

TCWLA LEGAL MATTERS

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRAVIS COUNTY WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

TCWLA Holiday Party

This year the TCWLA holiday party promises to be the best ever. The party will be Wednesday, December 6 from 5:30-7:30 pm at IF+D, an interior design and gift store on Colorado just north of Second Street, part of the exciting, revitalized Second Street District shopping area. There will be delicious appetizers and desserts, and plenty of wine—a wine expert will even be on hand to give us a guided wine tasting. Even when the party is over, the shops of the Second Street District will still be open for our members to get a jump on their holiday shopping.



Judge Bea Ann Smith, law student scholarship winner Laura Pena, and Judge Elizabeth Earle at this year's Color of Justice Program.

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December 2006

**TCWLA Member Holiday
Party
at IF+D
Interior Design and Gift Store**

**Date: December 6, 2006
Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Location: IF + D
Colorado and 2nd Street
208 Colorado
Free Parking in the City Hall
Parking Garage
(see www.ifdaustin.com)**

Please join us for an evening
of
delectable appetizers
tempting libations
and
fantastic shopping!

as TCWLA rings in the
holiday season at
IF+D in the 2nd Street District
Downtown

Spread some holiday cheer to
our neighbors
by bringing a donation of
canned or
nonperishable food items for
the
Capital Area Food Bank.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

December 2006

I can't believe it's already December! As I write this, the cold weather has finally come to town and it feels like an actual winter here in Austin. This is good weather for curling up with some hot chocolate, fuzzy socks, and a good book. It is also a great time to gather together, make new friends and toast the season at our annual Holiday Party for TCWLA members. Whether or not the cooler temperatures stick around, we hope to see you at the Holiday

Party on December 6th. This party is in lieu of a membership meeting in December, so the next time we'll see each other in an actual membership meeting is January 17th. See the front page of the newsletter for details about the Holiday Party and please do not hesitate to join us, even if you haven't made it to any other meetings this year! Don't miss out on this fun, free gathering for members.

Please take a couple of minutes today and renew your membership for 2007! Send it in now and mark it off of your

new year's to-do list! Forms are in this newsletter for renewals or new memberships, so feel free to forward this to your friends and coworkers and encourage them to join us. Our \$40 dues are quite the bargain given the access to hours and hours of free CLEs alone, not to mention the free special events and opportunities to network, mentor and volunteer. Happy Holidays!

Warmest Regards,

Joëlle Boehlé
TCWLA President

Membership has its privileges!

It is time to renew your Membership for 2007

- **FREE** CLE
- Networking with other lawyers
- Monthly meetings and luncheons
- Judicial Reception
- Holiday Party
- **Law Caucus with UT**
- Online access to the member directory (find those connections)
- Access to *Legal Matters*, an award winning newsletter
- Opportunity to spotlight your business/practice area
- Privilege of **community service**

New membership forms on page 9

Membership \$40 per calendar year

\$20 per year for students

\$400 lifetime membership!!!

Color of Justice Program 2006

Board Member Elizabeth Branch, Justice Bea Ann Smith and Judge Elisabeth Earle are glad to report that the Color of Justice Program was a huge success. This is the third Color of Justice program presented in Austin with the collaboration of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) and the University of Texas School of Law's Women's Law Caucus. It was a half-day event held on November 13, 2006, at the Eidman Courtroom at the University of Texas School of Law.

The Color of Justice program brought together a distinguished panel of minority judges, lawyers and law students who shared their experiences and the reasons why they chose careers in the law to a selected group of approximately 30 minority high school students from Austin's LBJ High School. The program focused on career preparation, panel discussions with judges and lawyers sharing personal and professional insights, and small group discussions during a box luncheon. Another highlight to the program was when Laura Pena, a second year student at the UT's School of Law, received the Access to Justice Scholarship given by the NAWJ. This \$1,000 scholarship was presented to a student who demonstrated a sustained and passionate commitment to promote access in the justice system, and who overcame significant obstacles. The scholarship was formally presented by Judge Earle, District Director of NAWJ in Texas.

Travis County Women Lawyers' Association would like to extend a huge thank you to the following panelist who so graciously took the time and effort to share their diverse and truly uplifting experiences, making the program a success!

The first panel entitled The Color of Justice – Judges Making a Difference, included the following panelists:

- Judge Brenda Kennedy, Travis County Criminal District Court
- Judge Orlinda Naranjo, Travis County Court at Law and Judge-Elect of Travis County Civil District Court
- Judge Lora Livingston, Travis County Civil District Court
- Judge-Elect Eric Shepperd, Travis County Civil Court at Law
- Velva Price, Moderator, Attorney, Law Office of Hubert Bell, Jr. and TCWLA Board Member

The second panel entitled Law as a Career—Preparing the Way, included the following panelists:

- Tracy McCormack, Professor, Director of Trial Advocacy, University of Texas School of Law
- Ciara Williams, Student, University of Texas School of Law
- Gavin Villareal, Baker Botts, LLP
- Steve Foster, Cantey Hanger, LLP
- Jana Ortega, Law Office of Jana Ortega
- Portia Bosse, Moderator, Attorney, Texas State Teachers' Association and Past President TCWLA

We would also like to thank the following sponsors: Vinson & Elkins, LLP and Strasburger & Price, LLP.



The Panel, from left to right, is Judge Orlinda Naranjo, Judge Brenda Kennedy, Velva Price, Judge Eric Sheppard, and Judge Lora Livingston

November Luncheon Recap:



The Travis County Women Lawyers Association launched its newest project, Lawyers for Women Fighting Breast Cancer, at the November program luncheon. Portia Bosse, TCWLA Past President, gave a brief presentation describing the purpose of the project as an initiative in partnership with Volunteer Legal Services of Central Texas and the William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law at the University of Texas School of Law which will provide free legal services to low-income women diagnosed with breast cancer.

Judge Susan Whitman and Attorney Holly Gillman presented a program, Estate Planning for Clients with Serious Illnesses, for attorneys attending and volunteering for this project.

Judge Whitman and Ms. Gillman walked the participants through the steps of writing and then probating a will with application to future clients of the project. Clients will be identified with the help of existing and future grantees of the Austin Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

The Travis County Women Lawyers Association will continue to promote this initiative to lawyers in the Travis County area including its membership and recruit attorney volunteers for this project. Volunteer Legal Services will provide support to the project and the William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law will recruit students to work with volunteer attorneys on these pro bono cases.

If you are interested in volunteering for this project, please go to www.tcwla.org for additional information and sign up sheet or contact Portia Bosse at portiabosse@yahoo.com or at 476-5355.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AYLA-TCWLA-VLS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROJECT

Would you like to make a lasting difference and help someone in need start building a new life? AYLA and the Travis County Women Lawyers' Association is partnering with Volunteer Legal Services for the fourth year of the Domestic Violence Project. Volunteers are needed to handle 2 domestic violence divorce cases on an emergency basis over 2007. "Emergency basis" means a case that needs a response within two weeks, and VLS will attempt to work around your schedule as requested. Participants will be trained by VLS domestic violence experts, and will be given a list of family law mentors that they can call with questions. We need at least 10 volunteer attorneys for this project. Please contact Laurie Higginbotham at lhigginbotham@govtclaim.com if you are interested in participating.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 6th	5:30-7:30pm	TCWLA Member Holiday Party at I F + D
December/January		Time to Renew your TCWLA Membership (application included in this newsletter)
January 17th	11:45-1:00pm	Pathfinders Luncheon at Austin Bar Association Offices (816 Congress)
February 15th		Judicial Reception at Green Pastures
February 12th-March 21st		Accepting Nominations for Attorney Awards and Applications for Grants

TCWLA Member Profile: Julia G. Benkoski (Julie)



I think of myself as an “old” lawyer given the average age of the TCWLA membership! A graduate from the U. of Houston College of Law and undergrad honor’s program, I was licensed in ’82. Starting off as an Assistant D.A. in Galveston Cty., I cut my teeth on the realities of crime and the lowly position as a groveling ‘baby’ lawyer. Life eventually lead me to Austin and a hard, long but educational stint with Doug Hearne, jury and bench trials...those days when you carted around boxes of paper!!

A chronic illness began to plague me throughout the 90’s...numerous stays in the local ER’s and OR’s. ICU and the dispensation of Last Rites followed. But thanks to Mayo Clinic, a great doc in Houston, and lots of prayer, I’m now healthy, returned to work initially with the St. Bar in the disciplinary division. And then a couple years ago, I hung out my shingle offering wills, probate and estate planning and my mediation services.

My health and sanity continue to be restored by a big, beautiful fella, Raphael, a Dutch warmblood horse. We ride English, jumping a course of fences. When I was wasting away, my husband of 20 + yrs., Harold, suggested that I learn to ride. **BIG MISTAKE!!** We’ve sunk a small fortune in the horse world...as well as with my other critters, Dixi, 5 yr. old, boisterous yellow lab, 3 indoor kitties, Avery, Pookie and Mojo.

When not tending to career and home life, I devote a huge amount of time to providing basic living necessities to the poor in Travis County. I’m the president of the St. John Neumann Catholic Church conference of St. Vincent de Paul. Besides facilitating many projects to help the poor, I regularly make home visits where we visit with the poor, provide assistance and let them know that people really do care. I have so many blessings, and I am ever grateful to be a part of this esteemed organization which reaches out to one another and the small, the forgotten in our community.



Meet Your Board Member: Lulu Flores

Practice Area/Employer: I am currently Of Counsel to HendlerLaw, P.C. of Austin, Texas. HendlerLaw represents persons who have suffered injuries due to toxic exposures, in particular the signature cancer caused by asbestos exposure known as mesothelioma. Our firm is hired to represent mesothelioma victims from all over the United States. Additionally, I serve as the public interest arm of the firm and one of my clients has been the Mexican American Bar Association of Texas, who I serve as Legislative Coordinator during legislative sessions. Prior to joining Hendler Law, P.C., I worked in the area of Legislative and Governmental Affairs for 22 years — I was Assistant Director for Intergovernmental Affairs of the Railroad Commission of Texas from 1996-2001 and Assistant Director for the Alternative Fuels Division of the Railroad Commission from 1992-1996. Before working for the Railroad Commission, I was Director for Governmental Affairs for the State Bar of Texas from 1986-1991. During law school (1978-1980) and thereafter from 1982-1986, I was Chief of Staff to the late Representative Irma Rangel, the first Hispanic woman elected to the Texas House of Representatives and a champion for higher education .

Education: I grew up in Laredo and attended an all girls school, Ursuline Academy, for 10 years and graduated in 1973 from St. Joseph’s Academy (a former all-boys school turned coed its final year – my senior year! ☺). I graduated summa cum laude from Laredo Junior College in 1975. I then entered The University of Texas at Austin where I received a Bachelor of Arts with High Honors Degree in Government in 1977 and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from UT School of Law in 1980. (I was actually a cheerleader in high school and in junior college, and I was co-captain of my basketball team my senior year in high school – remember half-court basketball??).

Family: I am married to Scott. Hendler, an attorney, and have three cats: Keanu, NaNa and Gracie. I am the youngest of nine children born to Francisco J. and Ernestina S. Flores, both deceased. My father was an attorney who self-studied and “wrote for the bar” in 1940; he was a practicing lawyer for 40 years. My mom was a school teacher and dress shop manager. Two of my siblings – a brother and a sister — are also lawyers; another of my sisters has her Masters in Public Administration from the Harvard JFK School of Government and a brother who is a Senior Executive with the U.S. EPA. I grew up knowing I wanted to go to law school having played in my dad’s office as a kid and typing warranty deeds for fun while I waited for my dad – his idea of entertainment! My father was one of the original founding members of LULAC. Public service was highly valued in my family and that helped influence my career path.

Loves to Do: I ran for over 30 years and did one marathon in 1986, a few half marathons and too many 10 and 5 Ks to remember — I even won a couple of trophies in my day — now I mostly “jog” occasionally, but still swim, practice Ashtanga yoga and do pilates and weights. You could say I love physical activity — I was even an aerobics instructor at the local YWCA in the mid-eighties (remember high impact aerobics?☺) and I danced Ballet Folklorico with a professional company for 12 years. Besides physical activities, I love to read. I just read Son of a Witch (the sequel to Wicked) by Gregory McGuire (I liked Wicked better, but it’s still a good read) and PREDATOR by Patricia Cornwell. One of my all time favorites is A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving. Scott and I both love reading mystery and detective novels and trade Daniel Silva and Michael Connelly novels on a regular basis. I recommend these fast reads for trips – they really help with all the traveling we do.

Tidbits: I have run for political office and still am politically active on the local, state and national arena, helping mostly women (and a few good men) get elected to office. I am First Vice President for the National Women’s Political Caucus and have served on the national board for over 12 years. I am also President of the Mexic-Arte Museum Board of Directors and I mentor a first generation Hispanic child now in 9th grade and have worked with her and her sisters for the last 12 years, since her oldest sister, now 22 was 10. I plan the annual Hispanic Bar Kids Holiday Party and coordinate the

Announcements

Have something you want to share with membership? Let us know!

Member Book Recommendations:

Gilead, by Marilynne Robinson (winner of the Pulitzer Prize — fiction — a preacher in 1956 Gilead, Iowa, nears the end of his life and the book is a letter to his seven-year-old son — it is about faith, grace, light, fathers and sons, ancestors, friendship and more — slowly paced but worth your effort).

The Stupidest Angel: A Heartwarming Tale of Christmas Terror, Version 2.0, by Christopher Moore (a tongue-in-cheek holiday/horror story — funny and ultimately tender, but not a Hallmark story! not for the faint of heart or people averse to cursing).

Appellate attorney (former appellate brief-writer for City of New Orleans before Katrina) with 15 years experience looking for contract, part-time, or full-time work in Texas. Experienced in ethics consultation/grievance representation and employment law. Top 3% J.D. class; LL.M. – UC Berkeley. Admitted in LA, TX, US 5th and US Supreme Court. 512/804-1985 or debhenson.austin2006@gmail.com

Want to be admitted to the Western District? Rent the DVD from TCWLA. Email tcwlaorg@gmail.com for details.

Seeking TCWLA CLE Co-Chair and Historian!!

Contact Joelle Boehle if you are interested.

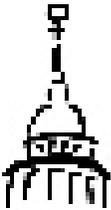
Joelle@KinneyRecruiting.com

State Bar Building is under construction from November through most of January, so we can't use their space until that's done. Meetings are at the Austin Bar Association in the meantime. (816 Congress)

Find your 2007 membership applications at the back of the newsletter!! Time to renew.

****SAVE THE DATES****

**Women's
Legislative Days**



**Uniting Women
for Fairness & Equality
January 28-30, 2007**

Woodward Hotel & Conference Center
3401 S. IH-35 Austin, TX
www.tcwild.org • info@tcwild.org

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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 with your announcements and photos.



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PRESIDENT:

Joelle Boehle
(w) 233-0280 (f) 857-1202
email: joelle@kinneyrecruiting.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT:

Laurie Higginbotham
(w) 266-7676 (f) 266-4646
email: lhigginbotham@govtclaim.com

PAST PRESIDENT and AUSTIN BAR ASSOCIATION LIAISON:

Portia Bosse
(w) 476-5355
email: portiabosse@yahoo.com

TCWLF LIAISON:

Maria Luisa "Lulu" Flores
(w) 439-3202 (f) 439-3201
Email: lulu@io.com

SECRETARY:

Rande Herrell
(w) 619-1341 (f) 328-1671
email: rkherrell@sbcglobal.net

TREASURER:

Jessica Warren
(w) 397-2417 (f) 397-2431
email: jessicawarren@bankofamerica.com

ACTIVITIES CO-CHAIRS:

Laura Moriarty
(w) 499-6299 (f) 499-6290
e-mail: lmoriarty@akingump.com

Joey Moore
(w) 476-5355 *1143 (f) 486-7045
e-mail: joeym@tsta.org

MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIRS:

Ellen Stewart
(w) 328-8355 (f) 328-8413
email: stewart@texasprobate.com

Gavra Flood
(w) 475-0121 (f) 463-2990
email: gavra.flood@twc.state.tx.us

CLE CHAIR:

Paige Casteneda
(w) 370-2839 (f) 370-2850
pcastaneda@winstead.com

SCHOLARSHIPS

CO-CHAIR (Boner/Williams):
Amie Rodnick
(w) 477-2226 (f) 477-2126
email: amie@rodnicklaw.com

CO-CHAIR (Farris-Cisneros):

Velva Price
(w) 469-9006 (f) 469-9008
velva-pc@sbcglobal.net

AYLA LIAISON/ WOMEN'S LAW CAUCUS LIAISON:

Elizabeth Branch
(w) 477-0100 (f) 477-0154
branch@americabourland.com

TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK:

Hon. Orlanda Naranjo
(w) 854-9242 (f) 854-4724
email: Orlanda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us

PUBLICITY/NEWSLETTER/ WEBSITE CHAIR:

Zelia Naman
(w) 476-5377 (f) 476-5773
email: znanan@women-law.org

Texas Supreme Court Task Force on Gender Discrimination LIAISON:

Lou Castaneda
(w) 476-0022 (f) 476-0033
email: lou@ryanco.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR and NEWSLETTER CONTACT:

Paige Chappell
(c) 699-5073
email: tcwlaorg@gmail.com

TCWLA

Travis County Women Lawyers' Association 2007 CALENDAR YEAR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Date: _____ New Member: _____ Renewing Member: _____
 Firm/Company/School Name: _____
 Mailing Address: _____ Zip Code: _____
 Office Phone: _____ Office Fax: _____
 E-mail: _____ _ (For newsletters and notices)

Practice Areas

Please indicate your practice areas for publication in the online directory:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative/Regulatory | <input type="checkbox"/> Education/School | <input type="checkbox"/> Malpractice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appellate | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADR | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Probate/Estate Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking/Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Government/Municipal | <input type="checkbox"/> Property Tax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Oil & Gas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Transactions | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil/Business Litigation | <input type="checkbox"/> In House Counsel | <input type="checkbox"/> Securities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights/Discrimination | <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer | <input type="checkbox"/> International | <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance Defense | <input type="checkbox"/> Water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance (Other) | <input type="checkbox"/> Workers Compensation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment/Labor | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Committee Information

I am interested in the following committees:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Court Seminar/Other Seminars | <input type="checkbox"/> Take Our Daughters to Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Website/Directory | <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers Bureau | <input type="checkbox"/> "Color of Justice" Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Susan G. Komen/TCWLA Project |

Feedback/Suggestions

What I hope to get out of TCWLA membership:

What I can give to get the most out of TCWLA membership:

Things I would like TCWLA to do:

Speakers/topics I recommend for TCWLA membership programs:

Holiday Gift Memberships: Give TCWLA membership as a gift to your friends and colleagues by duplicating and completing this form for each recipient. Please submit the form and the appropriate amount for dues. Please specify if the gift is anonymous.

Have questions? Call (512) 370-WLAW (9529) or send an e-mail to tcwlaorg@gmail.com if you have questions about membership. TCWLA membership is on a calendar year basis (January 1 - December 31).

Dues: \$40.00 per year; \$20.00 per half-year Lifetime Membership: \$400.00; Law Student: \$20.00
 Additional Voluntary Contribution: \$_____

*****Please renew your membership January 1, 2007*****

Send completed application and check to: TCWLA, P.O. Box 684683, Austin, TX 78768-4683.

**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:

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

_____ 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

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