FALL 2023

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

DOCKET CALL

BAYLOR LAW: A TOP LAW SCHOOL FOR FEDERAL CLERKSHIPS

SALUTING SERVICE

BAYLOR LAW ABROAD

The GAVEL, the GREEN, and the GOLD

BAYLOR LAWYERS AS FEDERAL JUDGES
Allison Dickson’s story of perseverance, faith, love for Baylor, and hard work—which enabled her to graduate first in her class while living daily with the physical challenges of Werdnig-Hoffman Muscular Dystrophy—has inspired many.

One of Allison’s long-term dreams was to leave a lasting legacy of helping others through the Allison Dickson Endowed Scholarship at Baylor Law. The fund is designed to reduce recipients’ debt burden, empowering them to explore their legal interests more broadly and seek out the most meaningful work.

Over the years, Allison recruited more than 80 partners to establish the fund—and even with her recent pressing medical issues, she continued to seek out supporters for her endeavor. Baylor Law would be honored to have you join us in supporting #TeamAlli.

If you would like to honor Allison with a donation to the Allison Dickson Scholarship Fund at Baylor Law, please visit https://baylor.scalefunder.com/cfund/AllisonDickson, or use the QR Code on the left.
A Message from Dean Wilson

Established in 1857, Baylor Law was the first law school in Texas and one of the first west of the Mississippi River. Today, the school has more than 7,800 living alumni. It is accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.
Dear Baylor Law Family,

I hope this letter finds you well and thriving. We are in a season of transition at the Law School. As you surely know, Dean Emeritus Brad Toben returned to the faculty after 31 years at the helm of the Law School. This is the first issue for which I’ve written the Dean’s Letter, as I serve as the Interim Dean during this transitional period. It is an honor and a privilege to do so.

In the pages of this issue, we celebrate the remarkable contributions of some of our alumni who have chosen to use their knowledge and skills in service to our nation. We are proud to feature federal judges who are shaping legal precedents, as well as public defenders who are dedicated to protecting the rights of the least among us. We take this opportunity to highlight some of our alumni who serve our country through their military service and judicial clerks who work behind the scenes to support the judges with whom they serve.

Federal service presents an avenue for our graduates to exemplify the ideals of justice, fairness, and public good. Whether it is upholding the Constitution, protecting individual rights, or shaping the legal landscape, their commitment to service reflects the values instilled during their time in the law center. Their commitment makes us immensely proud and serves as proof of the enduring influence of a Baylor Law education.

As we celebrate these Baylor Lawyers dedicated to federal service, we also reflect on the essence of change and progress. This issue of Docket Call coincides with a pivotal moment for our law school—the undertaking of an extensive capital improvement project at the Sheila and Walter Umphrey Law Center, designed to ensure that our facility continues to meet the needs of our program, especially the needs of the next generation of law students training to become Baylor Lawyers.

I am profoundly grateful for the trust that the university community has placed in me, and I am eager to carry forward the legacy of excellence that Dean Toben and his predecessors cultivated over the years. In this ever-changing landscape, we will continue to equip our students with the legal knowledge and the skills to adapt, innovate, and lead. I will continue to ensure that Baylor Law remains rooted in its commitment to academic rigor, experiential learning, and a deep sense of ethical responsibility.

We will also continue to foster an inclusive and collaborative environment that values diverse perspectives and empowers students to become compassionate and effective advocates for justice. We will expand our efforts to engage with the broader legal community, providing our students with resources that prepare them for the multifaceted challenges of the modern legal profession.

I appreciate the myriad ways in which you support the Law School. As we embark on this new era, I encourage you to stay connected with us. Your experiences, insights, and wisdom are invaluable assets that enrich the learning experiences of our students. The achievements highlighted in this and every issue of the Docket Call are a testament to your hard work and commitment to the ideals of justice and service.

With warm regards,

Patricia Wilson
INTERIM DEAN AND THE WILLIAM BOSWELL CHAIR OF LAW
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
I was told that doing the job of a judge correctly means being prepared to see results occur that I might not personally agree with or like but which a fair reading of the law and its application to the facts might otherwise cause me to reach," said the Honorable Rodney Gilstrap (JD ‘81), Chief District Judge of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas.

Judge Gilstrap’s insight into the role of a judge provides a valuable perspective on the importance of learning practical, real-world lawyering skills that Baylor Law emphasizes. Baylor Law students are exposed to the real-world skills necessary for practice—and the bench.
As a lawyer moves from representing clients to serving on the bench, his or her role shifts from that of advocate to the role of impartial arbiter. “When representing a client, a lawyer is dedicated to achieving the best outcome possible for his or her client. As a judge, one has to leave advocacy behind and commit to guaranteeing that each side receives a fair and impartial trial,” said the Honorable Andrew S. Hanen (JD ’78), District Judge of the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas.

The Honorable Jeffrey L. Cureton (JD ’93), U.S. Magistrate Judge of the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas, said a federal magistrate judge embodies the Fourth Amendment. “We evaluate in real time the presence or absence of probable cause in search and seizure affidavits and arrest warrants. While I miss the rewards and satisfaction of being able to provide individual civil and criminal clients with legal services, I am honored to be able to serve our community,” he said.

As part of their oath, judges vow to administer justice without respect to persons and “do equal right” to the poor and the rich, as well as to faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of the position. “Their decisions in specific cases may be influenced by how they think the decisions may impact the meaning of a statute or the interpretation of the common law,” said the Honorable Sidney Fitzwater (JD ’76), Senior District Judge of the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas. Lawyers, on the other hand, he said, are advocates who are obligated to represent and serve their clients zealously.

“Certainly, the role of an advocate for a client differs in many ways, but the skills I learned in Baylor’s Practice Court program are still put to use every day in my service as a federal judge. We are prepared for our proceedings, prompt in taking up docket items, precise in our analysis, and polite and professional in our communications,” said Christine A. Nowak (JD ’05), who served as U.S. Magistrate Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas for eight years.

Baylor Professor of Law Jim Wren pointed out core tenets that graduates take with them from the program include understanding problems and advocacy, managing details with precision, prioritizing time, handling pressure, and the ability to command a room, exhibiting professionalism and credibility.

“An Unexpected and Rewarding Service”

From working with law clerks who face the day-to-day impact of a judge’s busy docket to spending time with jurors answering questions about the justice system and their integral role, judges have found aspects of their service to be both unexpected and rewarding.

“I love to watch skilled trial lawyers try a complex case before a lay jury. It’s like being on the front-row, center seat at the hottest ticket in town,” said Judge Gilstrap.

He added, “I love doing naturalization ceremonies. It’s like a physician bringing a new life into the world. It is one time when everyone leaves the courtroom happy.”
The Honorable Ed Kinkeade (JD ’74), District Judge for the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas, said he’s found reward in solving issues that both parties have been unable to settle. The Honorable Sam R. Cummings (JD ’70), Senior District Judge for the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas, noted that he finds great fulfillment in diligently striving to ensure that justice is upheld in each case that comes before him. Engaging in public service through intellectually stimulating work is a rare privilege, noted the Honorable Christopher H. Steger (JD ’83), U.S. Magistrate Judge for the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Tennessee. He referred to Winston Churchill, who said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

**When Not in Court**

The role of public servant, rewarding and impactful as it may be, is not without sacrifice. Often the role leaves limited time for service outside of formal responsibilities. Judge Gilstrap noted that a federal judge is never off duty, with each interaction—whether through service clubs, visitors to the courtroom, or public speaking events—reflecting on the integrity of the court as a public institution.

Giving back to the profession by mentoring attorneys young in their career, encouraging young people to consider a career of judicial service, and serving on committees responsible for developing rules of procedure and evidence for consideration by the Supreme Court are some of the notable contributions Baylor Law grads now sitting as federal judges are making.

“I love to watch skilled trial lawyers try a complex case before a lay jury. It’s like being on the front-row, center seat at the hottest ticket in town.”

— HONORABLE RODNEY GILSTRAP, JD ’81
CHIEF DISTRICT JUDGE OF THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

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**BAYLOR LAWYERS ON THE FEDERAL BENCH**

**U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT**

HONORABLE PRISCILLA RICHMAN, JD ’76
CHIEF JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

HONORABLE SAM R. CUMMINGS, JD ’70
SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE

HONORABLE SIDNEY FITZWATER, JD ’76
SENIOR DISTRICT JUDGE

HONORABLE ED KINKEADE, JD ’74
DISTRICT JUDGE

HONORABLE D. GORDON BRYANT, JR., JD ’86
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

HONORABLE JEFFREY L. CURETON, JD ’93
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

HONORABLE RODNEY GILSTRAP, JD ’81
CHIEF DISTRICT JUDGE

HONORABLE AMOS L. MAZZANT, III, JD ’90
DISTRICT JUDGE

HONORABLE K. NICOLE MITCHELL, JD ’06
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

HONORABLE JOSHUA P. SEARCY, JD ’05
BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

HONORABLE ANDREW S. HANEN, JD ’78
DISTRICT JUDGE

HONORABLE IGNACIO TORTEYA, III, JD ’95
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

HONORABLE JULIE K. HAMPTON, JD ’01
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

HONORABLE DEREK T. GILLILAND, JD ’98
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

HONORABLE SHAD M. ROBINSON, JD ’99
BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE**

HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. STEGER, JD ’83
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

HONORABLE SHASHI KEWALRAMANI, JD ’96
MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO**

HONORABLE KEVIN R. SWEAZEA, JD ’88
MAGISTRATE JUDGE
The Honorable Derek T. Gilliland ('98), U.S. Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas, serves in the Federal Magistrate Judges Association and its outreach programs. A program called Robes in Schools organizes judges to speak with students about the path each judge took to the bench and their position. “The idea is to educate students on the role of the federal judiciary and plant the seed that they might be able to join the judiciary one day,” said Gilliland.

The Honorable Shashi Kewalramani (JD ‘96) stays active in local communities to hear litigants’ concerns with the system and then suggests ways to provide a better forum to litigate disputes.

Kewalramani, a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the U.S. District Court, Central District of California, also coaches a local high school mock trial team and participates as a judge in mock trial and moot court competitions. He said this “provides a face of the federal judiciary to young adults and shows career pathways that they may not have considered.”

“Service as a bankruptcy judge is not just about presiding over cases but is also about contributing to and upholding the idea that courts are to be trusted,” said the Honorable Joshua P. Searcy (JD ’05), U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of Texas. “To that end, I have spoken to elementary and middle school students about civics and government, regularly speaking and participating in legal education seminars. It can be hard to trust an abstract institution but much easier to trust a credible representative of that institution,” he said.

Early in his legal career, the Honorable Ignacio Torteya, III (JD ’95), U.S. Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas, served as a law clerk to the Honorable Filemon B. Vela in the Court where Torteya now sits. “I observed firsthand how one can lead a life of purpose and service to the community. I strive to follow his example every day with my law clerks, serving as a mentor during the early stages of their legal careers while becoming the best possible public servant I can be,” he said.

**Baylor Law prepared me to be a great trial lawyer, and I think that lays a deep foundation for being a great trial judge.**

— HONORABLE K. NICOLE MITCHELL, JD ’96
MAGISTRATE JUDGE IN THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

**Readied by Baylor Law**

The rigor demanded of Baylor Law students increases each year of the program, with the third and final year culminating in the now 100-year-old tradition that teaches students to command a room, master facts and law, and maintain composure and credibility under pressure. The *Princeton Review* has called the Practice Court program the best training ground in the nation for practical lawyering.

“Baylor Law invests significant time and effort in providing students opportunities to practice what they are learning in substantive and skills courses so that on day one of their first job, they hit the ground running,” said Professor of Law Beth Miller.

“Small classes, intense experiences, and one-on-one access to professors provide Baylor students with valuable opportunities to develop and sharpen the skills that employers seek and value,” Professor Miller noted of Baylor Law’s program.

“It gave me a strong foundation to develop as a lawyer and as a colleague to not only those with whom I worked on the same side but to those who were on the other side,” said the Honorable Priscilla Richman (JD ’76), Chief Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

“We learned at Baylor Law that respect for one another, regardless of our differences, and respect for the legal process are crucial as professionals, as officers of the court, and as examples to the community of how those entrusted with practicing law should comport themselves,” she said.

The Honorable Amos L. Mazzant, III (JD ’90), District Judge for the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas, still remembers a meeting with Professor of Law Brian Serr during his second year at Baylor Law when they discussed federal clerkships, and he was encouraged to apply. That meeting changed the course of his career.

“The Baylor Law School experience is unique and unlike any other law school experience,” Mazzant said. “Each quarter tends to increase in difficulty, culminating in the Practice Court program. This experience is something that law students may not appreciate until they have separated from it. Still, I can tell you from my experience that Baylor Law School prepares you for the myriad challenges you may face as a lawyer.”

In addition to presiding on the bench, the Honorable K. Nicole Mitchell (JD ’06), Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas, currently serves as president for the Federal Magistrate Judges Association, a national organization that supports the role of all U.S. Magistrate Judges.

“Baylor Law prepared me to be a great trial lawyer, and I think that lays a deep foundation for being a great trial judge. Things often move at a fast pace at the trial court level,” said Mitchell, who serves as a Jaworski Fellow in the Practice Court program and as an adjunct professor in Baylor Law’s Academy of the Advocate at St. Andrews.

“I need to have a good foundation for the rules of civil procedure and evidence, which I certainly learned at Baylor. Baylor Law also helped me hone my research and writing skills—skills I use every day at the courthouse,” she said.

Baylor Law’s unwavering commitment to excellence and its rigorous program have proven instrumental in equipping judges with the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to excel on the federal bench. Baylor Law’s legacy in producing exceptional judges continues to shape the nation’s judiciary, guaranteeing that justice is administered and the principles of the law are upheld.
BAYLOR LAW RECOGNIZED AS A TOP LAW SCHOOL FOR FEDERAL JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

Baylor Law’s commitment to giving its students unparalleled preparation for practice has once again borne fruit as recent graduate employment data for the Class of 2022 reveals a remarkable trend—Baylor Law graduates excel in securing coveted federal clerkships. Despite the limited availability of such opportunities nationwide, recent Baylor Lawyers have excelled in obtaining these highly competitive positions.

Reuters®, in its analysis of American Bar Association (ABA) data, underscores the remarkable accomplishments of Baylor Law graduates, ranking the law school 13th nationwide out of the 199 ABA-accredited Law schools in the country. Nearly 10% of the Class of 2022 achieved the distinction of landing a judicial clerkship with a federal judge. This ranking is a testament to Baylor Law’s commitment to delivering an exceptional legal education that effectively equips graduates to navigate the demanding terrain of legal practice.

Central to Baylor Law’s success is its rigorous curriculum, which is designed to hone legal reasoning, analytical skills, proficient writing, and a deep understanding of legal procedure. The comprehensive curriculum serves as a crucible for preparing Baylor Law graduates to excel as law clerks.

“I know that when Baylor Lawyers arrive in my chambers, they know their way around a courtroom and how to try a lawsuit,” noted the Honorable Amos L. Mazzant, III, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas. “In my eight-plus years as a U.S. District Judge, I have had the pleasure of working with 12 Baylor Lawyers, and all of them have done outstanding work for the court.”

Kristine Bridges, Assistant Dean of Career Development, remarked, “We are fortunate that our students are continuously sought out by federal judges seeking Baylor Lawyers to support their chambers. As with other sectors, federal judges feel the value of the ‘Baylor Law’ difference.”

Baylor Law’s success in producing federal law clerks stands as a testament to its commitment to rigorous legal training and equipping graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the profession. This accomplishment reaffirms Baylor Law’s status as a preeminent institution for those pursuing legal excellence and opens doors to numerous opportunities for its graduates within the legal profession.

Judge Mazzant added, “Baylor Lawyers, having gone through an intense curriculum that includes Practice Court, distinguish themselves by having a unique understanding of how to try a case and deal with the rigors of practicing law. As a Baylor Lawyer and judge, I understand what I am getting with a Baylor Lawyer when I hire one—I am getting a lawyer who understands that practicing law requires hard work. I am getting someone who understands how to try a case.”

“I understand what I am getting with a Baylor Lawyer when I hire one—I am getting a lawyer who understands that practicing law requires hard work. I am getting someone who understands how to try a case.”

— Hon. Amos L. Mazzant, III JD ’90
Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
LEXIE AMMONS
Judge: Hon. Andrew Hanen
court: U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
Houston, TX

ALEJANDRA GARCIA CASTRO
Judge: Hon. Edward L. Morris
court: U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas
Fort Worth, TX

BECCA JAHNKE
Judge: Hon. Alan Albright
court: U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
Waco, TX

LUKE MADDOX
Judge: Hon. John P. Devine
court: Supreme Court of Texas
Austin, TX

EMILY NORRMAN
Judge: Hon. Amos L. Mazzant, III
court: U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
Sherman, TX

BRITTANY RUMMEL
Judge: Hon. K. Nicole Mitchell
court: U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
Tyler, TX

MONICA SMITH
Judge: Hon. Claude Hilton
court: U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
Alexandria, VA

RACHEL BUCHHORN
Judge: Hon. Joel M. Carson
court: U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
Roswell, NM

JACOB HADJIS
Judge: Hon. Debra Lehrmann
court: Supreme Court of Texas
Austin, TX

MARIAN KARIGAN
Judge: Hon. Derek T. Gilliland
court: U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
Waco, TX

PEYTON MADDOX
Judge: Hon. David Newell
court: Texas Court of Criminal Appeals
Austin, TX

KATIE QUILLEN
Judge: Hon. Jeffrey C. Manske
court: U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas
Waco, TX

JASON SERFASS
Judge: Hon. Joel M. Carson
court: U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
Roswell, NM

MONICA SMITH
Judge: Hon. Matthew Kacsmaryk
court: U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
Amarillo, TX

MASON BUSBEE
Judge: Hon. Marcia A. Crone
court: U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
Beaumont, TX

CAITLIN HUETTMAN
Judge: Hon. S. Maurice Hicks
court: U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana
Shreveport, LA

SAMMY LUTES
Judge: Hon. Carmen E. Garza
court: U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico
Las Cruces, NM

KELLEY CLARK MORRIS
Judge: Hon. Lynn Hughes
court: U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
Houston, TX

KRISTOPHER RUZ
Judge: Hon. Amos L. Mazzant, III
court: U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
Sherman, TX
SALUTING SERVICE

Baylor Law Serves Those Who Serve Our Country

“Like the U.S. military, Baylor Law is committed to excellence and rigor and promotes a commitment to service.”

— Jenny Branson
Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid
Baylor Law has proudly emerged as a magnet for veterans and active duty service members aiming to transition into the legal field, weaving their unique experiences and indomitable spirit into the fabric of the legal profession. While the roles of attorney and soldier may appear dissimilar, Baylor Lawyers will immediately recognize the resonating common values.

Jenny Branson, Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, underscores the commonalities between Baylor Law’s ethos and the military’s core values: “Like the U.S. military, Baylor Law is committed to excellence and rigor and promotes a commitment to service.”

To illustrate the commitment to rigor, Branson points to Baylor Law’s mandatory third-year Practice Court program. This program immerses students in a comprehensive study of legal procedure, evidence, and professional responsibility during the mornings, followed by courtroom experience in the afternoons and evenings. Under the guidance and critique of attorneys, judges, and professors, students navigate every facet of a trial, emulating the workload of a practicing lawyer during their busiest six months. Branson notes that the discipline demanded by this program mirrors the military mindset. Service is another hallmark of Baylor Law’s identity. Branson emphasizes, “We firmly believe that the law is a service profession, that if you don’t want to serve people, you shouldn’t be an attorney.” Baylor Law offers numerous avenues for students and alumni to engage in community-focused service and pro bono work, including voluntary clinics, Adoption Day, the People’s Law School, a partnership with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of McLennan County, and more.

**Offering Accessibility**

Katherine Sims, Director of Student Affairs, underscores the practical aspects of Baylor Law that make it attractive to veterans. The school’s quarter system and three enrollment periods per year accommodate the varying schedules of military personnel transitioning into civilian life. “Our students may be separating from the military at different points throughout the year or, if they’re active duty, maybe the spring start is better than the fall start,” she says. Moreover, the law school’s efficient communication with students, ensuring

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**CHALLENGE COINS**

An enduring tradition within the U.S. military for over a century, Challenge Coins are small, metal “coins” shared by service members to foster unit pride, enhance camaraderie, and recognize diligence and excellence.

Many servicemen, servicewomen, veterans, and even civilians take great pride in showcasing their collection of challenge coins. These coins are tangible reminders of the various missions they have undertaken, the distinguished leaders they have had the privilege to meet, or a notable achievement, an anniversary, or special event.

In 2022, Baylor Law’s Military & Veterans Legal Society began sharing Challenge Coins with active duty service members and veterans as they prepare to graduate from Baylor Law.
timely decisions and responses, is especially advantageous for active-duty military members who often work within stringent deadlines. The proximity of Baylor Law to Fort Cavazos, the largest active-duty armored post in the United States, facilitates commuting to Waco for service members stationed there.

Sims also highlights the role of organizations like Baylor’s Law’s Military and Veterans Legal Society in fostering a supportive community for veterans. Rhasean Stephens, an active-duty Captain in the U.S. Army and a Baylor Law third-year student who recently served as the society’s president, explains their mission: “We try to create a community for veterans, whether they have served or they’re currently serving, and we highlight public service to our country as we navigate the law school journey aside our colleagues.”

Baylor Law’s Veterans Clinic stands as another testament to its commitment to veterans’ welfare. This clinic has provided free legal services to over 75,000 veterans in Central Texas, especially those who may not have the financial means to hire an attorney. Stephens notes that the clinic handles a wide range of legal matters, from wills to property issues to credit card settlements. Significantly, this initiative not only aids veterans but also offers law students invaluable client interaction experience as they prepare for their future careers.

Stephens sums up Baylor Law’s ethos by saying, “Baylor Law is not just people at an institution who are set off to the side, but people who are change-makers across central Texas and across the community.”

FLEP Students

While Baylor Law regularly welcomes active, reserve, and veteran members from the U.S. military among its student population, an elite few of those students use the military’s Funded Legal Education Program (FLEP). This highly competitive program is generally limited to only 25 service members per branch annually. Baylor Law currently has an impressive six FLEP students enrolled.

“Military service, particularly being selected for FLEP, is something that we look at closely since we know what that indicates about the student and how successful they’ve been,” Branson says. “We are really quick to admit these students if at all possible.”

Stephens emphasizes the program’s prestigious status. “I know when I see another FLEP selectee that they are top of their class, that they’ve had a successful career, and that they are a shining light above the rest.”

Advocating for Justice

Katherine Sims and Rhasean Stephens agree that being a lawyer or serving in the military extends beyond mere vocations; both are rooted in a profound and deeply ingrained calling. Sims notes, “We are trained to use our skills to help those around us.” Stephens aligns with this sentiment, emphasizing that attorneys and military service members are advocates. Lawyers advocate for their clients’ rights, while military service members advocate for freedom, democracy, and the rights of oppressed individuals globally. It is, in essence, a dual calling to serve and to advocate for justice.

Rhasean states, “I think it’s a calling to serve, and it’s a calling to be an advocate.”

Baylor Law Professors emphasized the important roles that lawyers play in society, and prepared students to understand, explain and perform those roles. Baylor’s focus on graduating practice-ready lawyers helped me. Professors stressed the importance of meeting the client’s legal needs, and—in accomplishing that end—the fundamental importance of diligent research and preparation.”

— John G. Hannink, (JD ’94)
44th Judge Advocate General of the United States Navy
50th Year Reunion Luncheon
Classes of 1972 & 1973
Every summer, Baylor Law offers students a distinctive field placement opportunity. Select externs spend 30 days in Zambia performing legal work under the direction of lawyers working for Undikumbukire Project Zambia, a non-profit legal services organization dedicated to representing juveniles charged with crimes under Zambian law. Students assist Zambian lawyers and meet directly with minors detained in adult prisons, accompanying them to court, and, if necessary, writing their appeals.

In the Summer of 2023, nine students participated in the program, the only law school externship in Zambia.
The Academy of the Advocate at St Andrews

In St Andrews, the art and practice of advocacy are woven into the rich tapestry of British common law history. The enduring traditions of trial by jury and the right to appeal find vivid expression in St Andrews, making it an exceptionally dynamic learning environment.

Designed for an intimate learning experience, the student-to-faculty ratio is maintained at approximately 3 to 1, ensuring a personalized approach. This summer, the Academy of the Advocate attracted 82 students from across the United States who participated in one of the program’s three schools: the School of Appeal, the School of the Trial, and the Advanced School of the Trial.
Haleigh Hashem emerged as the champion and Sami Shaffer secured the runner-up position in the Spring ‘Mad Dog’ Competition. Taylor Edwards and Rhasean Stephens earned the titles of semi-finalists. Hon. Bryan Bufkin (JD ’11), Jessie Cox (JD ’21), and Rachel Rickel (JD ’22) served as judges during the final round.
**Waco McLennan County Bar Association Memorial, May 5, 2023**

**TOP GUN, May 31 - June 4, 2023**

Nicholas Lewis of the University of Georgia School of Law emerged victorious as the winner of Top Gun XIV, Baylor Law’s highly acclaimed National Mock Trial Competition. Through the three-hour final round, Nicholas skillfully persuaded a distinguished panel of experienced trial lawyers, edging out his opponents, finalists Clarke Doig of Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law and Ameen Hussaini of Loyola Law School. Nicholas earns the well-deserved accolade of “Top Gun” that comes with a $10,000 grand prize, generously provided by MG+M The Law Firm.

**TDCAA - Advanced Trial Advocacy Course, July 24 - 28, 2023**

**Professional Development Course, June 20, 2023**

**Juneteenth: Insights into the History and Impact of Slavery**

Dr. Malcom Foley, Baylor University’s Special Advisor to the President for Equity and Campus Engagement

Barbara Moore, Baylor Law’s first female black graduate, attended Dr. Foley’s presentation

**Professional Development Course, August 29, 2023**

**Human Trafficking: Prostitution or Modern Day Slavery?**

Brad Toben

Jim Hering

Mayor, City of McGregor, Texas

Brandon Luck, President-Elect, Waco-McLennan County Bar Association

(L-R) Justice Matt Johnson, Chief Justice Tom Gray, Justice Steve Smith
Congratulations to the Spring 2023 Baylor Law graduates. Dean Brad Toben presided over the ceremony and Baylor University President Livingstone conferred the J.D. degrees. Carson Jones Lacy addressed her classmates as the highest-ranking J.D. student. The Honorable Ed Kinkeade, Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, shared a memorable address and Professors James Wren and Paul Yanowitch hooded the graduates.
Baylor Law awarded degrees to 28 graduates during the Summer commencement exercises on Saturday, July 29, 2023. Interim Dean Patricia Wilson presided over the ceremony. Gardner Bain McNeil addressed his classmates as the highest-ranking J.D. student. Adjunct Professor Paul Yanowitch addressed the students and Professor Jessica Asbridge and Director of Student Affairs Katherine Sims hooded the graduates. Congratulations to the Summer 2023 Baylor Lawyers.
East Texas Baylor Law Alumni Reception

Thanks to all who attended the East Texas Baylor Law Alumni Reception at the Rowdy Creek Ranch in Longview on Tuesday evening, May 2, 2023. Special thanks to Hon. Alfonso Charles, JD ‘90, and Melissa Charles, JD ’91, for underwriting the reception.

San Antonio Baylor Law Alumni Reception

Many thanks to all the Baylor Lawyers who attended the San Antonio Baylor Law Alumni Reception at the Jefferson Bank in San Antonio on Tuesday evening, June 13, 2023. The reception was generously hosted by Gonzalez Chiscano Angulo & Kasson, PC; Henry B. Gonzalez III, JD ’95, and Matt Maupin, JD ’22
Dallas Baylor Lawyer Network Reception

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Baylor Lawyers who joined us at the Dallas Baylor Law Alumni Reception, on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at Carstens, Allen & Gourley, LLP in Dallas. We are deeply grateful to Vincent Allen, JD ’99, and James Ortega, JD ’98, for graciously hosting this event.

Baylor Law in the Community

Members of the Baylor Law family joined fellow Wacoans for the Cen-Tex African American Chamber of Commerce Juneteenth parade.

Baylor Law Alumni Reception at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting

In addition to greeting alums and other friends of Baylor Law, Dean Emeritus Brad Toben (JD, ’77) announced that Judge Christine A. Nowak (JD, ’05) has been named the 2023 Young Baylor Lawyer of the Year.
Jerry Strickland Harris, JD ’60, of Longview, beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend passed away May 26, 2023, with his children by his side. The family has full confidence and comfort that he is in the presence of His Perfect Father, experiencing the peace and joy he always longed for because he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. Jerry will be deeply missed and forever remembered for his larger-than-life personality; a big presence that often hid a larger but private generosity and kindness. His most memorable gestures are known best by those who quietly received them. Jerry had the ability to inspire and help people of all walks of life, making them realize the value and potential they couldn’t always see on their own.

Jerry was born on March 4, 1935, in Marshall, TX to Ouida Latham and James Colbert Harris and was raised by his Aunt Lula Belle and Uncle Ex Strickland, whom he adored. He was a gifted 3-sport athlete who received a full scholarship to play football for Rice University after graduating from Marshall High School. There he was presented with the George R. Martin Award in 1958, an award annually given to the team’s most valuable player. He was also selected as team captain for two years during an era when Rice consistently was rated in the top 20 nationally. Upon graduation from Rice, he pursued his long-time desire to become an attorney and enrolled at Baylor University School of Law, graduating in 1960. After law school, Jerry moved to Longview, where his first job was working for entrepreneur Robert Cargill, Sr., and began his family by marrying the cute “girl next door” named Claire Roberts. He set down roots in a town that he would never leave, and those roots grew deep. Eventually Jerry joined a law practice with several seasoned local attorneys, and though the practice evolved over 60 years, he had the great fortune of being mentored by men like Henry Harbour, John Smith, and Hamp Smead Sr. Jerry paid this forward, mentoring many aspiring attorneys in East Texas. He was a natural attorney, and it wasn’t easy to tell if a person was his client, his friend or both because counseling others was his labor of love. He knew how to articulate his point, solve a problem and discern the finest detail of a case. Jerry continued to practice law until his final days on earth for the very reason he began his practice—he wanted to help people find a way to make their lives better.

Jerry also had a passion for any activity that involved the outdoors—especially fishing, golfing, hunting, and skiing. He found pleasure in nature, made complete when enjoying it with family and friends. A long Colorado summer was always the goal, but he was just as happy with a day of fishing on Lake Cherokee or Caddo with his son, nephew, or grandson. Friends describe him as devoted, brilliant, empathetic, and always available to take their call. He would listen, offer assurance, then give his wise counsel. Jerry knew how to fix things! He also knew how to tell a story, whether it was in the courtroom or around the dinner table. This man was gifted with an amazing sense of humor, and his timing was always perfect. He also operated on something known by many as “Jerry-time,“ and that timing was right only to him. Above all, he loved his family; and they knew it more with each passing year. He was so proud of his children, his niece, and nephews, and believed his grandchildren were his life’s crowning achievement. He constantly showered them with his love, wisdom, and silly jokes through phone calls, camp letters, voice mails, and very long texts. They loved their ‘Big Daddy,’ and his legend will never fade from their memories.

Jerry is preceded in death by his brother Louis Harris and his son-in-law George Jones. He will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 40 years, Risa Horner Harris; his daughter Miriam Jones, and her sons Harris and Houston; daughter and son-in-law Melissa and Scott McDonald, and their daughters and husbands Alexis and Scott Moody, Julia and Nolan Chumbley; son and daughter-in-law Houston and Dawn Harris, and their children Mary Aldon and Houston Jr.; stepson James Singleton; and his great-grandson Mac Moody.

The Honorable James Kenneth Walker, JD ’60, began his life on January 10, 1936 in Decatur, Texas, where he learned to love the game of golf. After graduating high school in Memphis, Texas, he attended Baylor University and was a member of the Baylor golf team, where he participated in the Southwest Conference. He was appointed to Pi Sigma Alpha and Phi Alpha Delta honorary fraternities. Jim continued his education attending Baylor Law. After receiving his Doctorate in Jurisprudence, he began his career in Lubbock, Texas. In 1960, he married Mary Frank Garrett. They had two sons, Jimmy and Steven. In 1963, they moved to Morton, Texas, where he served as County Attorney and was involved in the community. He married Jo Beth Barnes in 1978. (He gained two daughters; Valerie and Kristie) His third daughter, Ann, was born in 1979. In 1984, the family moved to Levelland, where Jim became Judge of the 286th District. After a few years, he served the state of Texas as a visiting judge. He was selected by the Tarrant County Bar Association as the “Best Trial Judge” for two years.

Jim served on many committees for the State Bar of Texas and was a guest speaker for Texas Tech School of Law (only because he did not have a prior commitment at Baylor). He supported student scholarships at South Plains College and served his community on numerous boards. He was a charter member of the Lubbock Woodworkers and a member of the Lubbock Wood Carvers Association.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Sherry Taylor; and wife, Mary Frank. Jim is survived by his wife, Jo Beth; children, Jimmy, Steven (Jessica); Valerie Robertson, Kristie Yeary (Bret) and Ann Walker; grandchildren, Matt Walker, Ryan Walker, Garrett Walker, Dana Valesquez, Nathan Yeary, John Yeary, and Liam Jenkins; and great-grandchild: Giselle Valesquez.

Allah B. Conant Jr., JD ’63, passed away Sunday, April 2, 2023. Allah was born July 24, 1939, in Waco, Texas, to Allah B. and Frances Louise Conant. Allah graduated from Waco High School. He went on to receive his bachelors from North Texas State University (now University of North Texas). He then graduated from Baylor Law School and practiced for decades in Dallas. He tried cases in 15 countries and 30 states. He enjoyed watching Baylor Basketball, Dallas Cowboys, and traveled to 31 countries.

He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by daughters, Heather Haight, Lisa Lynn Conant, Leslie Thorne and husband, Beau; stepson, Tom Bone; grandchildren, Elaina, Carissa, Anna, Violet, Risa, Charles, Jacob, and Marina; sister, Sandra Strachan and husband, Harry; and many cousins.

Norman Ray Bennett, JD ’64, a respected arbitrator who tried cases throughout the nation during most of his 58-year law career, died on June 9, 2023, in McKinney, TX, following a short illness—he was 83. Having spent most of his life in Texas, he considered Weatherford, TX, home. He was born there on Sept. 20, 1939. He was a devout Christian and active in his Lord’s service at Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco. He was preceded in death by his father, Norman Mumford Bennett of Brock, TX, and his mother, Nelwyn Oriole Bennett of Roanoke, TX. He is survived by his brother, David Bennett of McAllen, TX. Fair-minded and strong-willed, he practiced labor law from the early 1980s until days prior to his death, his services in much demand. His was a life centered on Christian principles, and his arbitration skills settled hundreds of cases before they reached the courthouse.
A graduate of Cleburne High School, he was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in business (1961) from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, where he served several years as a member of the HPU Board of Trustees. He was a 1964 graduate of Baylor University School of Law in Waco, TX, and a year later, earned a Master of Labor Law degree from New York University. In 1970, he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree from what was then West Texas State University in Canyon, TX. He was licensed by the State Bar of Texas in 1965. “He had a brilliant mind, traveling wherever necessary to conduct labor arbitration, a field where he was in constant demand,” observed Dr. Don Newbury, Chancellor of Howard Payne University. “He was my friend from our college days at Howard Payne, where we worked together on the college newspaper. He will be greatly missed.” He was also a talented athlete, playing baseball both in high school and college, and was a talented pianist, saxophonist and vocalist, admired and loved by those who knew him. Upon reaching what most people think to be “retirement age,” he tried it for a few months, declared it overrated, and went back to his arbitration practice for two additional decades. He had no later thoughts of retiring, choosing to continue service in his profession and in his church.

Charles Gumma, JD ’66, of Flower Mound, Texas, went to be with the Lord, on Monday July 24, 2023 at the age of 81, while surrounded by family. Charles was born, October 8, 1941 in Pennsylvania to his parents, Charles C. Gumma, Jr. and Mary B. Gumma. After a brief time in California, he grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, being the oldest of four siblings. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas and then completed law school at Baylor University where he met his loving wife, Mary Beth. They married in 1965. They lived in Conroe, Texas, after graduation while he sold land and plants out of a flower/garden shop. They also had their first child, Clayton, while in Conroe. In 1970, they moved back to Fort Worth, Texas, where he began his long successful career as real estate and title attorney. He and Mary Beth had two more children, Carrie and Grayson before settling in Bedford, Texas. They attended church at First Baptist Euless where he accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior. This event changed his life and gave his life new meaning and purpose. Once their children were grown, Charles and Mary Beth began attending First Baptist Grapevine. He sometimes filled in as the teacher for his Sunday School class which he enjoyed. They made many strong friendships in that class. He retired from the title industry after 35 years but continued to practice real estate law. Charles was happily married to Mary Beth until she passed in 2008. He then focused on building up his real estate loan business which is successful to this day. He found happiness again in 2013 when he married his loving wife, Pat Davis. They attended Countryside Bible Church Southlake. They were happily married until the day of his death. He continued to work at the office until his health prevented him. He was a practicing real estate attorney for 53 years and truly loved it. He mostly enjoyed talking with clients and helping when he could (often at low or no cost). He loved and adored family and friends very much. His favorite times and best memories were the holidays and birthdays when all the family would get together (close second, football season). His family describes him as very loving, giving, encouraging, wise, kind, gentle, and humble. He was very witty and loved to have fun, laugh, and tell stories. Although he would never admit it, he was a very good dancer, golfer, and ice skater—but he would admit he was a true sports enthusiast (Go Cowboys! Go Mavericks! Go Texas Rangers! Go Stars! Hook ‘em, Sic ‘em! Go USA!). “Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in em! Go USA!). “Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” Matthew 25:23

Charles was preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Mary Beth. He is survived by his wife, Pat, his children and their spouses, Clayton and Leilicia Gumma, Carrie Waiibel and Joseph Waiibel V, Grayson and Meredith Gumma. He is also survived by his 7 grandchildren: Josh Waiibel, Kaley Gumma, Griffin Gumma, Jarett Waiibel, Casey Gumma, Conner Gumma, and Marygrace Gumma. Further, he is survived by his siblings and their wives, Bill and Ranee Gumma, Gail and Tom Hazlewood, Laurie and Rip Davenport and many more nieces and nephews and their children.

Louis John “Johnny” Lacina, Jr., JD ’72, left this world on June 24, 2023. He was born to Louis John “L.J.” Lacina and Norma Hodde Lacina in Brenham, Texas, on November 14, 1949. Growing up, he attended the St. Mary’s Parochial School and then Brenham High School where he graduated in 1967. Johnny studied at Blinn College and later transferred to Baylor University where he finished his bachelor’s degree while attending Baylor Law School. In 1972, he graduated from Baylor with his Juris Doctor. On May 3, 1970, Johnny met the love of his life, Carey Ferris on a blind date and the two were married on April 28, 1973. They had two children, Rachael and Jonas. After taking the bar exam, Johnny took a train to Chicago and hitchhiked from there through Quebec and the northeast. He received his exam results over a pay phone from his mother during his travels. Upon returning to Texas, he entered into the legal profession with his uncle, A.W. Hodde, Jr., and together, they practiced as Hodde & Lacina until Mr. Hodde’s retirement. Johnny found a new law partner in Catherine Kenjura and the two practiced together as Lacina & Kenjura for 19 years. Most recently, Johnny worked in The Lacina Law Firm that he started with his son, Jonas. From 1974 to 1986, Johnny served as the County Attorney of Washington County. He was always willing to help someone in need and charge a fair price, and he served as a great example and role model of what a good lawyer should be.

As a proud Eagle Scout, Johnny served as the Scoutmaster of Troop 577 for the first few years of its existence. In 1997, he participated in a crew that went to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. From 1994 to 2011, Johnny sat as a member of the Blinn College Board of Trustees, which included time as the board president. Johnny loved trains. From the time that he was little until his last day, he had an interest in model trains, railroad history, and rail travel. In 2015, he traveled to the Nevada Northern Railway, where he drove a real steam engine. He liked sports, especially baseball, and he was a fan of the Chicago Cubs and the Houston Astros. Chicago was his favorite travel destination, and he made numerous trips there for Cubs games, beer, and deep-dish pizza. He also loved his Baylor bears and enjoyed attending Baylor football and men’s and women’s basketball games in Waco. He loved traveling and visited much of Europe and North America. In his younger days, Johnny was an avid runner, running several full marathons with his running club, The Running Fools. Later, he became a cyclist and finished the MS 150 on several occasions as well as regularly riding county backroads on Saturdays with the Gay Hill Cycle Group. Cooking was another passion of his and he was known as a great cook—he particularly excelled at making jambalaya, gumbo, breads, and pies. Johnny loved good beer and whiskey, and most of all, his family. In his final months, he enjoyed being a grandfather and playing with his grandson, Julian.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife of 46 years, Carey. He will be missed by his family: daughter Rachael Lacina-Taylor, son Jonas Lacina and wife Katie Zimolzak, and Austin Taylor; grandson Julian Louis Lacina; his loving companion of 3 years Cathy Cole; siblings Lorna Lacina, Tim Lacina and wife Michele as well as nieces, nephews and many close friends; beloved pets, Gus and Bobby.
Thomas David Koeneke, JD ’78 of San Isidro, Texas, entered into rest on May 20, 2023 in Brownsville, Texas, surrounded by his loving wife, Alicia Koeneke, and family. Tom was born in Denver, Colorado, on April 8, 1951, to Blanche Isabelle and Orville Ernest Koeneke. Tom grew up in Brighton, Colorado, with his three siblings: Kathy, Robert, and Susan. His childhood and teenage years were filled with days working on the family farm while enjoying eating meals prepared by his mother at harvest time. During this time, he also forged a very close relationship with his grandfather, Rudolf Koeneke. Tom loved telling stories to his children and grandchildren of him and his grandfather working the wheat fields outside of Brighton; of riding horses to school; and of racing through the farm fields on horseback to go fishing at the ponds with his sister, Susan. Tom graduated from Brighton High School in 1969 and subsequently attended Colorado University where he received his Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1973. Tom enjoyed his university days establishing lasting friendships and creating cherished memories during cross county road trips with his best university friend. After graduating from CU, Tom moved to Waco, Texas, to attend law school at Baylor University. During his time at Baylor Law, he connected with his fellow students, some of which became lifelong colleagues in the Rio Grande Valley. Tom graduated with honors from Baylor Law in 1978. During his final year at Baylor Law, Tom interviewed with his future law partner and friend, Bill Ellis, who brought him down to the Rio Grande Valley as an attorney with the Ewers & Tothaker Law Firm. Tom quickly secured his place in the Rio Grande Valley legal community and together with Bill Ellis moved forward to establish the Ellis Koeneke Law Firm. Dedicated to the provision of legal expertise, exemplary hard work, and unwavering ethics, the firm brought on Edmund Ramirez to expand the partnership into Ellis, Koeneke and Ramirez, LLP.

Tom gave his lasting commitment to the Rio Grande Valley when he married the love of his life, Alicia Martinez becoming a part of a legacy South Texas family. Tom and Alicia shared a love of the land, of history, of family faith and raised their two sons, Matthew David and Thomas Daniel to complement this love. Tom shared his passion for the outdoors with his family through hunting at the family ranch, Rancho Los Altos, and fishing in the Lower Laguna Madre near South Padre Island. Those quiet moments in the deer blind watching the South Texas brush country and early mornings on the bay watching the sun rise are ones that his family will cherish forever. Tom enjoyed traveling to Colorado and New Mexico. It was in those places he was able to teach his sons about growing wheat and navigating the ski slopes. Tom and Alicia poured all their time and love into giving their children amazing experiences and lifelong passions.

Tom became a proud fighting Texas Aggie when his son Matthew walked onto the basketball team. He traveled throughout the athletic season to watch Matthew and his team form lifelong friendships. Another proud moment in Tom’s life was when Daniel followed in his footsteps by becoming an attorney and sharing a love of the law. By far the greatest accomplishment and proudest moments in Tom’s life were the moments with his six grandchildren. It only took his first grandchild to turn a strong, commanding, almost impenetrable man, into a true “Gramps.” Emma was his first and the one that changed his life; Wyatt was his inseparable best-friend; Caroline was his ranch girl; Samantha was his little firecracker; Grace was him, with his mind and demeanor; and Hannah was his last love. It is the moments spent with Gram and Gramps, that their grandchildren cherished the most.

Tom is survived by his wife, Alicia Martinez Koeneke; sons, Matthew David (Heather) and Thomas Daniel (Katie); six grandchildren; and siblings, Robert Koeneke (Cristy), Kathy Heavers (Tim), Susan Koeneke.

Michael Ray Hedges, JD ’79, an esteemed lawyer and trusted advisor to so many, passed unexpectedly on October 3, 2022 at the age of 68 in Austin, TX. Mike was born in Amherst, TX, on April 10, 1954 to Buddy and Ann Hedges. He spent his childhood days growing up in a small 3-bedroom house on a cotton farm between Springlake and Olton, Texas. He was a clever, mischievous boy with a mind that was always active. Mike graduated from Texas A&M University, summa cum laude, in 1976 and went on to Baylor School of Law, graduating in the top 20% of his class in 1979. He was a very successful trial lawyer for Goode, Cassie, Jones, Riklin, Chaos, & Watson. Mike tried dozens of jury trials, some lasting weeks. He concentrated on civil litigation, especially land use and title disputes. He represented the City of San Antonio in lawsuits leading to the resolution of boundary disputes along the San Antonio River Walk, with historical facts dating back to 1852. He was also the lead trial attorney for the City in a jury trial in federal court over the validity of the City’s sign ordinances along McCAllister Freeway (the “Ugly Signs” case). Mike had highest possible peer review rating for both Legal Ability and Ethical Standards, and was an Associate Member, American Board of Trial Advocates, a national organization of invitation-only, peer-reviewed trial lawyers. He was also a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, (1/3 of 1% of all attorneys admitted to practice in Texas are elected each year). Mike was a loyal, “take-charge” lawyer, a tireless and fierce advocate for his clients over the course of 43 years. He was a loyal and resourceful leaning post for other lawyers in his firm.

On October 5th, 1991, Mike married his “Sweetie” and the love of his life, Patricia Mason. The two shared a passion for traveling, skiing, hiking, sightseeing, and most of all, each other. They were rarely seen apart during their hours away from work. Whether it was morning walks, planning their next adventure, or simply enjoying the presence of one another, the two embodied the poem Mike wrote for his beautiful bride, “One Heart, One Soul, One Life Together.” Mike was a devoted husband, son, brother, uncle, and friend. His generous and kind-heart touched the lives of so many. He selflessly shared his wisdom and comforting words in a way that impacted people’s lives forever. He was a culinary enthusiast and enjoyed planning and preparing the tastiest of meals for his family and friends. He filled the room with laughter using his witty charm, humor, and child-like spirit. He enjoyed spending time with his many nieces and nephews and loved each of them like they were his own. Some of his special talents (perhaps not known by many) include his expertise in 42, perfection in the art of charades, and ability to lead a two-step that would sweep anyone off their feet. He will always be remembered for serving well, loving deeply, and living with a Luckenbach state of mind.

Mike is survived by his loving wife, Patricia Mason; his mother, Ann Hedges; his brother, Pat (Annette) Hedges; two sisters, Gay Hedges and Joan Hedges; his nieces and nephews, Jerri Ann (Chris) Moore, Brittany (Justin) Hansen, Stephanie (Danny) Henderson, Casey (Lindsey) Hedges, Jonathan Webb, Tara (Kris) Humphries, Kristen (Steven) McCain; and many great nieces and nephews whom he cherished dearly. He is preceded in death by his father, Buddy Ray Hedges; his sister, Jan Ratliff; and his niece Ashley Hedges. Patty’s family played a huge role in his life also. His mother-in-law, Teresa Mason; his sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Lynn (Henry) Zimmerle, Kathy (Jim) Beaman, Jeff (Sandle) Mason, Debbie (Al) Uribe, Pam Mason, Robert (Dawn) Mason; nieces and nephews, Paul (Dolly) Mason, Ann Mason, Robert Mason, Wesley (Holly) Mason, Deja (Taylor) Tenberg, Stacy (Nicole) Zimmerle; and numerous great nieces and nephews.
Peyton Noble Smith, JD ’89, was called home to Heaven on August 30, 2023. Born on February 19, 1964, in Austin, Texas, to Dr. Ralph Morgan and Bess Noble Smith, he was a proud native Austinite, always promoting both the social and business opportunities of the capital city wherever he went. For all who knew Peyton, his energy, laughter, hugs, and encouragement, will not be forgotten.

Peyton was a graduate of Hyde Park High School and received both his undergraduate and law degrees from Baylor University. During his undergraduate years at Baylor, he was an active member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity and the Student Foundation, where he served on the Fund Development team, raising money for student scholarships. It was at Baylor University, that Peyton met Beth Nance Smith, who was his best friend and the love of his life. Peyton and Beth met in 1983 and were married in 1990, establishing their home in Austin, where they raised their two children, Lincoln, and Scarlett, until moving to Round Rock in 2016. The foundation of their marriage was built on their faith in Jesus, their deep and abiding friendship, and their love and admiration for one another.

Peyton was the former managing partner of the Austin office of McGuireWoods, LLP, with a focus on employment law and defending employers in employment-related litigation. He also served as the firm’s pro bono leader, coordinating and participating in important volunteer and community service work, including assisting military service members through the firm’s veterans’ pro bono initiatives. On August 29, Peyton and the firm were recognized for the veterans’ support efforts as one of the top 27 Austin businesses honored for best practices in business philanthropy in Central Texas at the Austin Chamber of Commerce’s Austin Gives Awards.

Peyton practiced law in Austin throughout his entire career. As a native Austinite, his knowledge of the Austin business network was a treasured asset to his clients looking to strategically open an Austin office or expand their footprint in the Greater Austin area. He possessed more than 30 years of experience as a trial attorney, both as defense and plaintiffs’ counsel, and brought unique insight and leadership to both pre-litigation counseling and the courtroom. Though he had specific and lengthy experience in representing national retail, restaurant, hospitality, manufacturing and healthcare industry clients, Peyton represented employers in virtually every industry, enabling him to quickly identify and effectively address the unique problems and issues of a wide array of clients.

Throughout his legal career, Peyton also devoted his time to several philanthropic efforts. Most recently, he served a four-year term on the Board of Trustees for the Texas Baptist Children’s Home where he chaired the Property Redevelopment Committee. He was current member of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce, the Baylor Alumni Association, and the Austin Baylor Lawyers’ Alumni Network.

Above all, Peyton was most proud of his children and his marriage. He was first and foremost committed to his faith, family, and friends. His foundation was rooted in Jesus Christ, and he was a humble servant to the Lord, always working to minister and make Heaven more crowded. He grew up in a Christian home and came to faith and was baptized at Hyde Park Baptist Church, where he and Beth began their young married life and family. As a couple, they taught Young Adult Married Couples at Hyde Park Baptist Church and then later at Great Hills Baptist Church where Peyton also served as a deacon. In 2016, after moving to Round Rock, they joined First Baptist Church Round Rock. Peyton walked with Christ daily, and his ministry expanded into every circle of his life. He was described by his friends as a man of integrity, honesty, loyalty, and filled with love for all. For everyone that Peyton met, he became their friend, connected them with new friends, and made everyone feel loved and special. Peyton led with love and joy in everything he did.

Peyton joins his parents, Dr. Ralph Morgan Smith and Bess Noble Smith in Heaven, as well as his brother, Wallace Morgan Smith and his great niece, Laci Sloan Love. He is survived by his loving wife of 33 years, Beth Nance Smith and their children Lincoln David Smith and Scarlett Elizabeth Smith, his father-in-law David Nance and wife Patti, and his brother-in-law Chuck Nance, wife Debbie and son, Hogan. He also leaves behind his sister Diane Smith Love and husband Bill and their children, Jeff Love and Lisa and husband, Hayden Gilbert, and their children Meredith and Luke, his sister-in-law Lanette Smith and her children, Martha Lauren and husband, Justin Treat, and daughter, Randa, Noble Lehnertz Smith, and Madison Morgan Smith and wife Ryann.

Kimberly Marie Franks Knapp, JD ’12, died tragically and unexpectedly at her home in Saginaw, Texas, July 24th, 2023. Kim is survived by her mother, Beverly Franks; brother, Kristopher Franks; husband, John Knapp. Preceded in death by her father, Dois Delman Franks; brothers, Del Allen Franks and Brent Belding; her grandparents, Frank and Marie Gray.

Born in Hobart, OK, on February 9th, 1977, Kim attended Hobart public schools until her father moved the family to Saginaw, Texas in 1987. Kim was a star gymnast from the ages of 10-18 training with world renowned coaches including Bela Karolyi and winning honors in all categories. Kim graduated from Boswell High School in 1995 and went on to complete her undergraduate studies at Texas Wesleyan University. She later attended Baylor Law School on full, merit-based scholarship, graduating with honors. Kim was a well-known and talented attorney in Fort Worth serving in the field of criminal law. She was well loved by all including judges, court staff, and both defense and prosecuting attorneys. Fort Worth Magazine and 360 West named Kim a top attorney from 2016-2023. Kim was also an adjunct professor of criminal justice at Texas Wesleyan University. In 2019, Kim founded her own law firm — Knapp Begley Law and worked tirelessly with her law partner, Lanny Begley, to ensure justice was possible for all seeking her services. A dynamic trial attorney, Kim was well known for her delivery in the court room.

Kim will be remembered for her quick wit. Family, friends, colleagues, and clients enjoyed her dry sense of humor coupled with a brilliant legal mind. Her vivacious spirit was contagious and the perfect anecdote for a bad day. She adored her two German shepherds, Memphis and Mishka. Kim loved spending time with family, cooking gourmet dishes, and was always keen for a great live concert.
Jessica Asbridge  
Associate Professor of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Federalism, Fines, and Forfeitures, Southeastern Association of Law Schools (SEALS) – New Scholars Property Law Panel (July 25, 2023)
- Excessive Fines in the States, Southeastern Association of Law Schools (SEALS) New Scholars – Your Next Article Panel (July 25, 2023)
- Private Delegations of the Eminent Domain Power, Eminent Domain Conference CLE (August 10, 2023)

PUBLICATIONS


Josh Borderud  
Director of Clinical and Pro Bono Programs and Clinical Lecturer

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Waco City Council
- Master of the Bench, Judge Abner V. McCall American Inn of Court
- President-Elect, Waco-McLennan County Bar Association
- Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network

Thomas M. Featherston Jr.  
The Mills Cox Professor of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Former ABA Advisor to the Uniform Law
- Member, Legislative Review Committee, Real Estate, Member, Publications Committee of the ABA’s Real
- Senior Editor, Defining & Acquiring Interests in Property, Aspen
- Co-Author: Probate 2022-2023 ed. (Texas Practice Guide), Thomson Reuters

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Senior Editor, Probate & Property, published six times a year by the Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section of American Bar Association
- Member, Publications Committee of the ABA’s Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section
- Member, Legislative Review Committee, Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section, State Bar of Texas
- Former ABA Advisor to the Uniform Law Commission’s Drafting Committee to Revise the Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act

Elizabeth M. Fraley  
Gerald Reading Powell Chair in Advocacy and Co-Director of the Executive LL.M. in Litigation Management

HONORS

- 2023 Louise B. Raggio Award Recipient – Dallas Association of Women Lawyers
- Member, Board of Directors, Waco Symphony
- Vestry member, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Waco
- Chair, Finishing the Work Capital Campaign, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Waco, TX

PRESENTATIONS

- “Leadership and Resilience,” Federal Court Clerks Association (FCCA) (August 9, 2023)
- “Applying Litigation Management for More Cost-Effective and Satisfying Outcomes in Health Care Litigation,” American Hospital Lawyers Association Annual Meeting (June 25, 2023)
- UT CLE and Discussion Group, “Winning at Deposition: Deposing for the Defendant,” University of Texas CLE (June 13, 2023)
- “Ethical Conundrums in Mass Tort and Multi-District Litigation,” Mass Torts Puerto Rico (May 5, 2023)
- “Jury Testing on a Budget,” ABOTA Foundation Webinar (April 18, 2023)

PUBLICATIONS


Bridget Fuselier  
Professor of Law

PRESENTATIONS

- “You’ve Got Mail: Your Eviction Notice Has Arrived,” State Bar of Texas 45th Annual Real Estate Law CLE, San Antonio (July 2023)

PUBLICATIONS

- REPTL Newsletter, updates on Easements & Covenants (published quarterly)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Member, Waco Historic Landmark Presentation Commission (appointed by Waco City Council to Serve until December 2024)
- Baylor Teaching Fellow

Chris Galezczka  
Reference Librarian

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Volunteer Attorney, American Gateways and AFL-CIO Citizenship Clinic, Waco (May 27, 2023)
- Chair, McLennan County Bar Association Law Library Committee

Laura Hernández  
Professor of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Conference Organizer and Presenter, GO LILA - Conference for Latina Law Professors, Stanford Law School (May 30-31, 2023)
- Named as a Latina Commissioner by Pedro J. Torres-Díaz, the President of the Hispanic National Bar Association (“HNBA”)

Rachel Kincaid  
Assistant Professor of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES


Christopher Brett Jaeger  
Assistant Professor of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Luke Meier
Professor of Law

PUBLICATIONS
- “Achieving True Strict Product Liability (But only for Plaintiffs Without Fault),” 56 Michigan Journal of Law Reform (2023)

Elected member, American Law Institute
Fellow, American Bar Foundation
Life Fellow, Texas Bar Foundation

Elizabeth Miller
M. Stephen and Alyce A. Beard Chair in Business and Transactional Law

HONORS
- W. Page Keeton Award for Excellence in Continuing Legal Education, University of Texas School of Law (2023)

PRESENTATIONS
- “Case Law Update,” 32nd Annual LLCs, LPs and Partnerships Conference, University of Texas School of Law, July 13, 2023
- “Case Law Update,” 2023 LLC Institute, Committee on LLC’s, Partnerships, and Unincorporated Entities, American Bar Association, June 1, 2023.

PUBLICATIONS
- Business Organizations, Texas Practice Series (Vols. 19, 20 &20A) West (3rd ed. 2011); 2022-2023 Annual Supplement (co-author)
- Texas Methods of Practice, Texas Practice Series (Vol. 13), West, 2022-2023 (co-author)
- “Miscellaneous Recent (Non-Delaware) Partnership and LLC Cases,” 2022 LLC Institute, Committee on LLC’s, Partnerships, and Unincorporated Entities, American Bar Association (November 12, 2022)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
- Testified at Senate Business and Commerce Committee Hearing, April 4, 2023, on S.B. 1514 (relating to business entities and nonprofit entities, passed and signed by Governor, effective Sept. 1, 2023)
- Member, Joint Editorial Board on Uniform Unincorporated Organizations Acts, Uniform Law Commission, and American Bar Association
- ABA Advisor, Drafting Committee for Revision of Uniform Unincorporated Organizations Acts, Uniform Law Commission
- Chair, Editorial Board of Publications of the LLCs, Partnerships and Unincorporated Entities Committee of the Business Law Section, American Bar Association
- Founding fellow and board of directors, American College of LLC and Partnership Attorneys

Read More About Professor Miller’s Honor:
Scan the QR Code or visit:

Professor of Law Emeritus Gerald Powell, JD ’77, Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award for Advocacy Teaching Excellence

Stetson University College of Law’s Center for Excellence in Advocacy has honored Professor of Law Emeritus Gerald Powell with the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award for his exceptional contributions to teaching advocacy. The prestigious recognition was awarded during the “Educating Advocates: Teaching Advocacy Skills” conference in June. The award serves as a testament to Professor Powell’s unwavering commitment to the field of advocacy and his legacy of teaching in Baylor Law’s Practice Court program for thirty-five years.

“During his acceptance speech, Jerry talked about how his achievements weren’t winning mock trial competitions or championships; his accomplishments were seeing former students become great trial lawyers,” noted Director of Baylor Law’s Advocacy Programs Robert Little. “Jerry’s achievements can be seen in courtrooms around the State of Texas every day when you see generations of Baylor Lawyers trying cases and representing clients the way Professor Powell taught them to. This award honors that legacy and those achievements.”

In 2005 Powell received Baylor University’s coveted Master Teacher designation—the highest honor granted to Baylor faculty members. In 2020, Powell was honored with the Outstanding Mentor Award by both the Waco-McLennan County Young Lawyers Association and the Texas Young Lawyers Association. He was selected by the Baylor Law Alumni Association Executive Committee as the 2021 Baylor Lawyer of the Year.

In addition to his commitment to teaching advocacy, the Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes Powell’s expertise in evidence and trial advocacy through extensive written works and speaking engagements. His valuable contributions include co-authoring two influential books on Texas evidence: A Practical Guide to the Texas Rules of Civil Evidence and Texas Rules of Civil Evidence with Objections.
Walt Shelton
Adjunct Professor of Law

HONORS
- Inaugural recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Section of the State Bar of Texas for fifteen years of service (and continuing) as the Chair and Co-Chair of the Law School Committee. This Committee implements and oversees numerous Environmental Law educational initiatives for all accredited Texas law schools, including scholarships, internships, and annual programs.
- Selected through peer review process as the 2024 Best Lawyers in America® “Lawyer of the Year” in Environmental Law for the Dallas-Ft. Worth geographical area. One lawyer per practice area and region of the country is selected as Lawyer of the Year based on the highest peer voter feedback.
- Selected through peer review process for inclusion in the 2024 annual edition of The Best Lawyers in America in the practice areas of Environmental Law and Water Law. Professor Shelton has been recognized by and listed in Best Lawyers for 26 consecutive years.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
- Liaison of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Section of the State Bar of Texas with the Section of the Environment, Energy and Resources of the American Bar Association
- Contributing editor (environmental law and water law), General Practice Digest, State Bar of Texas
- Co-chair, Law School Committee of the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Section, State Bar of Texas

PUBLICATIONS
- "Authentic Living in All Seasons: Focused, Fearless, and Balanced" [CrossLink Publishing 2022]

PRESENTATIONS
- “Wisdom and Learning from Experience,” The Church at Highland Park, Austin, Texas (April 30, 2023)
- “Writing on the Air,” KOOP Radio 91.7 FM, Author interview with Mindy Reed regarding two published books (April 12, 2023)
- “Faith and Personal Wellness,” United Methodist Women, Austin, Texas (January 24, 2023)
- “Wellness for Attorneys,” Haynes Boone law firm, Dallas, Texas (April 19, 2023)

Stephanie Tang
Assistant Professor of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
- Ex Officio, Illinois State Bar Association Family Law Section Council
- Secretary, Asian Leaders Network
- Board Member, Dispute Resolution Center Waco

PUBLICATIONS
- “Family Law Pedagogy: Mapping Out Custody Schedules,” Family Law Scholars & Teachers Conference (June 2023)
- “Family Law Pedagogy: Mock Client Intake Simulation,” Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference (July 2023)

Leah Jackson Teague
Professor of Law and Director of Business Law Programs

PRESENTATIONS
- "Leadership of Self with Leah Teague" hosted by Dean Patty Roberts, Aspen Leading Edge Podcast (June 20, 2023), https://www.podbean.com/ep/pb-57nki-1439e8b
- "Leah Teague, Stephen Rispoli and Neil Hamilton,” AALS Leadership Section Webinar (June 26, 2023)

PUBLICATIONS
- "Modernizing Legal Education through Leadership Development Programs: Equipping Lawyers for Success, Significance and Satisfaction through Service” (forthcoming in Wake Forest Law Review)
- “Creating a Culture of Professionalism to Equip Students for the Paradoxes of the Legal Profession” (forthcoming in St. Thomas Law Review)

Brad Toben
Dean Emeritus and M.C. & Mattie Caston Chair of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
- Elected member, American Law Institute
- Board member, Juliette Fowler Homes, Inc.
- Chair and member, American Bar Association and Association of American Law Schools, on-site re-inspection functions and accreditation
- Master of the Bench, Abner V. McCall American Inn of Court
- Member, Waco Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Patricia Wilson
Interim Dean and William Boswell Chair of Law

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
- Governing Board, Immediate Past Moderator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Member, Education Council; Member Comprehensive Campus Planning Committee, Seventh & James Baptist Church
- Chair, Client Counseling Subcommittee, ABA Law Student Division
During the Summer of 2023, Three Baylor Law Professors Received Prestigious Faculty Chair Titles

**Interim Dean and Professor of Law Patricia Wilson Named William Boswell Chair of Law**

**Interim Associate Dean Matt Cordon Named the A. Royce Stout Endowed Chair of Law**

**Professor of Law Brian Serr Named to the Louise L. Morrison Chair of Constitutional Law**

**Jenny Branson**
Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Board Member and Immediate Past President, American Council on Education Texas Women in Higher Education
- Law School Admission Council Investment Committee
- Director and Mock Trial Competition Co-Chair, McLennan County Young Lawyers Association
- Baylor University Staff Council
- Past President, Baylor Round Table

**PRESENTATIONS**
- Panelist/Presenter, “Reframing Professionalism in a (Post?)-COVID Era,” Western Association of Pre-Law Advisors Annual Conference
- Panelist/Presenter, “No Grad/Prof Financial Aid Office?! No Problem,” AccessLex Institute Annual Conference
- Panelist/Presenter, “Reframing Professionalism in 2022 and Beyond,” Midwest Association of Pre-Law Advisors Annual Conference
- Panelist/Presenter, “Building Your Cast: Building Relationships Across Campuses and Disciplines,” Texas Women in Higher Education Annual Conference

**Kristine Bridges, JD ’03**
Assistant Dean of Career Development

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Panelist: Law School Panel on Current 1L & 2L Recruiting Trends, Recruiting Administrators of Dallas, September 26, 2023

**PRESENTATIONS**
- Panelist, Leadership Essentials, Baylor University, August 2023

**Angela Cruseturner, JD ’02**
Senior Assistant Dean

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Immediate Past President, Judge Abner V. McCall American Inn of Court
- Treasurer, Waco-McLennan County Bar Association
- Board Member, McLennan County Dispute Resolution Center

**PRESENTATIONS**
- Panelist, Leadership Essentials, Baylor University, August 2023

**Jerri Cunningham**
Director of Academic Services & Registrar

**PRESENTATIONS**
- Presenter, “The ABA Wants What?! How to Approach Law School Accreditation and All Those Questionnaires,” 2023 American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Annual Meeting

**Chandler Dean, JD ’21**
LL.M. Associate

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Member, Texas Bar College
- Liaison: Special Committee on Rule of Law Initiative, American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
- Liaison: Standing Committee on Delivery of Legal Services, American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

**Jordan Hannah**
Director of Alumni Relations

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Vice-President, Board of Directors for the CASA of McLennan County
- Chair, Board of Trustees, Baylor Chapter (Theta Nu) of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity

**Stephanie Mabry**
Director of Development

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Immediate Past-President, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Central Texas Chapter
- Opening Speaker, 36th Annual National Philanthropy Day Luncheon, Association of Fundraising Professionals

**Ed Nelson**
Director of Marketing & Communications

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Baylor University Brand Council
- Newsletter editor Leadership Section, American Association of Law Schools
- Newsletter editor Pro Bono & Access to Justice Section, American Association of Law Schools

**Katherine Sims, JD ’11**
Director of Student Affairs

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**
- Transitioned to the role of Director of Student Affairs
1970s

**Neal W. Adams, ’70**, with Adams, Lynch & Loftin, P.C. in Grapevine, Texas, was honored with the 2023 Blackstone Award by the Tarrant County Bar Association. The Blackstone Award, established in 1963, is named after Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780), who was a British Jurist and legal scholar. The nomination for the Blackstone Award is made solely on the basis of consistent ability, integrity, and courage as a lawyer and is the highest award given by the Tarrant County Bar Association.

**Stan Curry, JD ’72**, was inducted into the Baylor University Athletics 2023 Hall of Fame. A two-time Southwest Conference champion in the high jump, Curry beat eventual Olympic gold medalist Dick Fosbury at a non-sanctioned meet in Pomona, Calif., and made it through the first of a two-tier process for the 1968 U.S. Olympic Trials in South Lake Tahoe, California. He shattered a conference record that had remained unbroken for 12 years by achieving a winning height of 6-11 ½ during the 1968 outdoor meet.

**Blake Bailey, JD ’73**, with Bailey Law Firm in Tyler, Texas, was recently recognized for 50 years of service to the legal community. Peers, colleagues, and clients reflected on the immeasurable impact he has made throughout his career. His unwavering dedication to the pursuit of justice, his exceptional skills as a litigator, mediator, and arbitrator, and his commitment to professional excellence have solidified his legacy as one of the most respected and influential trial lawyers of his generation. He continues to serve as a mediator and arbitrator.

**Ed Blizzard, JD ’78**, founder of Blizzard Greenberg, PLLC in Houston, was honored in the 2024 edition of Best Lawyers in America for excellence in personal injury litigation on behalf of plaintiffs. Ed has been recognized each year since 2003. He was also recently named to Lawdragon’s 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers legal guide.

1980s

**Michael B. Massey, JD ’81**, was recognized by The Inner Circle as a Distinguished Attorney in the Law and Legal Services fields. Michael is a founding partner of the Texas-based Craddock Massey law firm.

**Bill Stone, JD ’82**, founding partner of Scheef & Stone, LLP, has been recognized in the 2024 edition of The Best Lawyers in America for Corporate Law, and Mergers and Acquisitions Law.

**Edward “Eddy” Duffer, JD ’87**, retired this past year after 35 years of service as a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He is presently contracted as a Workplace Investigator.

**Glenn B. Callison, JD ’88**, a Shareholder at Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr, P.C. in Dallas, was honored in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America in the areas of Leisure and Hospitality Law and Real Estate Law. He was also included in the 2023 edition of the Chambers USA directory in recognition of his work in Real Estate law.

1990s


**Carol Payne, JD ’93**, is now a named partner with Estes Thome Ewing & Payne, PLLC in Dallas, focusing her practice on commercial litigation.

**Caren K. Lock, JD ’95**, Regional Vice President and Associate General Counsel of TIAA, was honored with the 2023 North Texas Diversity FIRST Leadership Award.

**Matt Adams, JD ’96**, was named Head of Legal & Business Affairs at MultiTracks. com, LLC and will be based in Nashville, TN. MultiTracks.com is a technology and licensing platform created to resource worship leaders in churches of all sizes with products that can assist them with preparation for rehearsals and live performance.

**P. Wes Black, JD ’99**, has joined the Dallas trial firm Lyons & Simmons LLP as Of Counsel.

2000s

**Hathaway Russell, JD ’00**, partner with Foley Hoag in Boston, was elected to the Executive Committee of the firm with responsibility for overall management and strategic operations of the global firm. Hathaway has over 22 years of experience providing strategic patent counseling to pharmaceutical companies and biotechnology companies, early-stage life science companies, and academic institutions.

**Aimee Guidry Szygenda, JD ’00**, has returned to the Dallas office of McGlinchey Stafford as an Of Counsel in the firm’s Financial Services Litigation practice group.

**Kyle Farrar, JD ’02**, with Farrar & Ball in Houston, was named Public Justice 2023 Trial Lawyer of the Year. Public Justice is a non-profit legal advocacy organization specializing in civil rights and environmental cases. Each year, it awards its Trial Lawyer of the Year honor to an attorney or a group of attorneys who have made the greatest contribution to the public interest within the past year by setting precedent in a socially significant case.
Wesley Ball, JD ’03, with Farrar & Ball in Houston, was named Public Justice 2023 Trial Lawyer of the Year. Public Justice is a non-profit legal advocacy organization specializing in civil rights and environmental cases. Each year, it awards its Trial Lawyer of the Year honor to an attorney or a group of attorneys who have made the greatest contribution to the public interest within the past year by setting precedent in a socially significant case.

Stephen Gibson, JD ’03, Senior Attorney with Munsch Hardt in Dallas, was honored in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America publication in the area of Insurance Law.

Jason T. Hill, JD ’04, has joined Allensworth as Of Counsel in Austin, Texas, to assist the firm with its deeper expansion into water-related construction and permitting issues. He continues to serve as the managing attorney for J.T. Hill, PLLC, where he focuses on water rights and transactions, water quality permitting, water supply contracting, and litigation.

Leslie Hunt, JD ’04, recently joined the Fort Worth City Attorney’s Office as a Senior Assistant City Attorney where her primary responsibilities include the oversight and legal review of real estate projects involving federal housing development and grant funds received from the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development and administered by the City’s Neighborhood Services Department.

Michael Pass, JD ’04, was recently named Chief Compliance Officer at Freepoint-McMoRan, Inc. Freepoint-McMoRan is a leading international mining company with headquarters in Phoenix, Arizona, operating large, long-lived geographically diverse assets with significant proven and probable reserves of copper, gold, and molybdenum.

Deborah M. Perry, JD ’04, Shareholder with Munsch Hardt in Dallas, was honored in the 2024 Best Lawyers in America publication in the areas of Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights Insolvency and Reorganization Law; Litigation - Bankruptcy.

R. Heath Cheek, JD ’06, Partner with Bell Nunnally in Dallas, has been selected for inclusion in the 2024 edition of The Best Lawyers in America in the area of Commercial Litigation and in the 2023 Texas Super Lawyers list for Business Litigation.

Hon. Christine A. Nowak Named the 2023 Young Baylor Lawyer of the Year

Judge Christine A. Nowak (JD, ’05) has been named the 2023 Young Baylor Lawyer of the Year. Dean Emeritus Brad Toben (JD, ’77) surprised Nowak with the announcement at the Baylor Lawyer Network reception at the State Bar of Texas annual meeting.

During her law school tenure, she was Associate Editor of the Baylor Law Review, participated in several competitive mock trial teams, won the Practice Court intramural mock trial competition, was a member of the Order of the Barristers, and earned a full academic scholarship.

After graduating from Baylor Law, Nowak began her legal career at K&L Gates, LLP (formerly Hughes Luce, LLP) and worked in the firm’s commercial litigation practice group, trying her first cases to jury verdict as lead counsel for the nation’s largest provider of trade shows and event furnishings. She then joined Dykema Gossett PLLC, rising to the level of Member (Partner) in her first year of eligibility and serving as the hiring partner for the Dallas office. There she continued to focus on complex business and commercial disputes, garnering a broad array of experience advising businesses and employers in state and federal court. During her decade in private practice, Nowak was recognized numerous times as a Texas Monthly “Rising Star” for Business Litigation, General Litigation, and Estate & Trust Litigation and was named DAYL Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year. In early October 2023, Texas Governor Greg Abbott appointed Nowak to the 493rd Judicial District Court in Collin County.

In 2015, Nowak was appointed United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division. A colleague, The Honorable Christopher H. Steger, United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, commented, “I know from personal experience that Judge Nowak enjoys respect and affection from her colleagues on the bench.” In his nomination letter for Young Baylor Lawyer of the Year, Judge Steger notes that Judge Nowak “exemplifies the spirit of service and dedication that Baylor Law School instills in its graduates.”

Dean Brad Toben shared, “I have followed Judge Nowak’s career, and she is, by any measure, a stand-out, both personally and professionally. At the time of her investiture as a federal judge, I predicted that just as she had already proven herself as an exceptional lawyer in practice, she would prove to be a respected and admired steward of our justice system through her service in the judiciary and would be a credit to Baylor Law School through her service. She has done exactly that.”

Nowak is heavily involved at Baylor Law, within the bar, and throughout the community. At Baylor Law, Nowak is a Jaworski Fellow, Adjunct Faculty Member, and President of the Baylor Law Alumni Association. She is actively involved in the Eastern District of Texas Bar Association, Women Lawyers of the Eastern District of Texas, Dallas Bar Association, Dallas Women Lawyers Association, Collin County Bar Association, Collin County Women Lawyers Association, and Dallas Bar Foundations. She served on the Editorial Board of the Federal Courts Law Review as the Fifth Circuit Representative and is a Credentialed Mediator through the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association. She serves her community in various capacities, including acting as Troop Leader and Den Leader to her children’s scouting groups. Nowak is married to fellow Baylor Lawyer and 366th District Court Judge of Collin County, the Honorable Tom Nowak (JD ’05). They have two children and are faithful parishioners of St. Mark’s Catholic Church.
Claire Carroll, JD ’14, Shareholder with Munsch Hardt in Dallas, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024 in the areas of Commercial Litigation and Construction Law and Litigation - Real Estate.

Anna Greenberg, JD ’14, a partner with Blizzard Greenberg in Houston, has been listed in the 2024 edition of Best Lawyers in America. Anna was recognized for her class-action and mass tort litigation practice on behalf of plaintiffs. This was her third consecutive honor. She was also named to The National Trial Lawyers: Top 40 Under 40 list for 2023, the latest edition of Texas Rising Stars and Lawdragon’s 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers legal guide.

Garrett Hicks, JD ’14, Shareholder with Munsch Hardt in Austin, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024 in the area of Construction Law.

James Everett Coleman, JD ’15, recently returned home to Meridian, MS, to practice family law. He specializes in litigation and dispute management.

Garrett L. Beach, JD ’16, has joined The Zimmerman Firm in Waco as an associate in the area of Estate Planning.

Alexandria M. Risinger, JD ’16, Senior Associate with Bell Nunnally, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024 in the areas of Commercial Litigation and Product Liability Litigation.

Toni Anderson, JD ’17, Associate with Munsch Hardt in Dallas, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024 in the area of Commercial Litigation.

J. Reid Burley, JD ’18, in Commercial Litigation with Bell Nunnally, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024.

Nicole E. Manley, JD ’18, Associate with Munsch Hardt in Dallas, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024 in the areas of Corporate Law and Mergers and Acquisitions Law.

Abigail “Abby” Griffith, JD ’19, joined the new Austin office of Reichman Jorgensen Lehman & Feldberg LLP as an Associate focusing on a range of complex commercial litigation. RJLF is a national, majority women-owned boutique trial firm.

Mason G. Jones, JD ’19, Associate with Bell Nunnally, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ in America list for 2024 in the area of Commercial Litigation.

RJ Ammons, JD ’20, has joined SLR Digital Finance as Assistant Vice President and Underwriter. Based in Sherman Oaks, CA, SLR Digital Finance offers asset-based lending for businesses in the digital media and advertising sector nationwide.

B. Keith Faulkner, LL.M. ’20, current president and dean of Appalachian School of Law in Virginia, has been appointed president of Charleston Southern University. Keith is a 1998 graduate of Charleston Southern.

Zeeshan “Zee” Iqbal, JD ’20, has joined the Financial Services Litigation practice group at McGlinchey Stafford in Irvine, California, as an Associate.

Christian Carson-Banister, JD ’21, is with the McClure Law Group in Dallas.

William J. Gober, JD ’21, recently joined Smith Rose Finley in San Angelo as an associate attorney.

Catherine Helm, JD ’22, Associate with Bell Nunnally, was honored on the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch™ list for 2024 in the area of Commercial Litigation.

Logan Krulish, JD ’22, representing Baylor Law, was recently honored with the “2023 Law360 Distinguished Legal Writing Award - Law School” for his article entitled “Defending the de-SPAC Merger: What Standard of Review Applies?” The Burton Awards recognized 25 writers from submissions from the nation’s top law schools.

Elaine Moore, JD ’22, has joined the Healthcare Practice Group at Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP in Dallas.

Jacob A. Muñoz, JD ’22, has joined the construction practice of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP in Dallas.
Baylor Law graduates are distinctively prepared for the practice of law. If you are in need of a new lawyer, Baylor Lawyers are ready, resourceful, and determined. Contact the Baylor Law Career Development Office today.

BAYLOR LAW INTERVIEW PROGRAMS 2024

FEBRUARY 14-16
MARCH 21-22

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER VISIT BAYLOR.EDU/LAW/REGISTERFOROCI

BAYLOR LAW | CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
Career_Development@baylor.edu | Law.Baylor.Edu/CDO | 254.710.1210
The Dean’s Suite at Baylor Law is home to one of the oldest existing copies of Justinian’s Corpus Juris Civilis, printed in 1509.

The Corpus Juris Civilis, which translates to the “Body of Civil Law,” encompasses a set of foundational legal texts in jurisprudence commissioned by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I and published between 529 and 534. It is colloquially called by the name of one of its components, the ‘Code of Justinian.’

The Corpus remained a cornerstone of the empire’s legal system through the 15th century. Justinian’s Code and Institutes had a lasting impact on ecclesiastical law, subsequently influencing early English legal literature and Spanish law.

This Spanish legal tradition, in turn, shaped the legal framework in Mexico, ultimately contributing to the development of Texas Law.