

TCWLA KICKS OFF 7TH YEAR OF MENTORING PROGRAM

Since 2013 the Travis County Women Lawyers' Association (TCWLA) Mentoring Program has been matching seasoned and new attorneys so that the participants will learn from each other, build friendships and create support systems. You can join the Mentoring Program as a mentor, mentee, or member of the mentoring committee. These roles offer rewarding experiences that further TCWLA's overall mission to foster communication among women lawyers. If you are interested in participating, go to TCWLA.org in August for requirements and information or contact co-chairs Jane Atwood or Sherine Thomas.

My Role as a TCWLA Mentor: By Cynthia W. Veidt, Assistant County Attorney and former equity partner at Lippincott Phelan Veidt, PLLC

As a young lawyer – honestly, for me, even before my decision to attend law school – I had the honor of working with a number of wonderful role models and mentors. So when one of those mentors asked me to "give back" by joining the TCWLA as a mentor for others, how could I say no?

Mentoring has provided me with an enriching experience over the past few years. I've had the opportunity to meet lawyers at the beginning of their careers and the pleasure of watching them develop into amazing professionals who also "give back" through work, volunteering, networking, and mentoring others. It feels like that old commercial – I've mentored two women, and they've mentored two women, and so on, and so on, creating an exponential web of support and friendship. (To be fair, we haven't really stopped at just two apiece.)

Knowing that this support network exists – that the support flows in *both* directions – has helped me throughout my career, in good times and harder ones. Mentoring allows you the opportunity to teach, but it also provides the opportunity to learn. It is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling experiences I've discovered during the practice of law.

My Role as a TCWLA Mentee: By Neha Paymaster, Associate Attorney at Eccles & McIntosh PC

During my first year as a licensed attorney, I joined TCWLA with the hope of meeting more seasoned attorneys who could guide a lawyer at the start of her career. Along with meeting lawyers who were willing to take the time to mentor a new lawyer, I began to learn what it meant to be a positive part of the legal community. Because of the welcoming environment of TCWLA, I applied to be a mentee in the mentoring program.

As a mentee I was provided the opportunity to build a relationship with a seasoned lawyer over the course of a year. Through the program I gained a community of lawyers willing to share their experiences and provide support as we navigated these new roads. The mentoring program fostered a collaborative environment in which we were encouraged to reach out not only to our mentor, but any other mentor or mentee. The program encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and become an active member of our legal community. I still meet with, lean on and learn from my Mentor. She continues to be an invaluable resource to me as I build my legal career. I am excited for the day when I can give back to this organization and community as a Mentor.

My role as a Mentoring Committee member: By Arianna L. Smith, Associate Attorney at Fritz, Byrne, Head & Gilstrap, PLLC

I owe a lot of my success as a young attorney to the Mentoring Program. When I moved to Austin to begin my legal career, I did not know many attorneys that I could turn to for guidance. Once I joined the Mentoring Program as a mentee, my network of attorneys immediately grew and I had the incredible opportunity to learn from an experienced attorney who was dedicated to helping me achieve my professional goals.

Eventually I wanted to help behind the scenes, so I volunteered to be on the Mentoring Committee. While on the Mentoring Committee, I coordinated events that brought new and experienced attorneys together—I was an integral part in creating lasting friendships and support systems. As a member of the committee I have also had the opportunity to moderate a CLE panel and learn about areas outside of my legal practice. The opportunities and experiences with not only the Mentoring Program, but with TCWLA generally, are endless and rewarding.



TCWLA 2018-19 Mentoring Program End of Year of Event at Z-Tejas