



# TCWLA

Travis County Women Lawyers' Association

## Legal Matters

April 2010

TCWLA is your organization, and the Board welcomes your comments and suggestions at [tcwlaorg@gmail.com](mailto:tcwlaorg@gmail.com)

### Our Membership Meetings Are So Much More

TCWLA membership meetings are famous among the Bar as a gathering of some of the most interesting and influential attorneys in the area. Each meeting is an opportunity to spend time with your peers from all different practice areas and legal perspectives. Most meetings have the added value of CLE speakers on interesting and cutting edge topics.

Kristine A Huskey, Clinical Professor of Law and the National Security Clinic at UT School of Law shared

her latest work with TCWLA members at our March meeting. After her discussion, the floor was opened for a lively discussion on national security and civil liberties.

In addition to discussion on some of the most important issues of our time, members also enjoyed the catered delights of Spoon and Co. Soon, the TCWLA membership meetings will be famous for its delicious fare as well.

Join us next month, on April 21, when the CLE will be a Supreme Court Update by Kurt Kuhn. Members may brown bag for free. To register for lunch or to bring a nonmember, go to [www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org).



### Inside this issue:

- From Your President 2
- Remembering Myra McDaniel & Charlye Farris 2
- TCWLA 2010 Events 3
- Meet Your Board Member 4
- Additional Opportunities 5
- Membership 8
- Announcements 9

### Important Dates to Remember

|          |   |            |
|----------|---|------------|
| April 21 | Monthly General Meeting<br>Supreme Court Update | 11:45-1:00 |
| May 3    | Take Your Daughters<br>to Work Day              | 8:30-1:00  |
| May 13   | Grants and Awards Luncheon                      | 12:00-1:00 |
| June 16  | Board Elections                                 | 11:45-1:00 |



## From Your President Elizabeth Poole

Spring is in the air! I hope you've been able to enjoy this warm weather – either over a spring break or at SXSW. TCWLA ushers in this new season with several new events. We were pleased to see so many people at February's Judicial Reception and were happy to return to our monthly CLE events in March. We enjoyed Kristine Huskey's presentation on her book *Justice at Guantánamo: One Woman's Odyssey and her Campaign for Human Rights*, an account of her experience representing Guantánamo detainees.

We continue our CLE series on April 21, and hope you can join us as Kurt Kuhn gives us an update on the Texas Supreme Court. This is your chance to learn more about what the justices have been up to this year and what changes in the law could affect your practice area.

Please save the date on your calendar for our Annual Grants and Awards Luncheon on May 13. This year we return to the Austin Hilton to honor the women attorneys who will receive TCWLA's attorney awards. We

will also provide \$25,000 in grant funding to local non-profit organizations. Come to this event to honor lawyers in our community and leave inspired to make a difference!

Please get involved with our many events. As always, we can use the extra help. I look forward to seeing you at our next event!

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth Poole*

*"This is your chance to learn more about what the justices have been up to this year and what changes in the law could affect your practice area."*

*To register and order lunch, please visit our website:  
<http://www.tcvla.org>*

## Remembering Myra McDaniel and Charlye Farris

Women lawyers across the state are grieving the loss of two trailblazing women attorneys who died in February of 2010, Myra McDaniel and Charlye Farris.

Myra McDaniel served as the first African American Secretary of State for Texas and as

General Counsel to Governor Mark White. She was an expert in public law, elections, redistricting and governmental relations, serving as managing partner at Bickerstaff, Heath, Smiley, Pollan, Keever, and McDaniel in 1995. She served as General Counsel to Austin Com-

munity College for years. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Myra was educated at the prestigious University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas Law School. She raised a family and pursued her legal career with the support of her loving husband, Dr. Reuben R.

McDaniel, Jr. Knowing that education is an equalizing key to success, she encouraged all whom she mentored to take full advantage of educational opportunities. Church and community service balanced her legal career. Myra was a leader at St. James Episcopal Church, past

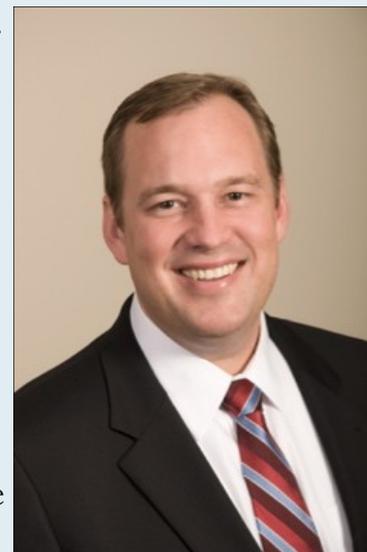
### **TCWLA 2010 Events**

See <http://www.tcwla.org> to register!

April 21

#### **Membership CLE Luncheon, TSTA Building.**

Kurt Kuhn (Partner at Brown McCarroll, candidate for the Third Court of Appeals, & TCWLA member) will be presenting a Supreme Court Update. The longest-serving nine member court in Texas Supreme Court history has just come to an end. With the recent changes at the court, now is a perfect time to look at big cases and trends. Our CLE/Networking lunches are free for members and \$15 for non-members, with an optional \$15 catered lunch for both. Menu this month includes: Pan Roasted Chicken Breasts with Preserved Lemon and Spring Herbs (vegetarian option of Baked Zucchini with Feta Cheese Preserved Lemon and Spring Herbs - please designate vegetarian when you RSVP); Bright and Beautiful Roasted Sweet Potato, Carrot and Beet Salad; Mixed Baby Leaf Salad with Best of the Market Bits and a Herbed Vinaigrette; Dulche De Leche Cheesecake Bars; and Iced Tea.



May 3

**Take Your Daughters to Work Day.** Judge Orlinda Naranjo leads this annual program, at which 20 elementary school girls will have the chance to participate in a mock trial and learn about the legal system. Contact Judge Naranjo to volunteer, [orlinda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:orlinda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us).

May 13

**Grants & Awards Luncheon, Austin Hilton Hotel.** At this annual event, hosted with the Foundation, members will enjoy a great lunch, auction, and raffle. Importantly, awards will be given to women attorneys making significant contributions in the categories of litigation, public interest, government, contribution to the minority community, pro bono, outstanding achievement, and law firm, government agency, or organization outstanding in its treatment of women. Additionally, grants will be given to organizations that benefit women and children and solve legal problems affecting women and children in Travis County. Finally, scholarships will be presented to 3 female UT Law Students finding success in the face of adversity. Tickets will be available for purchase soon.



## Meet Your Board Member Tracy L. Kasperek

Tracy L. Kasperek has been licensed to practice law in the State of Texas since 2007. Tracy received a BA in Business from Southwestern University and a JD from St. Mary's School of Law. While attending St. Mary's Tracy became a published staff writer for *The Scholar*: St. Mary's Law Review on Minority Issues. She was also elected to the Student Bar Association, and participated in several

community service projects which earned her a Pro Bono Certificate awarded at graduation as well as the Marianist Service to the Community award. A native Austinite, Tracy has made Austin her permanent home. She is an associate attorney of the Thrash Law Firm and focuses on Estate Planning, Probate, Family and Elder/Medicaid Law within the firm. Tracy also serves as

an attorney ad litem by appointment of the Travis County Probate Court, and takes on one pro bono case at a time through Texas RioGrande Legal Aid. In addition to serving as Treasurer and board member of TCWLA, she is also currently serving on 3 other boards, which include the AGLCC, AGLPF and her homeowner's association.

*Tracy Kasperek is an associate attorney of the Thrash Law Firm*

## Austin Lawyers Support Group

Are financial woes keeping you up at night?

Come to Texas Lawyer Assistance Program's (TLAP) confidential monthly meeting on Thursday, April 29 12:00-

1:00 at 816 Congress, 3rd floor Longhorn Room (#320), to discuss the basics of how to identify causes of financial headaches, make progress towards your financial goals and address

the emotional roadblocks often encountered when facing money issues. For more information call 512-427-1463 or go to <http://www.tlap.org>.

*For more information call 512-427-1463 or go to [www.tlap.org](http://www.tlap.org)*

## 2010 TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY

This is your opportunity to volunteer on Travis County Women Lawyers Association's award winning program by serving as a mentor, even if it's only for one day. TCWLA has scheduled their premier program, "Take Your Daughters to Work Day", on Monday, May 3, 2010 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This program reaches out to young girls in the fifth and sixth grades. This year the principal, teachers, and counselors from Zavala Elementary in East Austin will select twenty (20) girls who have good attendance and grades to participate in the program. This will be our 4th year to have a mock trial where the State seeks a protective order on a dating violence claim.

In the past, the TYDTW program has received the following two awards from The Texas State Bar: "Outstanding Partnership" and "Certificate of Achievement".

If you wish to participate in planning the event or helping on the date of this event, please contact the Chair, Judge Orlinda Naranjo, at 854-4023 or email her at [orlinda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:orlinda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us). We always need help with drivers who will pick up and drop off the girls at school and you will be asked to provide a copy of your Drivers License and Proof of Insurance.

**Breast Cancer Legal Advocacy Workshop  
A Complimentary CLE Program by Brown McCarroll LLP &  
The American Bar Association Health Law Section  
Breast Cancer Task Force**

Friday, April 16, 2010  
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Brown McCarroll LLP  
111 Congress Avenue  
Austin, TX

Out of all women born today, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their life. Chances are you or someone you know has had some experience with this disease. Cancer patients face a variety of legal problems related to their illness, including healthcare concerns, insurance company refusal to authorize needed treatment, and employment related issues. This seminar will provide information to assist attorneys who do not ordinarily handle cases of this type become aware of practices, procedures, and statutory enactments that will help them to assist clients with legal problems resulting from their illness. Information will also be provided on how attorneys can become advocates for breast cancer patients.

The distinguished panel will address a number of legal issues related to a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, including insurance coverage and ERISA issues, labor and employment issues, public benefits and a comprehensive review of a hypothetical of a patient's case.

Questions can be directed to Abbey Palagi at the ABA at 312-988-5532 or via email to [PalagiA@staff.abanet.org](mailto:PalagiA@staff.abanet.org).

\*3 hours of CLE credit has been applied for; program and breakfast are complimentary.

*Take Your Daughters  
to Work Day*

*Monday, May 3, 2010  
8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.*

*Free CLE on Legal  
Issues Faced by Breast  
Cancer Patients and  
Survivors*

*Friday, April 16,  
2010  
8:30 a.m. to 12:30  
p.m.*

## Remembering Myra McDaniel and Charlye Farris (continued from Page 2)



*"Myra McDaniel served as  
the first African American  
Secretary of State  
for Texas."*

**Myra McDaniel**



*"Charlye Farris was the  
first black woman to earn a  
license to practice law in the  
State of Texas."*

**Charlye Farris**

board chair at St. Edward's University, supported the League of Women Voters, and served on the board of Seton Hospital. In 2006, she was awarded the Sandra Day O'Connor Award for Professional Excellence. The family asks that donations be kindly made to support the St. James Episcopal Church Capital Campaign (include on memo line "Capital Campaign Fund-Myra McDaniel"). The depth and breadth of Myra's influence was evident at her beautiful memorial service. Her quiet but powerful influence throughout the community was apparent from the many diverse faces that filled the church as they came to pay their respects and reflect on the life of this remarkable woman. Her strength, grace and wisdom will be greatly missed.

Charlye Farris was the first black woman to earn a license to practice law in the State of Texas, and the first woman of any race to actively practice law in Wichita County, Texas. TCWLA honors her with the annual Farris-Cisneros Scholarship, championed by past president Bree Buchanan. Charlye was born to

educators and was a product of public schools. Mr. Farris was the first African-American school superintendent in Texas (Woodland Consolidated School District in Limestone County) and Mrs. Farris was an elementary schoolteacher for 49 years. In 1945, Charlye graduated at age 15 as valedictorian of Booker T. Washington High School (Wichita Falls public schools did not integrate until required by federal courts in 1969). She was 18 when she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Prairie View A&M College. To appease her parents, Charlye took a job teaching third and fourth graders in Stamford but gave it up after a year to pursue her interest in the law. Against all odds, Charlye became an attorney. When she applied for admission to law school, law was a man's profession. There were no African-American women licensed to practice law in Texas. And it was very difficult to gain entry into the only law school in Texas that admitted African-Americans: the newly created law school at the Texas State University for Negroes in Houston (renamed Texas Southern University in 1951). Undeterred,

Charlye entered law school at the University of Denver. She transferred to Howard University in Washington D.C. after her first year. During Charlye's last year in law school at Howard, her civil rights class helped work on *Brown v. Board of Education*; *Thurgood Marshall* (later a U.S. Supreme Court Justice), George E. C. Hayes, and James M. Nabrit Jr., practiced their Supreme Court arguments ("dry runs") in front of Charlye's class. In 1953, Charlye graduated from Howard University with a law degree and returned to Texas to take the Bar exam; she was sworn in on November 12, 1953. She endured the indignity of practicing law in the county courthouse which until 1962 had separate restrooms and drinking fountains for white and "colored" people. And Charlye was unable to attend the local bar association's luncheon meetings because they were held at the Marchman Hotel which excluded African-Americans. On July 7, 1954, members of the Wichita County Bar Association unanimously elected Charlye to serve as Special Wichita County Judge (County Judge Pro-Tem). She became the first African-American to serve as a judge in any capacity in the South

## 2009-2010 TCWLA OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

### PRESIDENT

Elizabeth Poole  
w) 512-476-5355  
[elizabethp@tsta.org](mailto:elizabethp@tsta.org)

### PRESIDENT-ELECT

Amanda Taylor  
w) 472-5998  
[amandat@hts-law.com](mailto:amandat@hts-law.com)

### PAST PRESIDENT/ TCWLF & ABA LIAISON

Rande Herrell  
w) 460-6132  
[rkherrell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rkherrell@sbcglobal.net)

### SECRETARY

Cameron Vann  
w) 427-1453  
[cameron.vann@texasbar.com](mailto:cameron.vann@texasbar.com)

### TREASURER

Tracy Kasperek  
w) 512-263-5400  
[tracy@thrashlawfirm.com](mailto:tracy@thrashlawfirm.com)

### TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY

Judge Orlanda Naranjo  
(w) 854-4023  
[orlinda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:orlinda.naranjo@co.travis.tx.us)

### ACTIVITIES CO-CHAIR

Cindy Connolly  
w) 495-6300  
[cconnolly@scottdoug.com](mailto:cconnolly@scottdoug.com)

### ACTIVITIES CO-CHAIR

Julie Street  
w) 512-499-6226  
[jstreet@akingump.com](mailto:jstreet@akingump.com)

### MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIR

Laura Merritt  
w) 338-5400  
[lmerritt@wsgr.com](mailto:lmerritt@wsgr.com)

### MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIR

Ann O'Connell  
c) 922-3264  
[anndoug@mac.com](mailto:anndoug@mac.com)

### AYLA/WLC LIAISON

Jaclyn Thompson  
c) 439-9957  
[jaclyn.thompson@lexisnexis.com](mailto:jaclyn.thompson@lexisnexis.com)

### WEBSITE

Molly Leder Hepkin  
h) 577-8867  
[mbleder@yahoo.com](mailto:mbleder@yahoo.com)

### WEBSITE

Beeral Amin  
c) 587-5888  
[beeralamin@yahoo.com](mailto:beeralamin@yahoo.com)

### CLE CO-CHAIR

Mindy Montford  
w) 826-6432  
[mindymontford@yahoo.com](mailto:mindymontford@yahoo.com)

### CLE CO-CHAIR

Lea Brigtsen  
w) 512-542-5032  
[lbrigtsen@hunton.com](mailto:lbrigtsen@hunton.com)

### SCHOLARSHIP CO-CHAIR

Amie Rodnick  
w) 477-2226  
[amic@rodnicklaw.com](mailto:amic@rodnicklaw.com)

### SCHOLARSHIP CO-CHAIR

Velva Price  
w) 445-1580  
[Velva\\_p@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Velva_p@sbcglobal.net)

### PUBLICITY CO-CHAIR

Claire East  
w) 615-6195  
[ceast@chopperlaw.com](mailto:ceast@chopperlaw.com)

### PUBLICITY CO-CHAIR

Natalie Niles Argüello  
w) 441-1411  
[narguello@thefowlerlawfirm.com](mailto:narguello@thefowlerlawfirm.com)

### TWL LIAISON

Susan G. Morrison  
(512) 478-1616  
[smorrison@morrisonlegal.com](mailto:smorrison@morrisonlegal.com)

**YOUR AD  
COULD BE  
HERE!**  
**\$30 for 3 months  
for a 2.5x2.5  
Free Classifieds  
Ads for Members**  
**For more  
information  
tcwlaorg  
@gmail.com**



## Membership Application for New and Renewing Members

Please indicate your selection...

- Active Membership: \$40 per calendar year, due Jan. 1
- Law Student Membership: \$20 per calendar year, due Jan. 1
- Fall Membership: \$20 for October, November, and December, payable after Oct. 1
- Lifetime Membership: \$400, payable anytime
- Newly Licensed Attorney Membership: Complimentary membership up to the first 14 months of licensure. February licensees receive free membership for the remainder of calendar year in which they are licensed (10 months). November licensees receive the same for the Nov. and Dec. of their year of licensure, plus the following calendar year (14 months). Dues will be due the January 1 after complimentary membership expires.

### Member Information...

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/employer: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a law student at \_\_\_\_\_ and will graduate \_\_\_\_\_.

I am a newly licensed attorney. My month and year of licensure: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Method of Payment...pay by check or online at [www.tcwla.org/joinus.htm](http://www.tcwla.org/joinus.htm)

- Enclosed please find my check and form. (Mail both to TCWLA, P.O. Box 684683, Austin, TX 78768-4683.)
- I have paid online; here is my form. (Email form, as an attachment, to [tcwlaorg@gmail.com](mailto:tcwlaorg@gmail.com) (download form at [www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org)) or to mail it to TCWLA, P.O. Box 684683, Austin, TX 78768-4683.)
- I'm a newly licensed attorney. Here is my form!

*Thank you for joining TCWLA!*



Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 684683  
Austin, TX 78768-4683  
Email  
tcwlaorg@gmail.com

WE'RE ON THE  
WEB!  
WWW.TCWLA.ORG  
FACEBOOK

## Membership Renewals are Every January Are You Current?

A sampling of membership privileges:

- § FREE CLE at our monthly membership lunches
- § Free admission to the annual Judicial Reception at Green Pastures
- § Invitation to the annual Pathfinders' Luncheon and the annual TCWLF Grants and Awards Luncheon
- § Social Connections: our annual holiday party and other special events
- § Access to *Legal Matters*, our award-winning newsletter
- § Opportunities to spotlight your practice or business at our events and in our newsletter
- § Privilege of community service

Membership dues are only \$40 per calendar year for regular membership!  
Student membership is \$20!  
Become a lifetime member for \$400!

This year, we are providing FREE MEMBERSHIP to newly licensed attorneys. If you or someone you know was just inducted into the Texas Bar, please claim your free membership and start connecting with practicing attorneys today!

## Free Memberships for Newly Licensed Attorneys!

TCWLA congratulates all newly licensed attorneys! The TCWLA board has decided to award all newly licensed attorneys free membership for 2010. TCWLA is a wonderful community of attorneys who can provide guidance and mentorship to new attorneys. We welcome you to our legal community!

For those newly licensed attorneys who are looking for a practice area, membership is an invaluable way to get to know experienced attorneys and learn about the varied practice areas in the Austin area. For those new attorneys who have already chosen an area in which to practice, there is no better group of women to turn to for advice and practical guidance. I encourage all new members to attend our luncheons and other events to get to know the women who have made their careers practicing law in Austin.

*Help TCWLA go paperless by renewing your membership online at [www.tcwla.org](http://www.tcwla.org). Or, fill out the form in this newsletter and mail in your dues.*

## Remembering Myra McDaniel and Charlye Farris (continued from Page 2 & 6)

since Reconstruction. The local newspaper ran articles about Charlye's accomplishment but refused to include her picture because of the paper's policy at the time against publishing photos of African-Americans.

In February 1955, Charlye opened a law office near the railroad tracks where passing trains sounded like they were coming right through the office. After the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Charlye was able to lease an office downtown by the county courthouse (where she officed for over 40 years). Despite the indignities that she endured, Charlye persevered, worked hard, and established a reputation for honesty and fairness. On September 10, 1963, Charlye filed a suit for a mandatory injunction in *Billouin v. City of Wichita Falls et al.*, #73,122-A in Wichita County 30th District Court. Before being held unconstitutional, restrictive covenants in deeds of residential property were often utilized so that the property could not be used or occupied by anyone who wasn't Caucasian. Charlye turned the tables on the establishment in this case and used a restrictive covenant to obtain injunctive relief for a married couple in Charlye's neighborhood to prevent a city police officer, who also lived in the neighborhood, from keeping a police dog and from erecting housing for the animal. Charlye's work on this case was among the most gratifying of all she has handled. Police dogs had been used in the

South against African-Americans, and Charlye resented their inhumane use and what they symbolized. She paid for the costs of the suit out of her own pocket. In 1973, Charlye became a mother. She had a son, Troy K. Farris, through the single-parent adoption plan when he was five days old. Like his grandparents, Troy became an educator and is currently a public high school vice-principal. Charlye was selected as acting District Judge of the 78th District Court in Wichita County during the summer of 1973. She served on the board of directors of the Wichita County Bar Association and as chairperson of the District 14-A Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas. Despite an active solo private practice that by the 1970's concentrated on family law, real estate, and probate matters, Charlye had long been involved in community and civic issues, and she served as a director on the boards of several organizations, including her church, Gilbert C.M.E. Church of Wichita Falls. In 2006, Charlye was appointed and served on the Board of Regents of Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, which she could not have attended as a young student. And recently the local public school district, whose schools Charlye was barred from attending, named an elementary school after Charlye and her mother, Roberta (who turns 104 this July 19).

Charlye has received several very prestigious state and national bar association awards honoring outstanding women lawyers who have achieved professional excellence and paved the way for success for other women lawyers. In 2004, she received the Texas Bar Foundation's Outstanding Fifty-Year Lawyer Award, recognizing

attorneys whose practice spanned 50 years or more and who adhere to the highest principles and tradition of the legal profession and service to the public. The essence of Charlye's story is eloquently stated by Betsy Whitaker, 2003 State Bar President, in her column in the September 2003 issue of the *Texas Bar Journal*: "Charlye is a lawyer, a Texan, and a woman whose dignity and strength helped her overcome the adversity that could have obliterated her dream of being a lawyer. Many have benefited from her persistence and patience. All Texas lawyers, especially women and minority lawyers, have individuals like Charlye to thank for leading the way, for standing tall, and for making it a little easier for those of us who have come later.

Charlye's story is a testament to the "power of one"—the difference one person can make in a community, in a profession, and even in our history. Charlye Farris represents all that is good and honorable about the legal profession. Her courage and integrity make her the female equivalent of Atticus Finch. Charlye turned 80 on June 30 and was still working Monday through Friday. Friends said that the years did not diminish Charlye's elegance, and the prejudice she endured did not make her bitter or resentful. She remained soft-spoken and humble and a very private person who shunned any publicity. She is a role model for all attorneys.

Excerpts written by their friends, Barry Macha, of Wichita Falls, Texas for the March-April 2009 edition of *The Prosecutor*, Susan Morrison, and Martha Smiley.