

*I don't deserve this award, but I have arthritis  
and I don't deserve that either.*

*Jack Benny (actor 1894 – 1974)*

Its awards season! As part of our mission to strengthen the image and position of women lawyers in the community, the Travis County Women Lawyers presents awards to women lawyers who are outstanding in their fields of practice. These awards honor the often low-profile, but nevertheless vital, contributions of female members of the profession. We seek nominations from the area bar associations and from you, our members, to spotlight and honor outstanding women practitioners. So my goal with this message is to ask you to look around at the many outstanding women you encounter in the practice of law, and nominate someone who stands head and shoulders above her colleagues in the practice of law.

TCWLA began making these awards in 1991. We began with 6 areas of recognition: Litigation, Public Interest, Contribution to Minority Community, Government, Pro Bono, Outstanding Achievement, and also recognized the law firm/agency/entity most supportive of women lawyers.

The Litigation award goes to a female attorney who has distinguished herself in the area of litigation. Our first winner in 1991 was Martha Dickie. Prior winners have worked in government, such as Linda Secord (1998) with the Office of the Attorney General, as well as in private practice, such as Beverly Reeves (2008) co-founder of Reeves & Brightwell. The Public Interest award goes to the female attorney who has made significant contributions in the area of public interest law. Last year's honoree, Kristine Huskey, directs the National Security & Human Rights Clinic at the UT School of Law and represented the Guantanamo detainees in *Rasul v. Bush* in the Supreme Court in 2004, winning the right of the detainees to challenge their detentions in federal court.

The Contribution to the Minority Community award goes to a woman attorney who has devoted a substantial portion of her career to advancing the interests of the minority community. Prior winners include Lulu Flores (1995), Velva Price (1997), and Edna Yang (2007). The Government service award is pretty self explanatory. It goes to a female attorney in recognition of outstanding service in a position with the government at any level. Past winners have been the Honorable Rose Spector (1996), former Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, Mary Keller (1992), former First Assistant Attorney General under Jim Mattox, and Laurie Eiserloh (2007), Assistant City Attorney. The Pro Bono award is also pretty self explanatory. It is for outstanding pro bono contributions. Past honorees have been in small solo practices, such as Denise Hyde (2007) honored for her work with Adoption Day in Travis County, and with large firms, such as Susan Burton (1992), with Clark, Thomas & Winters.

The Outstanding Achievement award is rather like a life-time achievement award. It has been awarded to a former Justice on the Supreme Court of Texas, the Honorable Deborah Hankinson (2001), a long-serving Justice on the Third Court of Appeals, the Honorable Jan Patterson (2003), and a former Secretary of State, Myra McDaniel (2005). We also recognize those entities that foster an environment that make it possible for women attorneys to make outstanding achievements. These include small law firms, such as Cole & Powell (2006), large law firms, such as Munsch, Hardt, Kopf & Harr (2002), governmental entities, such as the Office of the Solicitor General under Solicitor General Greg Coleman (2001), and business organizations, such as Advanced Micro Devices Legal Department (1997).

Last year we added a category for those unsung heroines of transactions large and small, without which the world as we know it could not function. Due to pent up demand to give recognition to these practitioners, we were graced with so many outstanding nominees, that we had to give two awards, one to Karen Bartoletti of Graves, Dougherty, Hearon & Moody and one to Christine Sweeney of Clark, Thomas & Winters. Answering another call to recognize unsung heroines, we have added a category this year for outstanding practice in the area of Criminal Justice.

The recipients of the awards are selected at a joint meeting of the Boards of the TCWLA and the TCWL Foundation. We will not select a current sitting member of either Board, and we try to not give the same award to an attorney twice. So please keep this in mind when making your nominations. The exception is for Outstanding Achievement, which is intended to be cumulative of the honoree's life time body of work. A complete list of prior honorees is on the TCWLA website at [www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org). Also, if you have nominated someone in the past who was not selected, please re-nominate them this year. Just because they weren't selected doesn't mean they aren't deserving of recognition. This may be their year!

A copy of the 2009 nominating form is contained in this newsletter and is also contained on the website. The deadline for making nominations is Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. The more you can tell us about your nominee's achievements, the better informed the Board members will be when it comes time to vote. So please take the time to notice your fellow practitioners, and if someone stands out, please take a minute to complete a nomination form and send it to Elizabeth Poole.

Best regards;  
*Raude K Herrick*  
President, TCWLA

Have an article you would like to share?  
Send it to us for consideration in the newsletter.

Have an announcement to make?  
Send it to us and we will include it in our announcement section.

Need to advertise something?  
Contact us at [tcwlaorg@gmail.com](mailto:tcwlaorg@gmail.com) to find out our advertising costs

Need to get some of the required 30 hours in Travis Co. to be a court-appointed special advocate? Contact Paige Pritchett at [tcwlaorg@gmail.com](mailto:tcwlaorg@gmail.com) for details on how to rent a copy.

Interested in admittance to the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas? Rent the mandatory CLE video from TCWLA. Visit us at [www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org) or email [tcwlaorg@gmail.com](mailto:tcwlaorg@gmail.com) for more details

## Color of Justice Paves the Way for a More Diverse Future

Over 30 minority students from local Austin high schools, Akins and Austin High, recently had the opportunity to participate in the Color of Justice program, a program started by the National Association of Women Judges to introduce minority students to a diverse group of minority judges, lawyers, and law students whose stories illustrate the many career options available in the law and judiciary. The program was held on February 19th at UT Law's Eidman Courtroom.

Travis County Women Lawyers Association was excited to join with the NAWJ, UT Law's William Wayne Justice Center for Public Law and the Austin Bar Association, as well as sponsor Winstead PC, to bring this wonderful opportunity to the students. This half-day event featured two panel discussions with speakers sharing their personal experiences and encouraging the students to pursue a career in law.

The intent of the program is to inspire minority high school students to consider the law as a career, and to aspire to be a judge as well as a lawyer.

The first panel, titled "The Color of Justice: Making a Difference," was led by several esteemed judges, including Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson, Judge Orlanda Naranjo of the Travis County Civil District Court and Judge Brenda Kennedy of the Travis County Criminal District Court. The panel was moderated by Bea Ann Smith, former justice for the Third Court of Appeals and a former president of NAWJ.

The second panel, titled "Law as a Career: Preparing the Way" was led by a mix of legal professionals, including Craig Moore of the Travis County District Attorney's Office; Geronimo Rodriguez of Seton Family of Hospitals; Patricia Hansen, UT Law Professor and Stephanie Kolmar, a UT Law student. Rande Herrell, President of TCWLA was the moderator.

Also, as part of the program, UT Law Student, Jessica Kemp received a \$1,000 "Access to Justice Scholarship" given by the NAWJ for her demonstrated and passionate commitment to the achievement of equality of opportunity and access in the justice system. Judge Elisabeth Earle of the Travis County Criminal Court and a former District Director for the NAWJ, presented the scholarship.

The program was spearheaded by TCWLA Board Member Elizabeth Branch with the help of Judge Marisela Saldana of the 148th District Court in Corpus Christi, the current District Director for the NAWJ, as well help from Judge Earle and Bea Ann Smith. TCWLA would like to thank all panel members and sponsors for making this year's program a true success.

## TCWLA Scholarship Winners

Two University of Texas law students received scholarships sponsored by Travis County Women Lawyers Association at the Judicial Reception on February 26, 2009. The inaugural **Margaret Cooper Scholarship** winner was Karla Vargas. The Cooper Scholarship is given to honor the many years of service of Judge Margaret Cooper, who retired from the Travis County district court bench on December 31, 2008. The scholarship is awarded to a UT Law student who has had to overcome adversity and who has a history of community service and financial need. Scholarship winner Karla is a student in the joint degree program of the UT Law School and the LBJ School of Public Affairs. She has been active in the Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, the Worker's Defense Project, the Public Affairs Alliance for Communities of Color, the UT Law School Domestic Violence Clinic, the Immigration Clinic, the Human Rights Society, and the National Lawyers' Guild.

The **Mary Pearl Williams Scholarship** winner was Rachel Stone. This scholarship is given in honor of the many years of service of Judge Mary Pearl Williams, who retired from the bench on December 31, 2000. Judge Williams has been a pioneering woman in the legal profession in Travis County, having served as the first female county court at law judge and the first female district judge in this county. Throughout her career, Judge Williams has always been known for her integrity, her courtesy to both attorneys and litigants, and her involvement in her community. The Mary Pearl Williams Scholarship is awarded to a law student at the UT School of Law who shows exceptional promise of being a leader in the community. Scholarship winner Rachel, a first-year student at UT Law School, is a graduate of Brown University. She founded the group Women in the World at Brown, and at UT is active in the Public Interest Law Association and the Environmental Law Society. She has volunteered at Project Transitions, Caritas, and Yacu Yura (an organic farm in Argentina). She will work this summer for Save Our Springs.

### TRAVIS COUNTY SETTLEMENT WEEK: WHERE HAVE ALL THE PARTICIPANTS GONE?

In an effort to help reduce our overcrowded dockets, our Travis County judiciary, the Austin Bar Association and the Dispute Resolution Center sponsors our bi-annual Travis County Settlement Week. Begun some years ago, this cost effective public service project gives litigants the opportunity to mediate their case for only a minimal administrative fee. Qualified, competent area mediators volunteer their time and efforts on behalf of this project. This year, the official settlement week is March 16-20; however, the parties may schedule their mediation on a week other than on this one particular week as long as the mediation is scheduled within a 30 day period, more or less.

What a great public service project this is for our community! However, there has been a slow, steady decline in the numbers of cases submitted. As a member of the ABA Settlement Week Planning committee for the past 3 years, we are perplexed with the lack of interest and participation by members of the bar. Mediation clearly gives the participants greater control over the outcome of their case as well as providing a most cost effective way of resolving the dispute, possibly saving them hundreds of dollars. The volunteer mediators' credentials have been reviewed and they work diligently with the attorneys to schedule and facilitate the mediation process.

We committee members have been told that many attorneys believe that if they cannot schedule their mediation on the actual settlement week, that they may not partake of this service. Please note, it is not required that the mediation be held on the actual designated settlement week. As long as the parties and attorneys work together to schedule and have the case mediated within a reasonable amount of time, about 30 days or so, from the days of settlement week, you're good to go!

'March Madness' in Austin... what a time of great Texana history, music, sports, and TRAVIS COUNTY SETTLEMENT WEEK opportunities. If you can't be a part of our current settlement week, please commit to utilizing this project in the fall!

*\*Julia G. Benkoski is a credentialed mediator; a member of TCWLA; co-chair of the 'ABA Fourth Fri. Free CLE' program; a member of the Travis Cty. Settlement Wk. planning committee; ABA Solo/Small Firm and Estate Planning/Probate sections member; member of Tx. Assoc. of Mediators, Association of Attorney/Mediators and many other professional and community associations. And in the spirit of our March 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Independence and pursuing the peaceful resolution of conflict, she is currently offering discounted fees for mediation services. Licensed for almost 27 years, Julia brings a broad litigation background tempered with the wisdom of basic common sense to the peace talks and mediation process. Phone: 329-0491; email: julia@jgblegal.com.*

**2009 TCWLA's  
TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY**

We need you to volunteer for the Travis County Woman Lawyers Association's award winning program by serving as a mentor, even if it's only for one day. TCWLA has scheduled its premier program, "Take Your Daughters to Work Day", on Wednesday, **May 6, 2009** from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This year we are going to include not only fifth graders but sixth grade girls. After many years with Norman Elementary, we are switching schools to another East Austin Elementary School, Zavala Elementary. This change is occurring to give opportunities for another school to be exposed to our award winning program. This will be the 3rd year to have a mock trial where the State seeks a protective order on dating violence allegations.

If you wish to volunteer, please contact the Chair, Judge Orlanda Naranjo, at 854-4023 or email her at [orlanda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:orlanda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us). We always need help with drivers and lawyers to handle the case as a prosecutor or defense lawyer.

*Save the Date*

*2009 Travis County Women Lawyer's Association and Foundation  
Charity Luncheon*

*May 14, 2009*

**Announcements**

*It is time to renew your  
membership!*

Mishell Kneeland and the Moxie Realty Group invite you to "First Time? It's Time!" on Monday, March 30. We will have information on special incentives for first time home buyers and lenders who can help you take advantage of current incentives and the Austin market. For more information, call or email Mishell at 512.965.5463, [mishell.kneeland@gmail.com](mailto:mishell.kneeland@gmail.com), or check our website at [www.moxierealtygroup.com](http://www.moxierealtygroup.com). We will also host a presentation for those interested in investing in real estate in April.

Office space 4-Points area (2222 and 620) available for sublease immediately. Professional and upscale setting. 461-1383.

Office space downtown available for sublease immediately. Professional setting including offices and cubicles available. Use of fax, reception area, bilingual receptionist, conference rooms, and kitchen facilities included. Please contact Corinne 512-381-9955 for additional information.

\$60/hr contract attorney with seven years of experience in general litigation, employment and appellate law available for research, briefing and document review. Contact Elizabeth Branch at (512)565-4464 [branch@branchlawoffice.com](mailto:branch@branchlawoffice.com).

## Meet Your Board Member Laura Moriarty



Practice Area: Securities Litigation—  
representing public companies, officers and  
directors in securities class actions and derivative

suits, as well as investigations and enforcement actions by the SEC.

Employer: Greenberg Traurig, LLP

Education: Started out at the now-defunct (but still much beloved)  
Liberal Arts Academy at Johnston High right here in Austin, followed by  
Yale University for a double major in History and Russian and East  
European Studies, followed by University of Virginia for law school.

Employment: Recently left Akin Gump for Greenberg Traurig, along with  
eight other securities litigators.

Organizations: In addition to her work for TCWLA, Laura is Vice  
President of Zilker Theater Productions (the organization that sponsors  
the Zilker summer musical), and has served on the board of the Austin  
History Center Association.

Interests: Laura loves to travel, eat well, throw dinner parties, and  
dance— particularly the two-step at the Broken Spoke.

Family: Laura grew up in Austin and her folks still live here. In April,  
she plans to marry Chris Ahart— a fellow securities litigator at  
Greenberg.

## Calendar of Events

March 18th, 2009	11:45-1:00	Membership meeting
April 15th, 2009	11:45-1:00	Membership meeting
May 6th, 2009		Take Your Daughter To Work Day
May 14th, 2009		TCWLA/TCWLF Charity Luncheon

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## What's Going On?

If you are an attorney, or legal professional who has recently changed jobs, opened up a new office, received an award, or hired new staff...we want to know what's going on.

Please e-mail [tcwlaorg@gmail.com](mailto:tcwlaorg@gmail.com) with your announcements and photos.



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**CLE Co-Chairs:**

Ann O'Connell

**Mindy Montford**

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TRAVIS COUNTY WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

WOMENS' LAW AWARDS  
2009 NOMINATION FORM

**DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25**

**MAIL THIS FORM (and attachments to):** Elizabeth Poole  
PO BOX 684683  
Austin, TX 78768-4683  
-or-  
Email completed nomination forms to *tcwlaorg@gmail.com*

TCWLA is accepting nominations in the categories listed below to honor local female attorneys who have significantly contributed to the legal profession. The nominees need not be TCWLA members in order to win, but they must be attorneys. A person may be nominated for more than one category. The categories are:

1. Public Interest
2. Contribution to Minority Community
3. Government Service
4. Pro Bono
5. Litigation
6. Transaction Attorney
7. Criminal Justice
8. Outstanding Achievement
9. Firm/Organization/Government Entity\*

\* Please note that this category recognizes an organization for hiring women and/or adheres to progressive work place policies, such as innovative job sharing, day care, flex and part-time programs, and alternative partnership tracks.

Please provide the following information about the nominee(s):

Nominee:

Category:

Place of Employment and Job Title:

Business Address:

Daytime Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

On a separate sheet (with your name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number), please describe your nominee's significant contributions to the legal profession in Travis County. If applicable, please include any supporting documentation such as resumes, newspaper, and/or website articles.

**LAWYERS FOR WOMEN FIGHTING BREAST CANCER  
ATTORNEY VOLUNTEER SIGNUP FORM**

**A Project of Travis County Women Lawyers' Association in Partnership with Volunteer Legal Services and the  
William Wayne Justice Public Policy Center at the University of Texas School of Law**

*Volunteer Attorney:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Bar No.* \_\_\_\_\_

**Firm:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_ **e-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **I am a member of Travis County Women Lawyers Association**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Note: Our Case Referral Coordinator will call to discuss individual referrals with you.**

**I will accept pro bono cases in the following areas of law:**

- |                                      |                                 |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| _____ <b>Bankruptcy</b>              | _____ <b>General Litigation</b> | _____ <b>Probate</b>                  |
| _____ <b>Consumer</b>                | _____ <b>Guardianships</b>      | _____ <b>Real Estate</b>              |
| _____ <b>Debt Collection Defense</b> | _____ <b>Housing</b>            | _____ <b>Social Security Benefits</b> |
| _____ <b>Education</b>               | _____ <b>Insurance</b>          | _____ <b>Tax</b>                      |
| _____ <b>Employment Problems</b>     | _____ <b>Landlord/Tenant</b>    | _____ <b>Torts Defense</b>            |
| _____ <b>Family Law</b>              | _____ <b>License Revocation</b> | _____ <b>Wills</b>                    |
|                                      |                                 | _____ <b>Wills, Homebound</b>         |

\*\*\*\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to mentor a UT Law Student assigned to help with a case.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to keep pro bono cases on my personal docket routinely. When I close a case or a case is inactive, you may call me to take another.

\_\_\_\_\_ **I speak Spanish fluently.**

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN FORM TO:**  
**Volunteer Legal Services of Central Texas**  
**816 Congress Avenue, Suite 701, Austin, TX 78701**  
**Fax: (512) 322-0764**  
**e-mail: [akmeyers@vlsoc.org](mailto:akmeyers@vlsoc.org)**

**QUESTIONS? Contact Anna K. Meyers**  
**(512) 476-5550, ext. 304**  
**[akmeyers@vlsoc.org](mailto:akmeyers@vlsoc.org)**