

# TEXAS TECH LAWYER

ON THE RISE: LEADING THE WAY IN ADVOCACY AND STUDENT SUPPORT



WINTER 2024



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# FROM THE DEAN'S SUITE

BY DEAN JACK WADE NOWLIN



**T**he Law School continues with increasing success! For the fourth straight year, we welcomed a 1L class with record-breaking credentials. The Class of 2027 has the highest median GPA in our history—an amazing 3.65. Our total enrollment has now grown to over 440 future lawyers, each bringing an impressive array of accomplishments.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our alumni and friends, we're celebrating remarkable growth in fundraising, especially for student scholarships. Our endowment has grown from about \$20 million in 2017 to over \$48 million in 2024, and the gifts keep coming. Mark and Becky Lanier honored civil rights legend Fred Gray with a \$1 million gift to establish the Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law. Scott and Lenna Summy championed our advocacy program with a \$2 million gift to create the Summy Elite Advocates Endowment. And the William A. Brookshire Institute gave \$1.25 million to launch the Veterans Law Clinic.

The Law School continues helping our students in every way possible. From an in-the-building food pantry and generous emergency funds to wellness initiatives and our *LawSuits* program (providing financial support for business attire), we make sure that all our students are happy, healthy, successful, and feel at home. Special thanks to Professor Brie Sherwin for envisioning *LawSuits* and to donors Michael Cole and Karen Brand for their generous gifts to start this program and ensure its future.

Our students continue to excel. Second-years Caden Jackson and Caleb Kunde brought home the 2023-2024 American Bar Association's Mediation Competition title, marking Texas Tech Law's 55th national championship. With this win, we're now the only law school in the country to have earned national titles in all five ABA Law Student Division competitions—an amazing achievement! We've also ranked No. 1 in the ABA's championship rankings four times in the last seven years, the best record of any school in the country.

Beyond our recognition for advocacy, we also continue to place well in other national rankings. Last year, *National Jurist* magazine named us the No. 14 Best Value Law School in the nation. And in the last two years, the Law School has placed 71<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in the *US News*, our two highest-ever showings in that ranking.

Our graduates also continue to have real success in bar passage and employment. We have an excellent 96% ultimate bar passage rate and an outstanding 96% 10-month employment rate for job seekers—overwhelmingly in “gold-standard” J.D. required positions. The Law School continues to maintain its rigorous curriculum of required and practice-oriented courses to ensure that our graduates are ready to excel on their first day of law practice.

Our faculty are thriving too! Professor Amy Hardberger is co-leading a \$26 million grant to create a nitrogen circular economy, and Professor Bill Keffer is providing research and policy guidance for a \$6.2 million grant to improve carbon management in the Permian Basin. Professor Vickie Sutton is shaping public policy as part of the National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center Advisory Council, and Professor Brian Shannon is working to improve mental health law as a Commissioner on the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health.

We are also pleased to welcome outstanding new faculty to our ranks: Professor Barbara Lauriat, our new Intellectual Property professor; Professor Miranda Rhyne, our new Clinical Instructor and Director of the Tax Law Clinic; Professor Joe Stephens, our new Caprock Public Defender and Director of the Caprock Clinic; and Professor Ken Williams, our inaugural Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law.

We at the Law School are very thankful for all the good fortune we have experienced and look forward to traveling further along our upward trajectory in the years to come.

## Guns Up!



# YEAR IN REVIEW

2024





## Alumni Tailgate

October 22, 2022



Alumni and friends gathered on the Law School Front Lawn to enjoy drinks, food, and great conversation before the Texas Tech vs. West Virginia showdown. The highlight of the tailgate was the announcement of the Daniel H. Benson First-Generation Endowed Scholarship, established by Professor Brian Shannon in honor of the late Professor Daniel Benson.

Professor Benson's wife, Patricia, and his grandson, Peter, a student at the Law School, were there to celebrate the scholarship's creation.

The event also spotlighted the outstanding Alumni Association Award recipients for the year. The celebration of these individuals and their achievements created a memorable event for the Law School community, made even better by Texas Tech's victory.





# Inaugural Arnold H. Loewy Memorial Lecture

February 20, 2023



Colonel (Retired) Michael E. Mulligan delivered a captivating lecture on the complexities of prosecuting high-profile cases, emphasizing the importance of compassion for victims and their families and recounting the critical decisions made by the prosecution team in the aftermath of the Fort Hood shooting on November 5, 2009.

Colonel Mulligan, a former judge on the Army Court of Criminal Appeals and civilian director of the U.S. Army Advocacy Center, played a pivotal role in several high-profile cases over his 30 years of service, including two death penalty cases, *U.S. v. Akbar* and *U.S. v. Hasan*.

During the lecture, Colonel Mulligan discussed various challenges encountered in prosecuting Hasan, handling media interpretations, the involvement of external attorneys suing the Army on behalf of victims, and the

contentious issue of awarding Purple Hearts. He was transparent about internal debates and criticisms and underscored the significance of maintaining connections with victims' families, acknowledging their grief, and keeping them informed.

This was the inaugural Professor Arnold H. Loewy Memorial Lecture, dedicated to the ethical practice of criminal law. This lecture series pays homage to Professor Arnold Loewy, the school of law's first George R. Killam Jr. Chair of Criminal Law, who passed away in July 2021. Colonel Mulligan's emphasis on honesty, transparency, and ethical standards resonated deeply with the audience, leaving them with a profound understanding of the delicate balance between legal duty and human compassion.



## 19th Annual Scholarship Gala

March 4, 2023

**W**hat a night it was at the 19th Annual Scholarship Gala held at the Overton Hotel and Conference Center! The Texas Tech law community came together to honor our 2022 Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Service awardees: Kevin Glasheen '88, Krisi Kastl '99, Paul K. Stafford '94, and David B. Weinstein '81. Their remarkable contributions to the legal profession and this Law School make each truly deserving of this recognition!

The evening was also a heartfelt celebration of the profound impact that scholarships have on the lives of Texas Tech law students. With the incredible support from our generous donors and sponsors—especially our Premier Diamond Scholarship Sponsor, The Lanier Law Firm—we raised over \$72,000 for student scholarships. This funding is vital, empowering students to chase their dreams of becoming outstanding legal professionals.

The gala was a wonderful night celebrating outstanding award winners and supporting law students. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event a great success!



## 14th Annual Huffman Distinguished Lecture

March 20, 2023



**K**aren Tandy '77 shared her personal journey and what it takes to succeed in one's career. She highlighted the importance of being overprepared, continuing to learn, and listening actively in professional situations.



Tandy is the principal at KPT Consulting LLC, the Executive Vice President at NLW Partners, and the Vice Chair of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Advisory Council. She was also the first woman to lead the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and served as a senior vice president of Public Affairs and Communications for Motorola. In recognition of her achievements, she was honored as a Distinguished Alumni of the Law School in 2004.

During her speech, Tandy highlighted key moments in her career, including her clerkship with Judge Halbert O. Woodward and her role in establishing a legal precedent in the Supreme Court regarding attorney's fees. She stressed the importance of resilience, failure, and adaptability, urging the audience to see setbacks as opportunities. Tandy's message inspired students to pursue their future careers with courage and tenacity.

The Huffman Lecture is an annual event organized by the ' to honor Walter B. Huffman, a retired major general of the U.S. Army, former editor-in-chief of the *Texas Tech Law Review*, and dean emeritus of the Law School.





## Centennial Hooding Ceremony

May 13, 2023

The Class of 2023 enjoyed an amazing celebration filled with excitement, pride, and inspiration. The graduates were treated to inspiring speeches from notable guests, including Regent Mark Griffin '79, Student Bar Association President Connor Leigh '23, class-elected speaker Judy Marie Tejeda-Gonzales '23, and keynote speaker Mark Lanier '84. The celebration coincided with the University's Centennial celebration, making it even more special.

Mark Lanier, a 1984 graduate and 2015 Distinguished Alumni recipient of the Law School, delivered a powerful keynote address. He is the founder and senior partner of The Lanier Law Firm, a national litigation firm with offices in Houston, New York, and Los Angeles. Lanier has achieved remarkable success over the past 30 years, securing some of the largest verdicts in history and advocating for justice in cases involving dangerous drugs, medical devices, and consumer products.

Sharing anecdotes from his own journey, Lanier highlighted the transformative power of lawyers to bring about positive

change in the world. He emphasized the importance of hard work, stating that it surpasses talent and top grades.

Lanier encouraged the graduates to view their legal education as a toolkit that they could use to tackle any challenge that comes their way. He shared the symbolism of various tools, including a stud finder representing the graduates' importance and duct tape signifying the ability to fix problems. He touched on the inevitability of making mistakes but highlighted the importance of promptly admitting and rectifying them.

Lanier urged the graduates to constantly evolve, not settle for being a "one-tool lawyer" but expand their skills throughout their careers. He emphasized the importance of practicing ethical conduct and giving back to their alma mater, calling on them to stick together and support Texas Tech Law.

The evening celebrated hard work, resilience, and the importance of constantly evolving, leaving the Class of 2023 inspired and motivated to make a difference in the world.





# A Legacy of Justice: Celebrating Fred Gray at Texas Tech Law

November 30, 2023

The Bill & Carolyn Lanier Auditorium was packed with students, faculty, judges, and community members eager to hear about pivotal moments in civil rights history through the experiences of one of its most remarkable figures: Fred D. Gray.

With a relaxed demeanor, Gray, nearly 93 years old, settled into his seat for a captivating conversation with Mark Lanier. He recalled vivid details of his work alongside icons like Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1930, Gray's journey began with aspirations of teaching history and preaching. However, a mentor at Alabama State University encouraged him to pursue law, leading him to attend Case Western Reserve University. At just 23, he returned to Montgomery to challenge segregation laws, marking the start of a legal career that would change the course of American history.

Gray recounted his early cases, including Claudette Colvin, a courageous 15-year-old arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat. Just months later, he represented Rosa Parks, igniting a movement that would resonate for generations. His legal acumen was instrumental during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, where he counseled the Montgomery Improvement Association and successfully argued *Browder v. Gayle*, leading to the Supreme Court's landmark ruling against bus segregation.

As he shared these stories, the audience hung on his every word. Gray's tireless advocacy extended beyond the bus boycott, encompassing numerous cases that tackled systemic racism, including landmark decisions on school integration and the rights of victims of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.

The evening continued with a musical interlude from the Worth It Mass Choir of St. John Baptist Church. The celebratory tone set the stage for the Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law presentation by Mark and Becky Lanier, longtime Texas Tech Law supporters.

Mark Lanier, a distinguished alumnus and founder of The Lanier Law Firm, spoke warmly about his friendship with Gray and emphasized how honored he and Becky are to establish the \$1 million Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law at Texas Tech. Mark and Becky have already made a significant impact on the law school with their transformative \$6 million gift to establish the Mark and Becky Lanier Professional Development Center. Their latest endeavor, the endowed chair, promises to inspire future generations of law students to continue Gray's fight for equality.

As the night drew to a close, President Lawrence Schovanec presented Gray with an honorary degree, a fitting tribute to a life dedicated to pursuing justice. Fred Gray's keynote address resonated deeply with the audience, echoing his unwavering belief in the power of the law as a tool for social change.

In his closing remarks, Dean Nowlin reflected on the significance of the evening. "Tonight, we have not only honored a remarkable individual but also reaffirmed our commitment to the principles of justice and equality that he has tirelessly fought for," he said.

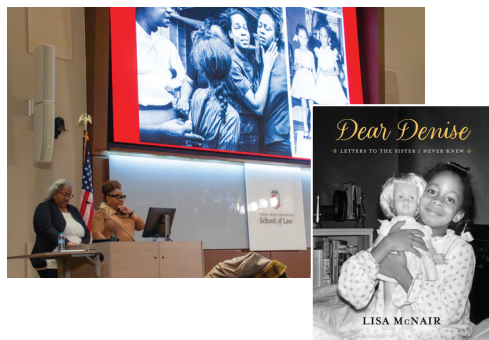
Attendees left inspired. They took with them the stories of a remarkable man and a renewed sense of purpose to support the values he promoted throughout his life. In a world still grappling with these issues, Fred Gray's legacy will continue to guide and motivate those who want to make a difference.





## 6th Annual MLK Commemorative Event

January 22, 2024



The 6th Annual MLK Commemorative Event featured a moving discussion led by Kimberly McNair Brock and Lisa McNair. They shared the story of their sister, Denise McNair, who tragically lost her life in the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Their powerful reflections on the events leading up to this pivotal moment in civil rights history left a lasting impression on everyone in attendance. The evening concluded with a reception and book signing of Lisa McNair's memoir, *Dear Denise: Letters to the Sister I Never Knew*. The conversation continued with the Civil Rights Book Club later in the semester, where faculty, staff, and students gathered to discuss McNair's book over lunch.

Mark Lanier '84, founder and senior partner of The Lanier Law Firm, visited the Law School at the invitation of the Federalist Society and the Personal Injury Association for two engaging presentations.

During a lunchtime session hosted by the Federalist Society and an evening event with the Personal Injury Association, Lanier shared invaluable insights on various topics, including law, faith, and civic duty. He also discussed the qualities that define effective trial lawyers. Using "war stories," he highlighted important points such as the power of strategic thinking, the notion that hard work beats raw talent, and the significance of empathy and a strong sense of justice in legal practice. His discussions left both students and faculty informed and inspired.

## Mark Lanier Visit

February 20, 2024



## 20th Annual Scholarship Gala

March 2, 2024

The 20th Annual Scholarship Gala on March 2, 2024, was truly a night to remember! Celebrating two decades of tradition, over 300 alumni and friends gathered at the Overton Hotel to honor four outstanding alumni: Martha Brown '79, Beto Cardenas '99, Bridget Moreno Lopez '99, and Scott Summy '90. Each honoree exemplifies the commitment and excellence that define Texas Tech Law.

The Gala also achieved a record-breaking milestone—raising nearly \$300,000 in support of student scholarships, making it our most successful gala to date! This historic achievement will inspire and support Texas Tech Law students for years to come.

A big part of this success was thanks to the evening's sponsors, who collectively contributed over \$80,000. Leading the way as the Premier Diamond Scholarship Sponsor, the David W. Copeland ('82) Family Foundation established the Janet Scivally Copeland '82 Legacy Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship is dedicated to supporting law students pursuing a career in criminal prosecution, reflecting Janet's example of integrity and dedication.

The night reached new heights thanks to Foundation President Tom Hall '88, who, in honor of the Gala's 20th



anniversary, offered a \$100,000 matching gift leading up to the event. He invited past Distinguished Award recipients to participate, and the response was inspiring. Eleven past honorees quickly contributed, resulting in \$200,000 for student scholarships!

Through Tom's visionary leadership and the generosity of our past honorees and sponsors, the Gala showcased our community's unwavering commitment to supporting the next generation of outstanding lawyers. Here's to twenty years of generosity—and to an even brighter future filled with more reasons to celebrate!





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION

Community engagement is more than just a goal—it's a commitment. Every year, our faculty, staff, students, and alumni come together to build a campus environment that supports justice, equality, and the rule of law. Through programs, events, and outreach, we work tirelessly to create a space where every member feels welcomed, valued, and empowered.

Our Community Engagement Committee led initiatives to strengthen student connections through impactful events and enriching educational programs. The student-led Community Engagement Board also played a critical role in organizing discussions and social opportunities that reinforced connection, learning, and professional growth.

This year's community events were as impactful as they were diverse. The Black Law Students Association (BLSA) hosted its annual *Candid Conversations* panel, where alumni shared insights on practicing law and discussed adapting to recent legislation like Texas Senate Bill 17. The Federalist Society brought in Stephen J. Hammer of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher for insights on recent Supreme Court rulings and a federal judicial panel, featuring Fifth Circuit Judge Andrew Oldham and U.S. District Court Judge Wesley Hendrix, who shared *Perspectives from the Bench*. OUTlaw hosted

discussions on Texas Senate Bill 14, inviting speakers like the Honorable Charles Spain, the first openly gay judge on the Texas Court of Appeals, and Professor Dale Carpenter, a distinguished LGBT rights scholar.

Students also found camaraderie through social events. OUTlaw's *Out with Allies* series brought members together with other organizations for relaxed gatherings, while BLSA's karaoke and movie nights filled evenings with music, laughter, and friendship. The Christian Legal Society's weekly Bible studies offered a space for faith-based community, and events like *Coffee Break and Coloring* with OWLS helped students recharge before exams. *The Valentine's Day Dance Class*, organized by the International Law Society (ILS) and Hispanic Law Students Association (HLSA), saw students embracing an evening of fun and dance instruction from Professor Corn.

As we look forward, we pledge to make each year at Texas Tech Law more supportive and encouraging than the last. Through the dedication of our Community Engagement committees and the commitment of our entire community, we're building a law school where everyone has a voice, feels valued, and is empowered to make a difference.





# BIG CHANGES AND BIG NEWS IN THE CLINIC

The Clinics are central to the Law School's commitment to practical training, offering students hands-on legal experience while delivering life-changing services to underserved communities. The work of our students and faculty continues to transform lives.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, students in the Criminal Defense Clinic handled 128 cases for 95 clients. In the fall semester, the Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic closed 64 cases, logged over 8,000 miles for court appearances and crime scene visits, and achieved an impressive 71% dismissal rate. Meanwhile, students in the Innocence Clinic dedicated themselves to the case of Butch Martin, who had been wrongfully incarcerated since 1999. They worked tirelessly to track down witnesses, secure affidavits, and draft direct and cross-examinations for a hearing requesting his release. Their hard work paid off when, on March 12, 2024, a district judge ruled that Butch should be paroled, allowing him to reunite with his family. Finally, on May 22, 2024, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals declared him actually innocent, bringing closure to a decades-long injustice.

But the story doesn't stop there. The new Veterans Clinic, made possible by a generous \$1.25 million donation from the William A. Brookshire Foundation, will launch in August 2025. This clinic, the first of its kind in West Texas, will offer pro bono services to veterans referred by VA hospitals in Lubbock and Amarillo. From benefits advising to reclassifying discharge paperwork, the clinic promises to make a profound difference for those who have served our country.

As we look forward, we also celebrate transitions shaping the Clinics' future. After 22 years of

extraordinary service, Elma Moreno retired, leaving a legacy of compassion and excellence. Her successor, Melissa Vasquez, has stepped into the role with enthusiasm, ready to build on Elma's remarkable work.

New leadership has also energized the Clinics. Professor Terri Morgeson now leads the Family Law Clinic, guiding students through challenging cases with expertise and passion. Professor Miranda Rhyne, as director of the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, has already made a significant impact: in just the Spring 2024 semester, students saved clients \$33,370 in debt reductions and secured \$34,430 in overdue refunds. And Joe Stephens, the new Caprock Public Defender, brings a commitment to public defense and mentorship that will inspire dedicated representation for rural communities.

As the Clinical Program evolves, one thing remains constant: the Clinics' unwavering dedication to providing transformative real-world legal experiences for our students and making a meaningful difference for those in need. With these achievements as our foundation, the best is yet to come. Stay tuned for more exciting updates as we build on these successes!



Donnie Yandell '01 with his final group of Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic students. After 14 years as Chief Public Defender for the Caprock Regional Public Defender Office, Donnie is stepping away from this role but will continue to teach as an adjunct professor. His mentorship has positively impacted students and the communities he served. Thank you, Donnie, for changing lives for the better!



## 15th Annual Huffman Distinguished Lecture

April 22, 2024

**T**he *Texas Tech Law Review* was honored to host Judge M. Tia Johnson as the 15th Huffman Distinguished Lecturer. Appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces by President Joe Biden in 2022, Judge Johnson offered valuable insights into the evolving landscape of military justice, discussing its alignment with civilian law, recent reforms, and the potential for future changes by Congress.

Judge Johnson's lecture highlighted her extensive legal expertise and groundbreaking achievements. Over nearly three decades, she achieved several significant milestones, becoming the first African American woman to earn a Master of Laws in Military Law with a specialization in International and Operational Law and later chair an academic department at the same institution. In 2002, she made history again as the first African American woman selected for the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army JAG Corps.

After her military service, Judge Johnson worked as a Presidential Appointee at the Department of Homeland Security and taught constitutional law, governance, and national security law at Georgetown University Law Center.



## Professor Geoffrey Corn's Recognition Ceremony

March 22, 2024



**I**n a moving ceremony, Colonel (Retired) Michael Lacey presented Professor Geoffrey Corn with a challenge coin and a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the U.S. Army General Counsel. This recognition honored Professor Corn's dedication to seeking justice for 110 Black soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, who were wrongfully convicted following the Houston Riots of 1917.

The riots, driven by racial tensions against members of the 24th Infantry Regiment, resulted in over 100 soldiers marching into the city, leading to clashes that claimed the lives of 19 individuals. In the aftermath, 113 soldiers faced swift judgments in three General Courts-Martial. The first trial, involving 63 defendants, was the largest criminal trial in U.S. history. Ultimately, 110 soldiers were convicted and 19 were executed, which remains the largest mass execution of American soldiers by the U.S. military.

Through collaboration with advocates and organizations like the NAACP, Professor Corn played a crucial role in advocating for clemency and restoring the regiment's honor. More than a century later, this effort resulted in a decision by the Secretary of the Army to overturn all 110 convictions and award honorable discharges to these soldiers, who had faithfully served the nation.

In his remarks, Professor Corn emphasized the law as a "weapon system" that must be used with honor and integrity, paying tribute to the soldiers and showcasing the impact of legal advocacy in correcting past injustices.



## New Student Orientation

August 12, 2024

For the fourth consecutive year, Texas Tech Law proudly welcomed an incoming class with record-breaking credentials. The Class of 2027 is our most accomplished yet, with 160 students bringing a median LSAT score of 158 and a median GPA of 3.65. This remarkable group comprises 48% students of color, 26% first-generation students, and 58% women. Additionally, 86% of these students have received at least \$1,000 in scholarships, a testament to our commitment to making legal education accessible. And we're not stopping there—growing this number remains a top priority to support even more bright minds on their journeys.

This outstanding class builds on the momentum set by the Class of 2026, whose 158 students entered last year with a median GPA of 3.63 and an LSAT median of 158—the strongest in the Law School's history at the time.

Together, these classes reflect a passion for learning, a drive to serve, and a commitment to excellence that will shape the future of the legal profession. We can't wait to see the incredible impact these students will have during their time here and beyond!



## Hooding Ceremony

May 4, 2024

The Class of 2024's commencement ceremony was a wonderful celebration filled with heartfelt moments and powerful messages. Graduates and their loved ones heard from an impressive lineup of speakers, including Regent Patrick Gordon '83, Student Bar Association President Malik Williams '24, class-elected speaker Mallory Elise DeGroat '24, and keynote speaker Karen M. Kennard '88. Each speaker shared wisdom, encouragement, and reflections that left everyone inspired and graduates ready to embark on their legal careers.

Kennard is a Co-Managing Shareholder in the Austin Office of Greenberg Traurig. She serves in the Government Law and Policy Group and has spent her career helping individuals, businesses, and non-profits navigate government law, policy, and regulatory matters.

She delivered a powerful keynote address, urging graduates to embrace their journeys and hold steadfast to their dreams. Reflecting on her own transformative law school experience, she shared moments of triumph, challenges, and the enduring lessons learned along the way.

Drawing from personal adversity, including the wrongful conviction of her brother during law school, Kennard shared how a heartfelt letter from him, containing the words "Never give up on your dreams," became a lifelong source of inspiration. She explained that these words fuel her distinguished 30-year legal career and remind her of the resilience needed to navigate life's unexpected paths.

Her address encouraged graduates to cherish their individual dreams, face setbacks with courage, and build careers rooted in compassion. Kennard ended with a heartfelt wish: that each graduate embrace the incredible opportunities ahead, use their skills to make a meaningful impact on the world, and dream big.



# TEXAS TECH LAW REVIEW AND EPJ STUDENTS SHINE

Lawyers understand that writing isn't just a skill—it's a cornerstone of legal excellence. That's why we proudly support five student-run legal publications that showcase our students' diverse talents and passions while contributing to the legal profession through innovative scholarship and thought leadership.

Among these, the *Texas Tech Law Review* and the *Estate Planning and Community Property Law Journal (EPJ)* stand out as flagship publications. They elevate the Law School's reputation, attract leading guest lecturers from across the nation, and require exceptional student leadership to thrive.

With guidance from academic advisors, Professors Brian Shannon and Alyson Outenreath, the *Law Review* continues to push boundaries in legal scholarship and alumni engagement. A new initiative, spearheaded by former editor-in-chief Zach Zahn '23, culminated in a wonderful alumni CLE Brunch in March 2024. Attendees were treated to an enlightening discussion on pressing topics such as the latest developments in name, image, and likeness (commonly referred to as NIL) in college athletics and the intricate world of coaching contracts. Additionally, this alumni engagement initiative has laid the foundation for an alumni newsletter and the exciting launch of a mentoring network, fostering deeper connections within our community.

Later in the spring, the *Law Review* partnered with the Center for Water Law & Policy to present the 2024 Water

Law Symposium. Tackling one of West Texas's most urgent issues—water management—this symposium featured thought leaders such as Sarah Schlessinger, CEO of the Texas Water Foundation, and Dr. Krishna Jagadish, Thornton Distinguished Chair Professor at the Texas Tech Davis College Water Center. With topics spanning legislative updates to sustainable water practices, the event underscored the journal's impact on critical legal conversations.

Meanwhile, the *EPJ* continues to thrive, now proudly publishing its 17th volume under the leadership of Professor Gerry Beyer. Known for its award-winning scholarship—including multiple honors from the Texas Bar Foundation—the journal also hosted its highly successful annual CLE & EXPO this spring, drawing nearly 400 attendees. Featuring top-tier experts discussing the latest in estate planning and community property law, this event has become a cornerstone of *EPJ*'s mission to serve the legal community.

As the *EPJ* looks ahead, it will continue its tradition of excellence, with two volumes slated for the upcoming academic year. The next CLE & EXPO is already on the calendar for February 2025, promising more cutting-edge discussions and valuable networking opportunities.

Interested in subscribing to the *Law Review* or *EPJ*? Donna Jones is your go-to contact for details at [donna.jones@ttu.edu](mailto:donna.jones@ttu.edu) or (806) 834-3493. We are incredibly proud of the students who bring these publications to life and invite you to celebrate their incredible work with us!

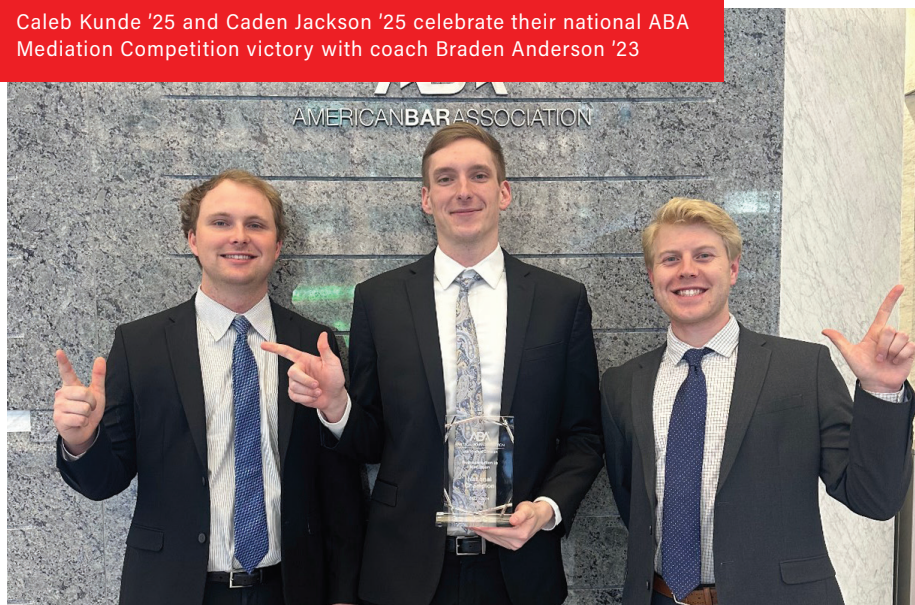
# AMBITIOUS ADVOCACY

**Texas Tech School of Law Becomes First to  
Win all ABA Championship Competitions**





Caleb Kunde '25 and Caden Jackson '25 celebrate their national ABA Mediation Competition victory with coach Braden Anderson '23



**T**exas Tech University's School of Law has built one of the nation's most respected advocacy programs—and stands alone as the first in the nation to capture a national title in all five American Bar Association (ABA) competition categories: arbitration, negotiation, client counseling, mediation, and appellate (moot court).

This rise to the top has nothing to do with luck and everything to do with hard work.

"The reason we consistently outperform other law schools is because we outwork other law schools," said Director of the Advocacy Program and Champions in Advocacy Endowed Professor of Law Robert Sherwin.

Sherwin assures prospective students there is nothing inherently special about Texas Tech's advocacy program. No magic pixie dust floats through the air vents.

A culture of excellence isn't created overnight. It's fostered and defended. But all traditions start somewhere. This one begins with a man named Don Hunt. Part of the early fabric of the law school, Hunt placed an emphasis on advocacy as he saw the world, and law, change during the 1970s.

Hunt built a legacy that's now been honored for more than 40 years. And while everyone loves a win, these victories are merely evidence of a deeper conviction—the drive to make people's lives better.

## Mediation

"Believe it or not, but not every lawyer is as friendly as us," jokes Caleb Kunde, a third-year law student at Texas Tech.

He sits with his friend Caden Jackson, another third-year student, and recounts their win at the ABA mediation competition earlier this year.

"We had three weeks to prepare," Kunde said.

The students got the case work for the competition two weeks ahead of time. After review, they flew to Denver for regionals. While Kunde and Jackson had experience in negotiation competitions, they'd never competed in mediation before.

They continued studying the case on the flight, drained the hotel business center of its printer paper, and captured a win the next day. That victory propelled them to nationals, where they beat schools from around the country.

Mediation was the most recent category added to the ABA competitions. Kunde and Jackson's win in April 2024 made Texas Tech's School of Law the first to win in all five areas.

Kunde earned an undergraduate degree in meat science at Texas Tech's Davis College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources. He plans to use his law degree to represent mistreated workers in the meat industry.

"I worked in packing plants and saw some folks, especially migrant workers, are taken advantage of," he said.

Jackson plans to go into family law.

"Going through family court proceedings as a kid gave me a unique perspective," he said. "As I got older, I knew I wanted to be in the role of helping kids going through those proceedings."

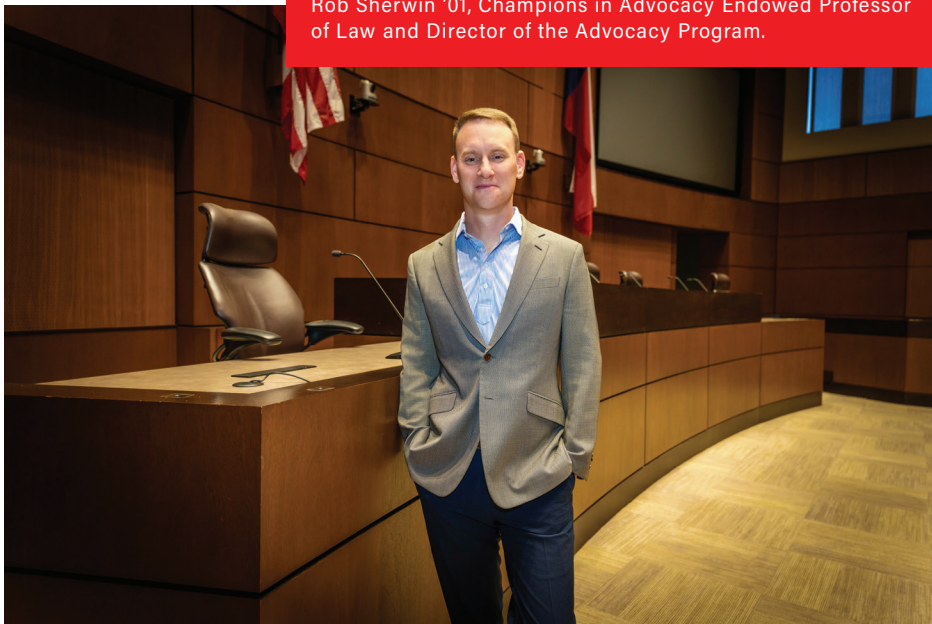
Both aspirations will require an air-tight understanding of the law with an abundance of empathy, compassion, and practical experience.

"These competitions help us



Coaches Sherry Kime-Goodwin '94 and Dick Baker join their team in celebrating a historic victory, later recognized at a February 2017 Board of Regents meeting.

Rob Sherwin '01, Champions in Advocacy Endowed Professor of Law and Director of the Advocacy Program.



become lawyers who will be with people on the hardest days of their lives," Jackson said. "We have to be able to counsel people through those moments. That's what makes Texas Tech's program so unique. Everyone who graduates from here is a great practitioner."

Kunde and Jackson are the most recent champions the Law School has produced, but they join a long list of those who came before.

## Building the Best

When Don Hunt moved to Lubbock in the '60s, he began work at Key, Carr, Carr and Clark.

"I cut my teeth there as a young lawyer," he said in an interview in 1998.

Hunt's trial experience quickly grew, particularly when the firm took on a case against Billie Sol Estes, one of the most notorious con men in Texas history. In the late 1950s, Estes created a \$150 million empire by convincing countless Texan farmers to purchase ammonia tanks for fertilizer storage, sight unseen. The mortgages he produced were mostly bought on credit. In the 1960s, it became clear the tanks were nonexistent. But, by that

point, the mortgage holdings had been used to get loans from banks all over the country.

The case was taken on by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Estes was tried and convicted on both state and federal charges and was sentenced to 24 years in prison.

While Hunt had no direct involvement with Estes, he helped represent many farmers who were victims of the scam. He oversaw gathering depositions.

"This would usually take a few hours on most cases," Hunt said. "I took depositions for eight months."

When Texas Tech opened its law school in 1967, the administration was searching for faculty members. Hunt was brought on as an adjunct professor in 1974. While he taught classes, Hunt volunteered a large amount of time to the trial and appellate advocacy teams by serving as the faculty adviser. It was under his leadership that the program became one of the best in the country.

In 1984, Hunt coached a team to a national title in appellate advocacy. It was the Law School's first national title in one of the ABA competitions.

One of the students on that team was Mark Lanier.

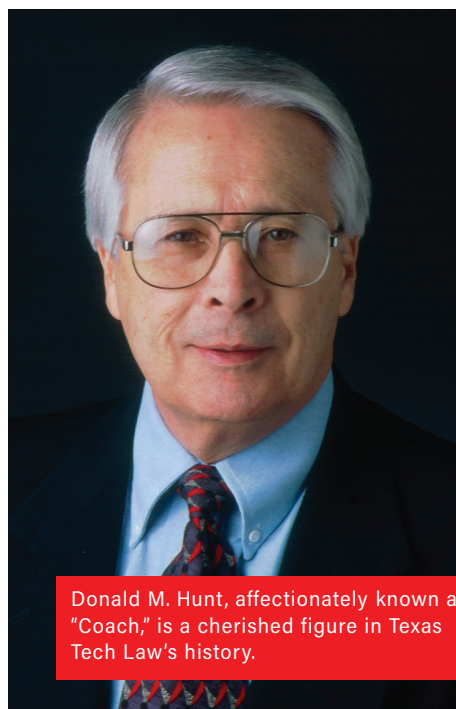
"Hunt was exacting," Lanier said. "He had us work around the clock. He was a perfectionist. He'd even bring in judges to critique our arguments."

Lanier remembers a few games of 42 and Risk during those days, too, and that Hunt knew how to have fun when it was needed.

Lanier's team won regionals and advanced to the national finals in Chicago. Much like a debate tournament, competitors do not know what side of the argument they'll be representing, so they prepare for both.

"We were happy with the side we got," Lanier remembered. "But we were curious whether we were going to get a hot bench."

A hot bench refers to judges who'll often interrupt with questions. Lanier says it's hard to stay focused in this situation because you have to answer the questions and then effectively weave those answers back into your argument.



Donald M. Hunt, affectionately known as "Coach," is a cherished figure in Texas Tech Law's history.



The bench was hot that day.

"That made it a whole lot of fun," Lanier said, with a smile.

Lanier has gone on to become one of the best civil trial lawyers in the nation. He has gained justice for victims of dangerous drugs and medical devices, asbestos exposure, and other harmful products.

Cumulatively, Lanier has won his clients close to \$20 billion in verdicts.

In 2008, the Lanier family made a \$6 million gift to the School of Law that was used to build the Mark and Becky Lanier Professional Development Center. Most recently, in 2023, the Lanier family continued their support with an additional gift of \$1 million to establish the Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law. These gifts have significantly enhanced the education of every law student who comes to Texas Tech.

At the heart of the center lies the "Don Hunt Courtroom," a space where the advocacy program cultivates champions, preparing them for competition with the



The 1994 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Champions—Jessica Whitacre Thorne '95, Michael Truesdale '94, and Mai Lan Isler '95

same passion and determination as its namesake.

## Fear & Humility

Jessica Whitacre Thorne is a managing member of Estes Thorne Ewing & Payne PLLC. She has had extensive success in family law and business litigation. It's not what she envisioned when she went to law school, but her time in the advocacy program revealed interests she didn't know she had.

After a national win on Hunt's appellate team in 1994, Thorne tried other teams, wanting to experience as much as she could. She remembers practicing under Hunt. He gave precise and tough critique, but it always inspired her to get up and try harder the next day, even when she lacked confidence.

"Texas Tech had a reputation for its advocacy program, and there weren't many opportunities to do

advocacy at the time," she said. "Back in the 90s, there were not a lot of law schools pushing it."

To this day, Thorne believes in the power of oral advocacy. It's vital in the work she does for families. She realized early in her career that she enjoyed family law. It allowed her face-to-face time with clients, and it was something she felt really mattered.

Thorne encourages the next generation of law students to lean into the experiences and opportunities that may feel uncomfortable. Things they're not automatically good at.

"I think anything worth doing comes with a bit of fear and humility," she said.

## Priorities

Rob Sherwin was on his way to becoming a journalist when he took an undergraduate course at Texas Christian University

Don Hunt and Murray Hensley



on law and ethics of mass communication.

"I enjoyed that class and thought, 'Maybe I want to use my journalism degree and go to law school,'" Sherwin recalled.

Sherwin applied to a few schools. He was accepted to Texas Tech with a scholarship.

He decided to drive out and visit campus for a law school event. While he was there, he witnessed the final round of the first-year moot court competition.

"I immediately was in love with moot court and advocacy," he said.

Sherwin didn't know of other schools that would give him the practical courtroom and litigation experience he would gain through Texas Tech. When the first day of class started in the fall, he was there.

While Sherwin didn't clinch any national championships, he was a member of two ABA NAAC regional championship teams and was a national semifinalist in multiple competitions. He returned to Texas Tech to become the director of the advocacy program in 2008 and has led nine teams to national wins.

He's also worked with every coach who has come through the program.

Like Lanier and Thorne, Sherwin was trained by Hunt.

"Hunt was a giant in the advocacy community," Sherwin said. "I still have coaches who come up to me and reminisce about meeting him or arguing against his teams."

When Sherwin was a student, he remembers Hunt laying down the law on the first day of practice.

"Hunt got up in front of us and said, 'Your first priority is to your God and your beliefs. Your second priority is to your family. Your third priority is to your schoolwork. The rest of your time is mine.'"

Hunt set a precedent for hard work and rigorous training. So much so that the school does not allow first-year law students to compete on national teams. Sherwin says it's important that first-year students focus on becoming good students before the demands of competitions are added.

First-year students can practice during intra-school competitions through a student organization called The Board of Barristers. This allows them to apply what they're

learning without the pressure of competing on a regional or national level.

After Hunt retired, Sherwin leaned heavily on long-time advocacy coach Murray Hensley. Hunt brought Hensley on in 1984 to help coach arbitration teams while he focused on the appellate teams. The divide and conquer technique worked well.

Arbitration is similar to a traditional courtroom trial but includes three arbitrators (judges) and no jury. It's used to avoid the long, drawn-out process of going to court. It's also a more economical avenue.

Hensley was skilled at preparing students for arbitration.

## Arbitration

Judge Michael Davis presides over the 396th Judicial District in East Texas. He was on the first Texas Tech team to win a national title in arbitration in 2008.

"When I graduated high school, I did not have the resources to go straight to college," Davis said. "So, I served six years in the U.S. Air Force."

Wanting to see the world, he was sent to the lively city of Grand



Ryley Bennett '18, Brian Burkhardt '18, Brent Debnam '17, and Andrea Nfodjo '18 celebrate with the championship trophy after going undefeated in the national rounds of the ABA Arbitration Competition.



Taylor Stoechner '15, Drew Thomas '15, Laney Piercy '15, and Caleb Miller '15 celebrate with their trophy after winning the ABA Arbitration Competition in Chicago.





D. Murray Hensley

Forks, North Dakota.

"Luckily, Uncle Sam made it up to me because my second assignment was to the Aviano Air Base in Italy," Davis said.

When he finished his time in the military, he went to Texas State University—San Marcos to study psychology and philosophy. He'd known for a long time he wanted to go to law school, and after a decade, Texas Tech gave him that opportunity.

"Texas Tech offered me a scholarship and, when I came out to visit the campus, I knew this was the place for me," he said. "I instantly committed."

Davis said the advocacy program was phenomenal, and one of the main reasons he's been so successful in his career.

Davis was coached by Murray Hensley and Shery Kime-Goodwin for the Arbitration Team.

"I cannot say enough good things about them both," he said.

Hensley and Kime-Goodwin also worked in Lubbock but would come to campus multiple nights each week and a good chunk

of the weekends to spend time coaching the team.

"They donated their personal time to mentor us," Davis said. "Their personal sacrifice to help us improve our advocacy skills meant a lot to us."

That sacrifice made students willing to work hard; knowing the coaches wanted to be there was extra incentive to bring everything they had.

Davis likened practice to training for a marathon. He remembers working long into the evenings revising and running through arguments until they were razor sharp. He could recite his opening and closing arguments from memory.

"There is a commitment to excellence," he said. "When Texas Tech shows up to these competitions, we're there to place first. We're not after a participation trophy."

Davis pulls daily from the lessons he learned at Texas Tech. As a judge presiding over a general trial jurisdiction, he handles a variety of cases, from business disputes to murder trials and everything in between. Davis became a judge at age 40, a milestone that usually comes later in one's career.

"The education I received at Texas Tech taught me how to tackle cases and helped me excel as a practicing attorney," he said.

"This helped me develop a great reputation in my legal community which ultimately led me to the bench."

Davis flies into Lubbock weekly to teach as an adjunct professor. He often walks down a hall named after his late mentor. A plaque with a picture of Hensley hangs in that hall. It reads:

*"Famous for his quick wit and jovial personality, Murray 'never met a stranger' and was revered by fellow mock trial coaches across the nation."*

After beating brain cancer in 2000, Hensley's cancer returned. He passed away in 2011.

## Unmatched

"Murray was the heart and soul of our program," Director Robert Sherwin said.

Sherwin took on a more active role coaching teams after Hensley's death, along with Professors Kime-Goodwin, Dick Baker, and Cassie Christopher. They've coached many students to victory over the past decade. One of those students was Laney Piercy.

Piercy is now a partner at Glasheen, Valles & Inderman, LLP, where she practices as a personal injury attorney. After earning her undergraduate degree at University of California, Berkeley, Piercy wanted to attend law school in Texas to be closer to family.





The team celebrates with coaches Sherry Kime-Goodwin '94 and Dick Baker after claiming the Law School's 40th national advocacy championship at the ABA Arbitration Competition in Chicago.



"Texas Tech had one of the highest bar passage rates in the state," she said. "It was also affordable. Other law schools would cost more in tuition and didn't always offer the real world practice opportunities that Texas Tech's advocacy team offered."

For her, it was a simple choice.

Piercy became heavily involved in interschool competitions and the national competitions, too. She was on an arbitration team that won a national title in 2014. She remembers the practice being grueling, but perfect preparation for the real world.

"As a lawyer, I want to give my all to my client," she said. "I can't ever promise a win, but I can work quickly and find out

what happened and why."

For victims of personal injury cases, that's often the closure that's needed most.

The summer before her third year of law school, Piercy got a clerkship at Glasheen, Valles & Inderman. She didn't know much about personal injury law at the time, but she'll never forget the first case she worked.

On her first day, Chad Inderman, a senior partner at the firm and a Tech Law alum, came to her office and offered her the chance to travel to Amarillo with the team. They'd be taking depositions for a new case.

"A 22-year-old man had fallen down an elevator shaft and died," Piercy recalled. "I was 22 at the time, and that case hit close to home."

The elevator's platform had been removed, and the owner of the building hadn't taken the precautionary measures to mark it out of use. By the end of the summer, Inderman sent Piercy out solo to get recorded witness statements of the parents to use in a mock trial on the case.

"Most clerks don't get the opportunity to interact with clients like that," she said.

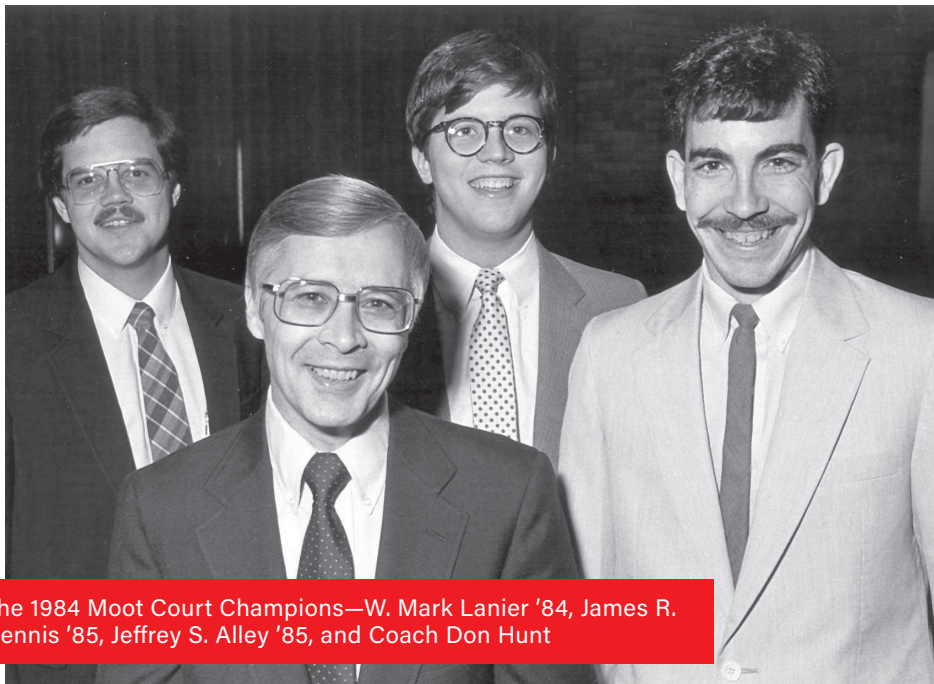
Piercy attributes the countless hours of practice in the advocacy program to being trusted with big cases so early in her career. Now, not even 10 years out of law school, she's made partner.

Andrea Nfodjo is another graduate who won an arbitration national title. She now serves as the head mock trial coach and is an adjunct professor at the School of Law.

Nfodjo knew early that she wanted to be in a profession that helped people, and, with a degree in criminal justice from the University of Texas at Arlington, she turned her sights to law.







The 1984 Moot Court Champions—W. Mark Lanier '84, James R. Dennis '85, Jeffrey S. Alley '85, and Coach Don Hunt

When it came time for law school, she set her sights on Texas Tech.

"The program is unmatched," she said. "The coaches you have access to and the hours you can get in practical experience are unique."

Nfodjo enjoyed the national win she secured with her team in 2017, beating out Drake University School of Law in the final round.

"I don't know if people always see Texas Tech coming," she said with a grin.

Nfodjo is now a prosecutor for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office. She handles a lot of criminal cases, balancing what's in the best interest of the victim and the community and ensuring fairness to the person accused.

In her first month on the job, she had to handle a motion to suppress that came up on a case.

"I had the skills to get that done because of the training I got at Texas Tech," she said. "Graduates come out ready to try cases."

While that statement may seem like a given for any law school graduate, it's not always the case. According to faculty at Texas Tech

Law, many private and Ivy League law schools focus more heavily on theory. Emphasis on skill is a valuable endeavor and can prepare future lawyers for niche career paths, such as the Supreme Court.

Problems arise when an alumnus comes out of a theory-based school wanting to practice trial law. They often lack the experience to do so. For many law students, a more practical program and curriculum is helpful.

However, on the whole, lawyers are spending less and less time in courtrooms.

In 2024, The National Center for State Courts collected data that shows caseloads down by 18.7 million compared to 2019. While COVID-19 accounts for some of this, experts wonder if the number of cases that see the inside of a courtroom will ever return to pre-pandemic levels.

"Now more than ever, the law needs lawyers who are willing to get into the courtroom and try cases because the art of trial advocacy is dying," Sherwin said.

He says not many cases get tried anymore, due partially to cost and

partially because of the risk for the litigating parties. As a result, lawyers don't get as much practice trying cases as they once did, even in appeals. More recently, courts of appeals tend to ask for written briefs rather than oral arguments.

"Now, one might say, 'Well, then why does any of this matter? If we're doing less of it, why do we need to train people to do it?'" Sherwin said. "My response is exactly the opposite. Yes, we're doing less of it, but that means when we do it, the person doing it needs to be experienced, because it has that much more added importance."

Sherwin says Piercy's firm recently won a \$262 million judgment in Ector County because it was willing to try a case against a defendant who thought they'd back down.

Many wealthy and powerful corporations can make these assumptions – that the other side will back out or merely not have the money to take them to court.

"That makes a good lawyer go, 'You know what? I'm not going to let you get away with that. I'm going to put you in the courtroom, and we're going to find out what the truth is,'" Sherwin said.

## Bettering People's Lives

Mark Lanier almost wasn't on the appellate team in 1984. In fact, he almost didn't attend law school at all. Earning a bachelor's degree in biblical languages, he planned to become a minister. But he felt led to law at the same time.

"I figured if I went the law route, I could do both," he said. "I still preach; I just don't take a paycheck for it," he said.

This has enabled him to fund his interest in theological study and helping his neighbor. On a recent



Hensley Hall proudly displays photos of Texas Tech Law's championship teams, fulfilling Murray Hensley's dream of honoring the school's best advocates.

trip back to campus, he sat at a large conference table drinking a bottle of water after speaking to a group of law students. There was a steady smile that never left his face.

When he reminisced about being on the very first team from Texas Tech to win a national ABA competition, he beamed with pride.

"It's a cool thing, you know, to leave your fingerprint on something other than a crime scene," he said.

Lanier's journey continues to inspire. Like him, the students who follow in his footsteps are driven by a desire to make a difference. And that's what the advocacy program at Texas Tech makes possible.

Each new generation of students carries forward the legacy of excellence and dedication set in motion by early leaders like Don Hunt and Murray Hensley.

Guided by exceptional coaches and professors, students like Caleb Kunde and Caden Jackson embody a commitment to rigorous preparation that extends far beyond competitions.

Today, the impact of Texas Tech's advocacy program ripples out into the world, carried by alumni like Lanier, Davis, Nfodjo, Piercy, and Whitacre Thorne. These dedicated professionals continue the tradition of advocacy, standing up for those who need it most—whether its individuals, families, or entire communities.

"At Texas Tech School of Law, we love to celebrate our wins, but winning is never the end goal," said Jack Wade Nowlin, dean of the School of Law. "Each success reflects our dedication to something much larger—the relentless drive to change lives, one argument, one case, and one client at a time. That's what makes this program so special."

**This story is dedicated to all the students who have created a tradition of excellence within the advocacy program, and to Donald M. Hunt and D. Murray Hensley.**



## Texas Tech's School of Law ABA National Championship Teams:

### National Appellate Advocacy Competition:

'84—W. Mark Lanier, James R. Dennis, and Jeffrey S. Alley

'94—Jessica L. Whitacre (best oralist), Michael S. Truesdale (best brief), and Mai Lan Isler

'98—Shelley A. Hallman, R. Scott Mayo, and Michael Murray

'13—Reagan Marble, Ashirvad Parikh, and Suzanne Taylor

'21—Taylor Holley, Alicia Mpande, and Jay Evans

### Arbitration:

'08—Jesse Blakley, Tiffany McDuff, Joe Putnam, and Mike Davis

'10—Sam Ackels, Matt Butler, Paul Miller, and Courtney Stamper

'12—Wade Iverson, Meredith M. Mills, Jared Mullowney, and Kate Murphy

'14—Laney Piercy, Caleb Miller, Taylor Stoechner, and Drew Thomas

'17—Ryley Bennett, Brian Burkhardt, Brent Debnam, and Andrea Nfodjo

'20—Patricia Cabrera-Sopo, Emily Fouts, Michael Samaniego, and Drake Pamilton

### Negotiation:

'92—R. Lane Brindley and Joseph E. Byrne

'97—Cynthia L. Wilkinson and Michael A. Yanof

'19—Taylor Calvert (International)

### Client Counseling:

'87—Kevin T. Glasheen, Jody L. Hagemann, and Brian Loncar (International)

### Mediation:

'24—Caden Jackson and Caleb Kunde

## SCOTT SUMMY '90: SHAPING THE FUTURE FOR ELITE ADVOCATES



Scott Summy's commitment to advocacy is both inspiring and impactful. Recognized as one of the nation's leading environmental litigators, Scott has built a career marked by groundbreaking victories and transformative leadership. Now, he and his wife, Lenna, are ensuring that the next generation of Texas Tech Law students can pursue their own paths to success.

With a \$2 million gift, they have established the Scott and Lenna Summy Elite Advocates Endowment. This endowment will enhance the law school's renowned Advocacy Program

by funding scholarships, competition travel expenses, and other advocacy-related needs. The support will help students develop the skills, confidence, and resilience necessary to excel in the legal profession.

"Lenna and I are excited to support Texas Tech Law's Advocacy Program," Scott shared. "I still remember how it felt to dream of becoming a trial lawyer, and this program helped me realize that dream. We hope this gift inspires students to dream big and work hard."

For Scott, the Advocacy Program was a formative part of his law school experience. Competing on advocacy teams honed his trial skills and introduced him to new cities and opportunities. "Traveling to places like New York and Chicago for the first time was exciting," Scott said. "Those experiences were unforgettable and instilled a sense of confidence in me that has stayed with me throughout my career."

After graduating, Scott quickly gained a reputation as a fearless plaintiffs' attorney. Early in his career, he achieved victories against major chemical companies, securing clean drinking water for communities across the country. Over his 25-year career tackling water contamination cases, Scott became a leader in environmental

litigation, significantly impacting public health for countless Americans.

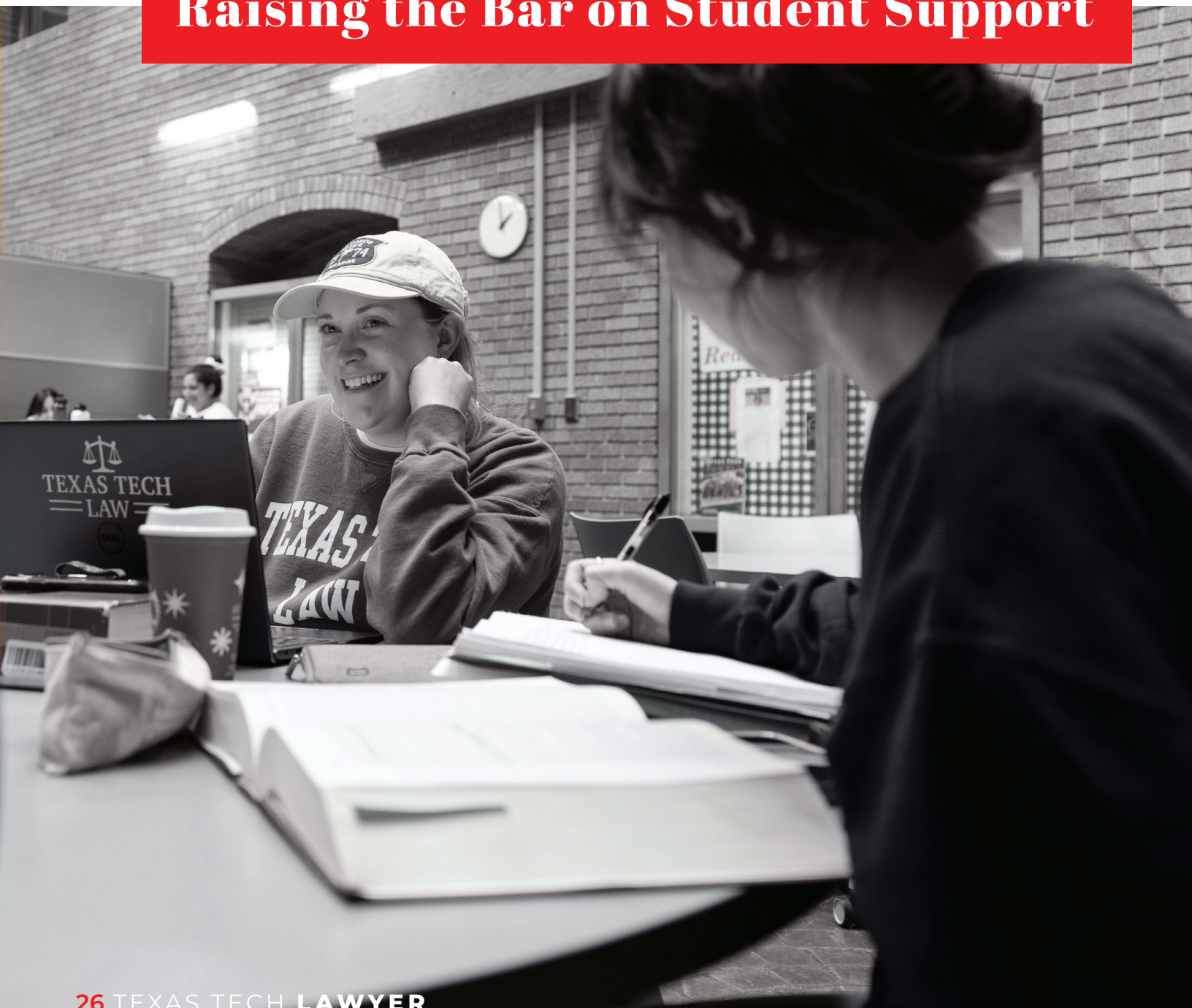
His most challenging and rewarding work came as Co-Lead Counsel in the PFAS Chemicals MDL in South Carolina, where he represented public water systems nationwide. Scott's leadership resulted in the four largest drinking water settlements in U.S. history, totaling \$14.8 billion. These settlements will provide crucial resources to public water systems serving millions.

As the leader of the Environmental Litigation Group at Baron & Budd, Scott's career exemplifies the power of effective advocacy, and he attributes much of his success to the mentorship and training he received at Texas Tech Law. A 2023 Distinguished Alumnus and trustee of the Texas Tech Law School Foundation Board, Scott remains deeply committed to the institution that helped shape his career.

The Summys' generosity ensures that Texas Tech Law's Advocacy Program will continue to be a cornerstone of excellence, providing students with exceptional opportunities to refine their skills and compete at the highest levels. Their legacy will empower future generations of advocates to dream big, work hard, and achieve extraordinary success.

# STUDENTS FIRST: A TEXAS TECH LAW COMMITMENT

**Raising the Bar on Student Support**





**L**aw school is a unique experience, and the payoff is truly life-changing for students, their families, and their communities.

But the path to becoming a lawyer is demanding. The 420-plus law students at Texas Tech know what it takes to succeed: countless hours of study, endless reading and research, rigorous final examinations, participation in demanding activities like journal membership and advocacy competitions, summer clerkships, and networking—all culminating with the bar exam.

Tech Law always puts its students first and has worked hard in recent years to take support for students to new heights. This effort has been made possible by generous alumni and a deeply committed faculty and staff.

Take the Law School's emergency fund program, which has helped scores of students since it was first established in 2020. The emergency fund assists law students with unexpected expenses such as medical bills and travel for family emergencies—drawing on the Dean's Excellence Fund and other resources. Students apply for funds through a confidential online process with approval by a discreet three-person faculty-staff committee.

The impact of the emergency fund support has been tremendous. Just ask Malik Williams, a recent graduate and former president of the Student Bar Association, who witnessed firsthand the difficulties students face and the help they need. "I have a friend," Williams recalls, "who had a \$300 expense come up unexpectedly. He's doing pro-bono public interest work. He's working this summer without getting paid. So, he's reaching out to the school in hopes of using the emergency fund. The fund particularly helps students in

that environment who otherwise couldn't make ends meet."

Dean Jack Wade Nowlin agrees, observing that "even a small amount of support at just the right time can make all the difference in a student's life. We've had people who might have dropped out of school if it weren't for the help that we've been able to give to them."

Associate Dean for Student Life Sofia Chapman, who regularly sees struggling students, adds, "We know the hardships and challenges our students experience. This special funding from our alumni makes a huge difference. It keeps students in school and allows them to concentrate on their studies and stay happy and healthy."

## Challenge and Support

At the Law School, two simple yet powerful principles guide everything: "Students First" and "Challenge and Support." These unofficial mottoes are the basis for how the school helps students succeed academically, professionally, and personally.

"Putting students first means we challenge them with a rigorous program while providing the support they need to rise to the occasion," explains Dean Nowlin. "I like to say that you have to lift the heavy weights at the gym if you want to get strong. But the right support for students is crucial, too. We have to be there for the students—not just to teach them, but to coach them, to mentor them, and to help them out when life throws a curveball. That's what we do, and we've tried to do it better than ever every single year."

A big part of the "challenge" comes from the Law School's rigorous curriculum. Students tackle 56 credit hours of required courses taught by experienced professors with high expectations. Add to that one of the country's

top legal writing programs, a stellar legal research curriculum, and an array of electives that include upper-level writing, hands-on experiential learning, and public service work. It's no wonder the Law School achieves its high bar pass and employment numbers and provides the academic foundation for the tremendous success of the advocacy program and law journals.

But the "support" component is crucial to success as well, and it comes in many forms, including financial support for students in need. The Law School offers emergency funding for students facing unexpected expenses, wellness programs to help students develop coping skills and resilience, specialized academic resources to ensure success in the classroom and on the bar exam, as well as a culture of professionalism and community support that fosters a welcoming environment where all students can thrive, both as professionals and people.

## Helping Students in Need

Texas Tech Law has many students in need. While the Law School is routinely a top-twenty Best Value Law School nationwide and one of the least expensive law schools in Texas, it still costs a great deal to attend each year.

Nearly a quarter of Tech Law students each year are first-generation college graduates who have made the move to law school. These students—and many others—often struggle to manage their expenses, especially during the first year, when outside work is discouraged so they can focus on succeeding academically. For first-gen students, there's also the added challenge of adapting to professional environments that may feel unfamiliar.

Breaklyn Nivens '26, Allison Monacelli '26, Matt Farago '24, and Juan Torres Monroy '26 have already suited up thanks to LawSuits, exuding confidence as they step into the future with style.



The Law School is committed to helping these students all it can. In addition to the emergency fund program, the Law School provides other important support, including first-gen programming, a student food pantry for those facing food insecurity, and a professional attire fund to help students "dress for success."

In 2022, the Law School established its First Gen Resources, led by Assistant Dean of Admissions Danielle Saavedra, to offer

mentorship, community-building, and networking opportunities tailored to these first-generation law students.

"We do things like host lunches, panels, and networking events where first-gen students get to know each other and also successful first-gen professionals," Assistant Dean Saavedra shares. "They discuss the challenges they face and the goals they need to set to succeed. It's a great program and ensures that our first-gen students know they belong here and that there are lots of people to help them."

The program also partners with

## KAREN (HARRISON) BRAND '79: ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Karen (Harrison) Brand is making a lasting impact on student success and professional development at Texas Tech Law. Along with her husband, Stephen, Karen established the Karen (Harrison) Brand Endowed Professional Development Fund with a generous \$105,000 gift. This fund, created through a required minimum distribution (RMD) from an IRA, generates \$4,000 annually to support initiatives that promote professional development.

One key initiative supported by the fund is the LawSuits program, which provides financial assistance for professional attire. This helps students make strong first impressions during job interviews, Board of Barristers competitions, and as they begin their careers.

"When I was starting out, finding money for professional clothing was a constant worry," Karen recalled. "Every interview, every networking event meant another financial hurdle. So, when I heard about students struggling with the same challenge, I knew I wanted to help. By establishing

this permanent fund, I've ensured that future students won't have to choose between buying interview attire and paying for textbooks. Now, when students need a blazer, dress slacks, or a professional outfit, they'll have a resource that eliminates one more stress from their journey. This isn't just about clothes—it's about giving students the confidence to step into their professional futures."

Karen graduated with honors from Texas Tech Law and began her distinguished career with the Legal Department at Phillips Petroleum Company, which later became ConocoPhillips. Over the years, she handled a wide range of legal matters both domestically and internationally, culminating in her final assignment in Perth, Australia. In this role, Karen managed all legal affairs within her geographical region, including corporate compliance for over 40 affiliates, human resource issues, contract negotiations, and joint venture agreements. She played a key role in the Bayu-Undan project, which included building an offshore

gas recycling facility, a 500-kilometer offshore pipeline, and an LNG plant.

Karen's career highlights also include high-stakes negotiations with the United Nations, participation in international arbitrations, and the successful finalization of three international unitization agreements.

In 2014, Karen and Stephen established the Karen (Harrison) Brand Endowed Scholarship, with matching funds from the J.T. and Margaret Talkington Foundation. This merit-based scholarship attracts top-tier students to Texas Tech Law and rewards academic excellence.

Karen's dedication and generosity continue to empower Texas Tech Law students, helping them achieve their goals and preparing them for success in the legal profession. If you are interested in making a gift from an IRA or exploring other giving opportunities, please get in touch with Karen Holden, Senior Director of Development, at 806.834.4910 or karen.holden@ttu.edu.





Students take part in Wellness Wednesday events, hosted regularly by the Student Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC), offering activities and resources to support both mental and physical well-being.



The Law School's Food Pantry provides essential support for students facing food insecurity, ensuring they have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Kayla Wimberley, Assistant Dean of Career and Professional Development, to offer workshops like "Look Like a Lawyer," which focuses on professional attire for interviews, and the Annual Etiquette Dinner, a fun and practical multi-course dinner in the Forum that teaches proper table etiquette with help from an inspiring (and often humorous) host. "These events really help our students feel more confident in professional settings," Assistant Dean Wimberley explains. "Whether it's an interview or a networking dinner, they pick up practical skills that help them stand out and make a great impression."

The Law School's food pantry has provided much-needed resources for students experiencing hunger since it first opened in 2019. The idea was sparked by Foundation Board Member Judge Mollee Westfall '94 and brought to life with the help of Board Members Paul Stafford '94 and Beto Cardenas '99, who worked alongside Associate Dean Chapman to establish the pantry, using donations from Board Members and others.

Located in a discreet area of the law building, the pantry can be

booked online anonymously. This allows students to visit quietly and pick up staple food items to tide them over when money is tight. The pantry includes healthy foods, some appealing snacks, and even baby formula and diapers for law student parents. It is restocked regularly so that no student goes hungry.

"The food pantry is an invaluable resource for our student body," says Niya Williams, President of the Student Bar Association. "While the food itself is helpful to so many students, the sense of community that it brings to the student body fosters the caring environment of Tech Law. It's a reminder that the school cares not only about our academic success but also about our overall well-being and cultivating a sense of belonging for all students."

The Law School also helps students with professional attire through its LawSuits program, which offers up to \$250 for purchasing a suit and alterations or up to \$150 for alterations alone. The goal is to help students look and feel their best as they prepare for job interviews, advocacy competitions, and their transition into the legal profession.

Professor Brie Sherwin started

this program in 2022 with funds contributed in her honor by alumnus Michael Cole '16, and she currently partners with Assistant Dean Wimberley and the Office of Career and Professional Development to run the program.

"This program is about more than just buying suits—it's about helping students feel confident," says Assistant Dean Wimberley. "We want them to walk into a courtroom, a job interview, or any professional setting feeling like they're ready to take on the world. Looking the part really does make a difference, and this program gives them that extra boost to make a great first impression and show they belong in the legal profession."

## Staying Grounded

The legal profession is stressful. The Law School recognizes that, to succeed, students need the ability to manage stress in healthy ways and avoid the common pitfalls that some lawyers fall into. Every experienced lawyer has seen too many classmates and colleagues struggle under the weight of the profession, which is why it's so important to help students build healthy coping mechanisms and resilience early on.

Assistant Dean Kayla Wimberley provides career counseling, helping students build confidence and skills to shine in professional settings.



Tech Law has devoted important staff time and resources to programming for wellness and resilience. Associate Dean Chapman leads these efforts as the Director of Wellness. She partners with the Student Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC) and others to organize a variety of initiatives, events, and resources focused on student well-being.

As Associate Dean Chapman relates, “The events organized by my office and SWAC on wellness and resilience include yoga sessions, mindfulness meditations, and panels and presentations to help raise awareness on a wide range of important issues. We even provide hot meals in the law building during final exams, so our stressed-out students remember to eat and eat healthy.”

In 2018, the Law School opened a Wellness Room. This space, created by the Office of Student Life, SWAC, and the Law Library, allows students to reserve quiet time to decompress and step back from the pressures of daily life at the Law School. Students use it to de-stress and recharge—with inspirational books, nature sounds, aromatherapy, yoga mats, and even a table-top Zen sand garden. It’s also used for the Law School’s in-building wellness support program, which brings in graduate student wellness advisors from the College of Education.

Guest speakers show students how wellness practices can benefit their future careers. For instance, to celebrate World Mental Health Day in October, SWAC and the Office for Student Life hosted a lunch discussion with Lubbock lawyer Ted Liggett ’94. Liggett shared his personal story about how meditation and spirituality have helped him navigate the stresses of a very successful legal career. His story resonated with students, offering a reminder that prioritizing mental health isn’t just a personal benefit—it’s a professional advantage.

## Success in the Classroom and on the Bar

The Law School has also focused on improving academic support to help students succeed in their classes and on the bar exam.

In 2019, the Law School started a new one-credit course for first-year students called “Introduction to the Study of Law” (ISL). This course takes place in the fall and gives students the skills they need to succeed in law school and the legal profession. Taught in small sections by a diverse group of faculty, the course teaches the fundamentals of law school success, such as briefing cases, outlining, taking final exams, time management, wellness, professionalism, and early career planning. ISL has been especially helpful for first-generation college graduates, offering them the extra support they need to adjust to the demands of law school and level the playing field.

Building on these efforts, the Law School took its academic support program to the next level in 2022, hiring Erica M. Lux ’21 as Director of the Office of Academic Success. She was later joined by Associate Director Jessica Aycock ’20 to provide even more services for students. The Office of Academic Success provides individual consultations, organizes regular workshops, and oversees the 1L tutor program. It also works closely with the Bar Success Program. “We’re all about meeting students where they are and helping them figure out what works best for them,” says Erica Lux. “Whether it’s tackling course material, managing their time better, or preparing

Professor Erica M. Lux, Director of the Office of Academic Success, engages with her Introduction to the Study of Law class during orientation, helping students feel welcomed and supported as they begin their law school journey.





Panelists Laura Pratt '09, Bridget Moreno Lopez '99, and the Honorable Wes Hendrix discuss the importance of professionalism and civility in the legal profession during the "Day of Civility" panel.



Professor Dwight McDonald mentors clinic students, helping them build the real-world skills needed for their future careers.

for the bar exam, we're here to support them every step of the way and make sure they feel ready to succeed."

The Bar Success Program, launched in 2020, complements these efforts by offering regular spring bar preparation workshops for 3L students, and a special mentoring and advising program during the spring and summer. As Professor Cassie Christopher, Director of Bar Success, explains, "The 3L workshops help demystify the bar exam and reduce stress, and the special advising program gives students extra chances to connect with faculty and staff one-on-one, so they get the support they need when they need it."

## Success in the Profession and in the Community

The Law School has students with many different backgrounds and a wide array of life experiences. It's a place where every student—without exception—can thrive and grow as a person and as a professional. In recent years, the Law School has worked especially hard to promote professionalism, civility, and respectful discussions in a world that often feels divided.

For instance, in fall 2022 the school hosted a "Day of Civility" panel to highlight the importance of respect and collegiality in the legal profession. The "Texas Lawyer's

Creed" was a major focus of the discussion among panelists, including the Honorable Wes Hendrix, Bridget Moreno Lopez '99, Laura Pratt '09, and Professor Dwight McDonald '93. Reflecting on the event, Professor McDonald remarked, "As lawyers, we set the tone for how disagreements are handled. Civility isn't just a professional obligation—it's a way to ensure the legal system works for everyone."

The Law School's many student organizations, working closely with the Office of Student Life, also foster an important sense of community and collaboration. Groups as various as the Raider Bar Association (for law students who graduated from a Texas Tech undergraduate program), the Energy Law Interest Group, the Environmental Law Association, the Black Law Students Association, the Organization of Women Law Students, and the Federalist Society offer opportunities for students to connect, organize events, and bring in dynamic speakers.

The Law School also emphasizes public service through its Pro Bono Program, a public service graduation requirement, and strong clinical programs, which nearly half of the graduating class participates in. These initiatives help students understand the value of serving the community and connect them with local residents in need. "Public service is at the core of who we

are," says Professor McDonald. "What we do in the clinics and through the Pro Bono Program isn't just about meeting a graduation requirement—it's about building a mindset of giving back that sticks with you long after you leave law school."

## The Next Generation of Tech Lawyers

The Law School knows it is shaping the next generation of Texas Tech Lawyers, and its goal is simple: to help every student succeed, both in law school and in their careers.

The plan is clear: continue refining the rigorous curriculum to push students to be their best, while providing the support they need to overcome the challenges they face along the way. As Dean Nowlin relates, "I believe we are doing it the right way. Building on a great tradition, we have come a long way in just a few years. But we are committed to doing even better. We are always determined to improve. We want each year to be bigger and better than the last. And we are grateful for the resources our alumni provide, which enable us to do even more each year."

Texas Tech Law is on an upward trajectory, and, with the continued help of its generous alumni and dedicated faculty and staff, its best years are yet to come.

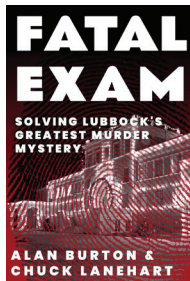
# ALUMNI NEWS

**We love celebrating our alumni!**

Share your updates and photos with us at the Office of Alumni Relations at [alumni.law@ttu.edu](mailto:alumni.law@ttu.edu).



Chuck Lanehart



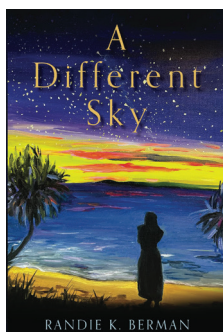
**1977:**

**Chuck Lanehart**, a partner at Chappell, Lanehart & Stangl in Lubbock, continues to engage readers with his historical writings. His latest book, co-authored with Alan Burton,

*Fatal Exam: Solving Lubbock's Greatest Murder Mystery*, was released by Texas Tech University Press. Lanehart's previous works include *Evolution of the Texas Plains*, *Tragedy and Triumph on the Texas Plains*, and *Marvels of the Texas Plains*, all published by The History Press. He also writes the "Caprock Chronicles" column for the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, sharing stories from the Llano Estacado's history.

**1982:**

Gov. Greg Abbott has reappointed **Robert G. "Bob" Wright II** to the OneStar Foundation. The OneStar Foundation offers technical assistance, education, information, and other support services to Texas' extensive volunteer community, aiming to enhance and strengthen the state's volunteerism and community service infrastructure. Bob is the founder and lead attorney of Wright.law in Dallas, as well as a professor of practice in social entrepreneurship at The University of Texas at Dallas.



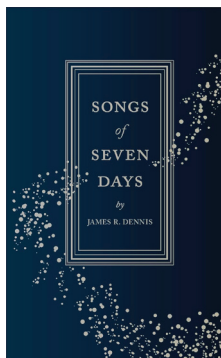
**1983:**

**Randie Kirschner** published her first novel, *A Different Sky*, under the pen name "Randie K. Berman" in late April 2024. From 1992 to 2012, Randie served as Senior Counsel and Vice President of Legal Affairs at Automatic Data Processing, Inc. She credits her experiences at Texas Tech with inspiring her passion for both law and writing.

**1984:**

**Randy Johnson** has been elected to serve as Judge of Collin County Court at Law No. 5. He has over 36 years of

experience litigating civil and criminal cases in the trial and appellate courts and is certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in the areas of Civil Trial Law, Personal Injury Trial Law, and Texas Workers' Compensation Law.



**1985:**

**James R. Dennis** has added an accolade to his literary career with a silver medal win at the 2024 Independent Book Publishers Awards for his poetry collection, *Songs of Seven Days*. This marks Dennis's third poetry collection, and he previously received the International Book Award for his second collection, *Listening Devices*. In addition to poetry, Dennis has co-authored a series of five mystery/adventure novels set on the Texas Gulf Coast.

**1992:**

Gov. Greg Abbott has appointed **Jim Bethke** to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission's Governing Board. The Commission supports counties in developing quality, cost-effective indigent defense systems. Jim is the executive director of the Bexar County Managed Assigned Counsel Office and has previously led the Texas Indigent Defense Commission, Harris County Justice Administration, Harris County Pretrial Services, and Lubbock Private Defender Office.

**1994:**

**Matt Schroeder** has been appointed as the office managing partner of Akerman LLP in Dallas. In his role, he will focus on strengthening the firm's relationships with civic and business leaders in the Dallas market, guiding the firm's strategic direction locally, and facilitating important local and regional connections. Matt's expertise lies in representing major insurance companies in litigation with significant exposure claims that pose an extreme risk of loss to the company. He also advises insurance companies on policy coverage issues, environmental regulatory compliance, and preventive measures to mitigate future risks.

**Darrell Armer**, who is the managing partner of the Dallas office, has been appointed as the Healthcare Practice Group



## TWO ALUMNI EARN STATEWIDE RECOGNITION WITH 2024 NANCY GARMS AWARD

Lubbock attorneys Michael “Mike” Calfin ’81 and Judge Mark Hocker ’98 were honored with the 2024 Nancy Garms Memorial Award at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting Bar Leaders Recognition Luncheon in June. This prestigious statewide recognition celebrates their outstanding commitment to law-focused education programs.

For over a decade, Calfin and Judge Hocker have been instrumental in educating Lubbock high school students about the law and the Constitution. In 2016, they co-founded the Law-Related Education Committee for the Lubbock Area Bar Association, a committee they continue to serve on to this day. The committee organizes impactful programming for young people in the Lubbock community.

Their signature programs, *Now You Are 18* and *Applying the Constitution to Our Lives*, bring the law to life for Lubbock area high school students. Topics range from the rights and responsibilities of



adulthood—such as voting, credit management, and jury duty—to real-world applications of constitutional principles like free speech and protections against unreasonable search and seizure.

Through their dedication, Calfin and Judge Hocker have not only fostered a deeper understanding of the legal system among students but have also elevated the role of lawyers in the community. Their work exemplifies the spirit of service celebrated by this award.

Leader of Gray Reed. He specializes in structuring complex commercial transactions for his clients to achieve their business goals and minimize risk within strict regulatory frameworks. Darrell is also Board Certified in Health Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.



Judge Robert Hofmann

### 1995:

**Judge Robert Hofmann** was sworn in as the president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He will serve a one-year term leading the nation’s oldest and largest judicial membership and education organization. Judge Hofmann presides over the 452nd Judicial District, which covers five counties in the Texas Hill Country. He is actively involved in various projects aimed at improving the child welfare system and frequently speaks on related topics.

### 1997:

Gov. Greg Abbott appointed **Brian S. Stagner** as a judge for the newly established Eighth Business Court Division in Fort Worth, created to streamline the resolution of complex commercial disputes in Texas. Brian, of counsel at Kelly Hart & Hallman LLP and a former partner, has over two decades of experience in state and federal complex business litigation.

### 1998:

Gov. Greg Abbott has appointed **Douglas A. Allen** as the new judge of Criminal District Court No. 3 in Tarrant County. Allen, who has been serving as an assistant U.S. attorney for the

Northern District of Texas Fort Worth Division, has devoted 20 years of his career to the U.S. Attorney’s office in Fort Worth. During his tenure, he was assigned to Iraq, where he served as a resident legal advisor in Baghdad and Mosul. Additionally, he was appointed as the acting U.S. Department of Justice Attaché and the Rule of Law Coordinator for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. After returning from Iraq, he served as counsel to the Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

**Melanie Sumrow** has released her latest book, *Girls Like Her*. Before focusing on her writing career, she practiced law for over sixteen years, with many of her cases involving children and teenagers.



### 1998:

Gov. Greg Abbott has reappointed **Keith C. Thompson** to the Manufactured Housing Board, which regulates the manufactured housing industry in Texas. Keith is the principal attorney at the Law Office of Keith C. Thompson, PC, where his practice focuses on transactions and litigation related to business, commercial, and real estate matters.

### 2003:

**Dylan O. Drummond** joined Langley & Banack in San Antonio as an equity shareholder. He is an accomplished civil appellate and commercial litigator who represents clients in complex civil disputes before state, federal, and administrative forums at trial and on appeal.

**2005:**

Gov. Greg Abbott has appointed **Brooke Paup** to the Environmental Flows Advisory Group. Brooke has served as Chair of the Texas Water Development Board since April 2021 and is a member of the State Bar of Texas, Symphony League, and a board member of the Wine and Food Foundation of Texas.



Brooke Paup

**2006:**

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed **Heidi Adams** as the Tenth Judicial District Attorney. Since 2015, Heidi has served as the Chief Deputy District Attorney in the Tenth Judicial District Attorney's Office in Tucumcari, where she was responsible for prosecuting both misdemeanor and felony cases. Before that, she spent four years as an assistant district attorney at the Potter County Attorney's Office in Amarillo, Texas.

**2007:**

**Vinh Ho** is the executive director of the Houston Bar Association. Previously, he served as the senior director of legal services at the Randall O. Sorrels Legal Clinics at South Texas College of Law and as executive director of Boat People SOS, Inc., a nonprofit serving the Vietnamese and Asian communities.

**2008:**

Gov. Greg Abbott has reappointed **Lindsay Kinzie** to the Crime Victims' Institute Advisory Council. The Council is responsible for conducting an in-depth analysis of the impact of crime on victims, close relatives of deceased victims, guardians of victims, and society. Lindsay serves as the legal program director for The Gatehouse in Grapevine and is also an associate judge for the cities of Southlake, Keller, and Colleyville.

**2011:**

The Williamson County Commissioners Court appointed **William Ward** to serve as the first County Court at Law No. 5 judge. Before his appointment, Will served as a Williamson County Assistant District Attorney for six years and a Brazos County Assistant District Attorney for four years. He has also served in the Marine Corps for nine years, earning the Bronze

Star twice, a Navy and Marine Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service, a Navy and Marine Achievement Medal for superior performance in Iraq, and a Combat Action Ribbon for his courageous performance of duties under fire in Iraq.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed **Quentin Ray** as Ninth Judicial District Attorney. He previously served as Deputy District Attorney for the Ninth Judicial District, supervising and managing the Portales branch of the office and prosecuting criminal cases.

**2012:**

**Allie J. Hallmark** has been promoted to partner at Hamilton Wingo in Dallas. With over a decade of litigation experience, Allie handles personal injury and wrongful death cases. Her expertise includes negligent construction and OSHA violations, dangerous premises and inadequate security, trucking accidents, negligent hiring and supervision, and medical malpractice.

**Tony Nguyen** has rejoined Fish & Richardson's Houston office as a principal in the litigation group, specializing in computer hardware and semiconductor processing. After 10 years with the firm, he left to travel with his wife. Now back at Fish, Tony focuses on high-stakes patent litigation before the U.S. International Trade Commission, U.S. District Courts, and the Patent Trial and Appeal Board.



Tony Nguyen

Gov. Greg Abbott has appointed **Benjamin Robertson** to the 226th Judicial District Court in Bexar County. Ben, who previously served as Judge of the 73rd Judicial District Court in Bexar County, is board certified in Oil, Gas, and Mineral Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. His extensive legal experience includes roles as a staff attorney for the Fourth Court of Appeals, a shareholder at Santoyo Wehmeyer P.C., and an energy litigation associate at Cox Smith Matthews Inc.

**2013:**

**Jamie Guidry** has joined the Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice group at Spencer Fane LLP in the firm's Houston office. Jamie represents clients in various types of litigation, including product liability, premises liability, personal injury defense, and labor and employment matters.

## THREE ALUMNI LEAD LAUNCH OF SBSB EASTHAM DALLAS OFFICE



David Henderson



Reid Hudgins



Rasha Zeyadeh

Three Texas Tech Law alumni—David Henderson '17, Reid Hudgins '14, and Rasha Zeyadeh '17—are among the founding partners of the newly launched Dallas office of Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea, BenMaier & Eastham PLLC (SBSB Eastham). This expansion marks the firm's third office in Texas and its seventh nationwide. Congratulations to David, Reid, and Rasha on this exciting new chapter!



**Nadia Haghghatian** has joined Winstead's Business Litigation Practice Group as a Shareholder in the Austin office. With a background in electrical engineering, Nadia specializes in patent litigation, representing clients in a wide range of technology areas, including software, telecommunications, electrical, mechanical, and semiconductor technologies. Her practice also includes handling patent and trade secret disputes in the energy sector, as well as matters related to trademark infringement.

**Denise Hernandez** has been named the 2024 Austinite of the Year. She serves as the presiding judge of County Court at Law No. 6 in Travis County, where she leads the Transformative Youth Justice program. This initiative focuses on youth diversion by providing holistic, community-centered support for young people involved in the justice system.

**Brian Sullivan** has joined Alliance Bank Central Texas as its Executive Vice President and Chief Legal



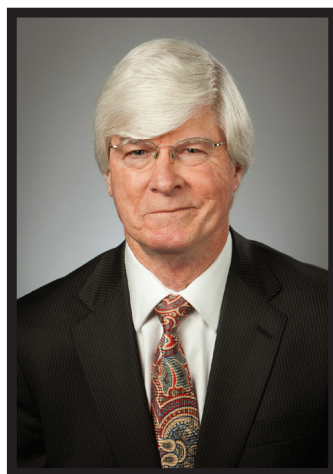
Brian Sullivan

Officer. Utilizing his litigation and prior in-house experience with the Texas Hotel and Lodging Association, Brian oversees all legal and regulatory matters for the bank's locations throughout Central Texas. He is based at the bank's headquarters in Waco and is actively involved in supporting Alliance Bank's expansion into new markets.

## 2014:

**Brett Epstein** has been promoted to partner at Jackson Walker's Fort Worth office. He specializes in the acquisition, disposition, development, and leasing of various types of real estate projects, including commercial, multifamily, mixed-use, and raw land assets.

**Elizabeth Hatch** joined Polsinelli as Counsel when the firm expanded its presence into Fort Worth. She focuses her practice on various transactional real estate and business matters. Elizabeth regularly represents buyers and sellers in all aspects of commercial real estate transactions, including purchase and sale agreements, title and survey issues, capital raises, and financing. Additionally, she manages real estate assets post-acquisition, handling leasing, property management, and loan modifications.



## TRAVIS DALE JONES OF LUBBOCK 1942-2022

After nearly three decades practicing law in Lubbock, Dale Jones brought his expertise and passion for the law to Texas Tech Law in 1999. He taught Legal Practice I and II for almost twenty years, inspiring students with his depth of knowledge, humor, and dedication. Known fondly as "The Silver Fox," Professor Jones took great pride in his students' achievements, finding true joy in watching them excel and grow in their legal careers. His warmth and mentorship left a lasting impression on all who knew him, creating a legacy that endures through the countless students he guided. Contributions can be made to the Professor Travis Dale Jones Endowed Scholarship to honor his memory and continue his impact, supporting future generations of law students.

## In Memoriam

Matthew G Aiken '05  
Tom Carl Akins '72  
Ronnie V. Baugh '88  
Steven James Bickings '08  
Phillip Black '77  
W C Bratcher '75  
Wyatt Lee Brooks '86  
Peggy Y. Butler '74  
Adrian Antonio Chavez '94  
George D. Cisneros '80  
William W. Clifton '77  
Jacque Collins '84  
James Edward Cook '76  
Minnie Curtis '83  
Russell Durwood Daves '76

G. Mike DeGeurin '72  
Janet Miller Denton '87  
Patricia Kay Dyer '00  
Tim Evans '69  
Benjamin Andrew Falk '19  
William P. Gibson '72  
Charles Michael Gray '80  
William T. Habern '72  
Steven Duncan Hale '80  
Mark C. Hall '73  
Marilyn Jewell Headrick '90  
Harrison Wayne Hill '09  
Sherry L. Hill '79  
Stephen A. Hines '73  
Anderson McClain Horne '01

Carie Dawn Jones '99  
Carolyn Snyder Jordan '77  
John W. Judge '75  
Charles L. Kessie '76  
Martha M. Klein '87  
Jack Clinton Looney '82  
John Francis Martin '97  
Neill Massello '84  
James T. McBride '93  
Frank Lee Melton '76  
Richard D. Mock '73  
Richard L. Moore '79  
Kelly L. O'Connor '74  
N. Ted Painter '74  
Michael F. Payne '77

Perry L. Peek '84  
Sonya Diane Phillips '06  
Gail Robertson '80  
Randall Lee Rogers '74  
John Ryan Schmidt '03  
James Lee Schutza '77  
John E. Simpson '74  
Alfredo A. Soza '92  
William A. Sproull '80  
Patricia B. Stone '81  
Paul K. Sweitzer '85  
Celeste I. Villarreal '05  
Belle K. Weninger '75  
Sonja W. Westerfield '88  
Billy R. Wolfe '80

# FACULTY UPDATES

Texas Tech law faculty are experts in their fields and passionate mentors dedicated to student success. Their recent achievements demonstrate leadership and innovation in legal education, as well as an unwavering commitment to preparing the next generation of legal professionals.



**ASHLEY  
ARRINGTON**

Head of Instruction;  
Associate Librarian of Law

Professor Arrington presented on NextGen Bar issues at several legal writing conferences, the Southwestern Association of Law Libraries (SWALL) Annual Meeting, and the Central States Law Schools Association Conference. She also shared her expertise on legal research pedagogy at the SWALL Annual Meeting and discussed legal research, writing, and library faculty partnerships during Thomson Reuters' Fall Faculty Webinar. In addition to her conference presentations, Professor Arrington taught multiple sessions at local high schools through the Lubbock Area Bar Association's "Now You're 18" program. She continues to serve as chair of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL)'s NextGen Bar Caucus and was recently appointed vice chair of AALL's Research Instruction Committee.



**JAMIE J. BAKER**

Associate Dean and Director  
of the Law Library; Dean's  
Distinguished Service  
Professor of Law

Associate Dean Baker is finalizing a multi-year space update in the Law Library to enhance the space for collaborative and quiet study. She is also leading a collection review as the Law Library modernizes its collection to meet the research and curricular needs of the Law School Community. Additionally, Associate Dean Baker co-teaches Academic Legal Writing

each fall and provides instruction to journal students through the comment writing process. She is also drafting pieces on surviving the legal academy, awakened leadership, and law library organizational structures.



**BRANDON  
BECK '12**

Assistant Professor of  
Law

Professor Beck had a busy year in 2023-2024.

His recent article, "The Federal War on Guns: A Story in Four-and-a-Half Acts," was published in the *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law*. A second article, co-authored with Professor Geoffrey Corn, was accepted by the *Texas A&M Law Review*. He also co-authored the Respondent's merits brief in *United States v. Rahimi* before the United States Supreme Court. Beyond his publications, Professor Beck spoke at Notre Dame Law School, Duke University School of Law, Vermont Law School, and others, addressing issues related to Constitutional law.



**DUSTIN B.  
BENHAM**

Charles P. Bubany  
Endowed Professor of  
Law

Professor Benham continues to study civil procedure and litigation transparency. His recent article, "Secrecy and Transparency in Substantive Due Process Litigation,"

was featured at the National Civil Justice Institute's annual Academic Symposium and was published in the *SMU Law Review*. Professor Benham received the Bernie Rushing, Jr. Faculty Research Award from Texas Tech University, a university-wide award for excellence in scholarly activity. He served as the 2024 Chair of the AALS Section on New Law Professors.



**GERRY W.  
BEYER**

Governor Preston E.  
Smith Regents Professor  
of Law

Professor Beyer continued his student-focused approach by implementing innovative teaching methods and serving as the advisor for student organizations, including the Black Law Student Association, *Estate Planning & Community Property Law Journal*, and the Estate and Property Law Society. Prof. Beyer was an invited presenter, either in-person or virtually, at approximately fifty programs for the nation's most prestigious estate planning conferences for attorneys and judges from coast to coast and Hawaii. Prof. Beyer's prolific scholarship included authoring dozens of articles and new editions of several treatises. The interface between Artificial Intelligence and Estate Planning is one of the most popular topics on which Prof. Beyer writes and speaks. The Uniform Law Commission appointed Prof. Beyer as the Reporter for the Study Committee on Probate and Non-Probate Transfer Integration, and he continues to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the *REPTL Reporter*.





## STEPHEN BLACK

Professor of Law

Professor Black authored "Taxing the Digital Economy," which will be published in the *Wake Forest Journal of Business* and *Intellectual Property Law*, and is finalizing a second article titled "Weaponizing AI." As a frequently invited speaker at major cybersecurity conferences, he discusses various topics, including making cybersecurity disclosures to the SEC, training information security teams, legal issues for current and prospective Chief Information Security Officers, and the role of lawyers in cybersecurity practice. Additionally, he conducted a week-long training session on global tax policies and trends for 143 members of the State Administration of Taxation of the People's Republic of China (China's IRS).



## BRYAN CAMP

George H. Mahon  
Professor of Law

During the past year, Professor Camp kept busy cheerfully inflicting trauma on 1Ls in Civil Procedure and on upper-class students in Federal Income Tax. He also continued his regular blogging of Tax Court cases, widely read by tax practitioners with too much time on their hands. He also published a couple of tax articles for academics. He also filed an Amicus Brief in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals to help that Court understand the intricacies of the tax statutes Congress passed back in the 1860s.



## WILLIAM R. CASTO

Paul Whitfield  
Horn Distinguished  
Professor

Professor Casto was honored with a Festschrift—a celebration marking his 50 years of groundbreaking scholarship—on March 24, 2023. The day featured four Zoom sessions celebrating Professor Casto's significant contributions to legal history, including his outstanding scholarship on Presidential Advising and the Alien Tort Claims Act. Distinguished scholars from across the country participated in discussions reflecting on his enduring influence. The celebration also featured an in-person luncheon at the Law School, during which Judge Patrick Higginbotham, Senior Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, delivered remarks honoring Professor Casto's remarkable legacy as a scholar, mentor, and teacher.



## CATHERINE MARTIN CHRISTOPHER

Dean's Distinguished  
Service Professor of  
Law and Director for Bar  
Success

Professor Christopher continues her advocacy for students' academic success and bar exam passage. She is a leader in the Association for Academic Support Educators, and her new article, "Defining the Discipline: Six Pillars for Academic Success Programming in Law Schools," co-authored with Professor Kris Franklin, will be published in the *Journal of Legal Education*. In addition, she continues to research, write, and present on legal developments in blockchain technology, with two new articles on Decentralized Autonomous

Organizations (DAOs) forthcoming in the *Michigan State Law Review* and the *NYU Journal of Law & Business*. Professor Christopher also hosted an academic conference at Texas Tech Law, bringing together law professors from across the central states region to share their research.



## GEOFFREY S. CORN

George R. Killam Jr.  
Chair of Criminal Law  
and Director of the  
Center for Military Law  
& Policy

This year, Professor Corn worked on two projects that focused on the military and legal aspects of the conflict in Gaza. This work included two visits to Israel and one day spent inside Gaza. He contributed to amicus briefs for the Supreme Court presidential immunity case and for the case against the Israeli Prime Minister and Minister of Defense at the International Criminal Court. His efforts to achieve clemency for the 113 African American U.S. Army soldiers convicted in 1917 for the Houston Mutiny resulted in the Secretary of the Army setting aside all convictions and awarding posthumous honorable discharges to all those veterans. Professor Corn published numerous editorials in national periodicals, authored several law review articles, and revised three books: *The Law in War: A Concise Overview*, *National Security Law, Practice and Policy*, and *National Security Law and the Constitution*. He continued to teach courses related to criminal and national security law while also developing two new courses: International Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure: Trial to Appeal.



### JAROD S. GONZALEZ

Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives and J. Hadley and Helen Edgar Professor of Law

Professor Gonzalez is actively engaged in producing teaching materials and conducting scholarship in the field of labor and employment law. In 2024, he co-authored the fourth edition of the casebook, *Employment Discrimination: A Context and Practice Casebook*, published by Carolina Academic Press, alongside Professor Sandra F. Sperino. This edition continues to emphasize both the theoretical and practical applications of the law of employment discrimination. Additionally, Professor Gonzalez presented a work-in-progress titled "Private Contractors, Security Clearance Determinations, and Employment Discrimination Law" at the Nineteenth Annual Colloquium on Scholarship in Employment and Labor Law on September 14, 2024, in San Diego, California, at the California Western School of Law.



### DELEITH DUKE GOSSETT

Jack F Maddox Professor of Law

Professor Gossett returned to Seville, Spain, with nearly a dozen students for a Maymester study abroad program. During this two-week period, she taught International and Comparative Family Law—an area that aligns with her scholarly focus—while students explored UNESCO World Heritage sites and other cultural landmarks. In addition to this program, Professor Gossett continues to teach in the nationally ranked Legal Practice program and also teaches Professional Responsibility. She was on faculty development leave during the Fall 2024 semester to advance her research.



### AMY HARDBERGER '05

George W. McCleskey Professor of Water Law and Director of the Center for Water Law and Policy

Professor Hardberger and her research fellows at the Center for Water Law and Policy continued their work on the National Science Foundation CASFER grant. One of the fellows served as the lead author for a law review article that is set for publication, and both graduating research fellows secured excellent subject-related jobs. Along with *Texas Tech Law Review*, Professor Hardberger co-hosted a symposium on West Texas water, which addressed critical topics such as regional water challenges, the reuse of produced water, and advancements in agricultural technology. Additionally, she published an article on the beneficial reuse of produced water and completed two book chapters that are currently in the editing phase. Professor Hardberger was also quoted on various water issues in state and national publications, including the *Texas Tribune*, *Texas Monthly*, and the Associated Press.



### SALLY M. HENRY

John E. Krahmer Banking and Commercial Endowed Professor of Law

Professor Henry updated her book *Ordin on Contesting Confirmation*, and published updates in the *Southern Methodist University Law Review* and the 2024 edition of *The Portable Bankruptcy Code and Rules* in the ABA's Business Law Section. She lectured nationwide, including programs for the American Bankruptcy Institute and the Texas Bankers Association. She presented on AI and Bankruptcy Law at the Southern District of Texas Bench and

Bar meeting and gave an appellate practice update to the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges. As president of the Federal Bar Association's bankruptcy section, Professor Henry helped develop a "student scholars" program and published a judicial profile in *The Federal Lawyer*. She also served on the Texas Bar Association's U.C.C. Committee, contributing potential changes to the U.C.C. as adopted in Texas. Her primary focus remains teaching. She coached the school's moot court team and devoted hours to training the editors and writers of "The Texas Bank Lawyer" and "The American Bank Lawyer."

### WENDY A. HUMPHREY '01

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Brock Professor of Law; Director of Assessment and Director of the Texas Tech University Pre-Law Academy



Professor Humphrey continues to shine in local, state, and national leadership roles. Among her leadership roles, she recently completed a four-year term on the national Legal Writing Institute (LWI) Board of Directors. She also remains very active in the State Bar of Texas, serving on the Local Bar Services Committee and the Law Focused Education Inc. Board of Directors. In addition, she serves as a Co-Chair of the Texas Bar Foundation Nominating Committee for District 16. In 2023, she was selected by Texas Tech University as its sole nominee for the prestigious Minnie Stevens Piper Professor Award, evidencing her status as a top professor at the university.





## VAUGHN E. JAMES

Judge Robert H. Bean  
Professor of Law

Over the past year, Professor James authored a second edition of his book, *Elder Law: Cases and Materials*, published by Esquire Books. He is working on another book, *Contemporary Issues in Law and Religion*, set to be published by the same publisher in 2025. Additionally, Professor James has contributed several articles to the Law Professors Non-Profit Blog, where he is a contributing editor. Moving beyond the shores of the United States, he has appeared as a guest on WICE, a radio station in the Caribbean, on two occasions. In his first appearance,

he discussed the legal implications of a dementia diagnosis, while in the second, he addressed social issues related to Caribbean music.



## WILLIAM R. KEFFER

Professor of Practice;  
Janet Scivally and  
David Copeland  
Endowed Professor of  
Energy Law; Director  
of Energy Law Lecture  
Series; Assistant Director of  
Bar Preparation Resources

Professor Keffer took significant steps to enhance and promote the Law School's Energy Law Program. He spoke at events for the National Association of Division Order Analysts,

the Permian Area Lease Title Analysts, and the West Texas Geological Society. He also led students on oil-and-gas field trips to Midland and North Lubbock and actively promoted the eleven energy law courses now available to students. Additionally, Professor Keffer oversaw the publication of the third issue of the *Journal of the Energy Law Practitioner* and initiated marketing efforts for his Oil & Gas Law I and II courses through Texas Tech's Continuing Education Department. He also guided his Legislative Process students on a class trip to Austin. In recognition of his efforts, Professor Keffer received the Spencer A. Wells Creativity in Teaching Award from the Texas Tech Parents Association.



## BARBARA LAURIAT

Associate Professor of Law  
Dean's Scholar in Intellectual Property

Joining the faculty in September 2023, Professor Lauriat brings a wealth of expertise and enthusiasm for teaching to Texas Tech Law. With a career that spans both sides of the Atlantic, Professor Lauriat has made significant

contributions to the study of copyright, patents, and trademarks, often adopting a comparative approach utilizing examples from different national legal systems and legal history that enriches the classroom experience.

Her journey began in England as a Career Development Fellow in Intellectual Property Law and a Fellow of St. Catherine's College at the University of Oxford, followed by teaching law at King's College London. Along the way, Professor Lauriat has held esteemed fellowships and visiting positions at some of the world's most

respected institutions, such as Harvard, Notre Dame, and NYU.

Professor Lauriat earned her A.A. from Mount Wachusett Community College, her B.A. and J.D. from Boston University, and her D.Phil. from the University of Oxford.

Her accomplishments are equally remarkable, including winning first prize in the prestigious International Association for the Advancement of Teaching and Research in Intellectual Property (ATRIP) Essay Competition and receiving the Seton Award from the Copyright Society of the U.S.A. Currently, she serves on the editorial board of *Arbitration International*, further solidifying her role as a leading voice in intellectual property law.

Admitted to practice law in Massachusetts, New Hampshire (inactive), and being called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2018, Professor Lauriat's credentials are as impressive as her enthusiasm for teaching. Her dynamic teaching style and dedication to student success make her an outstanding addition to the intellectual property curriculum at Texas Tech Law.



## MIRANDA RHYNE

Clinical Instructor  
Director of the Low-Income Taxpayer  
Clinic

Professor Rhyne joined Texas Tech Law in the summer of 2023 to lead the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, combining her passion for mentorship with her extensive expertise in tax law. As Clinic Director, Professor

recover refunds, and eliminate substantial debts. Professor Rhyne brings practical insights to the classroom and challenges students to consider a holistic approach—understanding that sometimes solutions go beyond legal strategies, requiring empathy and a grasp of the client's unique circumstances. Known for making complex tax issues accessible, she has built a reputation for clear, engaging communication that benefits both clients and students alike.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Professor Rhyne earned her J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law and an LL.M. in Taxation from SMU Dedman School of Law. Her approachable style and extensive expertise make her an inspiring mentor to future lawyers eager to make a difference.

Rhyne guides law students in representing clients with IRS disputes, providing a unique, hands-on opportunity to navigate the complexities of tax law while making a meaningful difference in clients' lives.

Before academia, Professor Rhyne worked as a tax attorney for a non-profit where she helped clients resolve IRS controversies,



## DWIGHT McDONALD '93

Clinical Instructor; Director  
of Community Engagement

Professor McDonald was elected Chairman of the High Plains Regional Public Defenders Office Board of Directors in December 2023. He serves as the Law School Liaison to the Criminal Justice Section of the State Bar of Texas, the Vice-Chair of the Local Bar Services Committee of the State Bar of Texas, and the Vice-Chair of the Law School Committee for the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. He was awarded the Judge Sam Williams Award from the State Bar of Texas, recognizing his commitment to fostering and maintaining the relationship between the Lubbock Area Bar Association and the State Bar of Texas. Professor McDonald is also the Immediate Past Chair of the Community Foundation of West Texas.



## PATRICK METZKE

Professor of Law and  
Director of Criminal  
Defense Clinics

During the last academic year, Professor

Metzke focused his scholarship on the potential expansion of the death penalty to non-homicide crimes. In his upcoming article, "The Continuing Unevolving Model of Decency: *Kennedy v. Louisiana* in Peril," which will be published in the Spring 2025 issue of American University Washington College of Law's *The Criminal Law Practitioner*, he examines the possibility that the High Court may abandon long-established precedent allowing states to execute individuals convicted of crimes not involving homicide, which would contradict the Court's holding in *Kennedy v. Louisiana*. Additionally, as the Director of the Criminal Clinic, he has been actively involved in hiring and training the new Chief Public Defender for the Caprock Public Defender Clinic, Joe Stephens. Stephens will take over the Caprock Clinic from our founding Chief, Donnie Yandell, who has been elected as the District Attorney for the 286th Judicial District.



## TERRI MORGESON '03

Clinical Instructor and  
Director of the Family  
Law Clinic

Professor Morgeson provided outstanding leadership as the Director of the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic from May 2014 to July 2023, embracing the complexities of tax law and finding fulfillment in her work. Last year, she was excited to transition into her new role as Director of the Family Law Clinic, a position that perfectly aligns with her passion for family law and providing pro bono legal assistance to the citizens of Lubbock County. Beyond her work in the clinics, Professor Morgeson serves on the board of the Lubbock Private Defenders Office and chairs the Region 16 Grievance Committee. She is also a dedicated volunteer at VITA, where she serves as a quality reviewer, providing tax assistance to low-income taxpayers. She also evaluates scholarship applications for the Hispanic Association of Women.





## RICHARD MURPHY

AT&T Professor of Law

Professor Murphy is currently revising Volumes 32 and 33 of *Federal Practice & Procedure*, focusing on the evolving field of administrative law. These volumes are particularly relevant given the shifting landscape sparked by significant Supreme Court cases like *Loper Bright*, which held that the forty-year-old Chevron doctrine violated the eighty-year-old Administrative Procedure Act. On the off chance you're interested, he has shared some insights on the Major Questions Doctrine in his essay titled "Democracy, Chevron Deference, and Major Question Anti-Deference," published in the *Georgia Law Review* (Volume 58, Page 987, 2024). He is also working on an article seeking to clarify, at least for himself, ultra vires review of agency actions. Professor Murphy also co-authors a quarterly column in the ABA's *Administrative Law & Regulatory News*, where he highlights key Supreme Court developments in administrative law.



## ALYSON OUTENREATH '00

Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Erwin and Elaine Davenport Endowed Professor of Law

Professor Outenreath has held various leadership roles within the State Bar of Texas Tax Section, including serving as a Council Member and Law School Representative, co-chair of the Law School Outreach and Scholarship Committee, and vice-chair of the Continuing Legal Education Committee. She was also a member of the Board of Directors for the Texas Federal Tax Institute and participated in planning committees for continuing legal education conferences focused on both tax and business law. Currently, Professor Outenreath continues to serve as the Associate Dean for Faculty Development at the Law School.



## JORGE A. RAMÍREZ

Walter and Anne Huffman Professor of Law

Professor Ramírez serves in various roles for local and international organizations. He is an editor for the *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* and is a Steering Committee Member of the ABA International Law Section's Contracts Committee. In 2024, he took the lead in coordinating and participating as Program Co-Chair and Moderator for a panel on Smart Contracts and the CISG at the ABA International Law Section Conference in Washington, D.C. He was awarded the Law School's "Distinguished Faculty Service Award" in the fall of 2024. Professor Ramírez also serves on the boards of Covenant Health System and Lubbock Methodist Hospital System. He is also under contract with West Publishing to update their NAFTA/USMCA coursebook while teaching the required Commercial Law course and electives in international law.



## JOE STEPHENS

Clinical Instructor  
Chief Public Defender of the Caprock  
Regional Public Defender Office and Clinic

Professor Stephens joined Texas Tech Law in July 2024, bringing remarkable experience, leadership, and dedication to public service to the Clinics. As Chief Public Defender, he will guide students in representing underserved communities, equipping

them with practical skills in criminal defense and an appreciation for the importance of providing high-quality representation to underserved communities.

Previously, Professor Stephens served as the Chief Public Defender for the Concho Valley PDO, the largest rural public defender office in Texas, which he built from the ground up. Covering 12 counties with offices in

San Angelo and Abilene, his leadership transformed indigent defense in rural areas across the state.

His commitment to public defense extends statewide. He sits on the oversight boards of two regional public defender offices, mentors emerging leaders in indigent defense, and serves on the State Bar of Texas Legal Services to the Poor in Criminal Matters Committee. He is also co-authoring the upcoming *Texas Criminal Jury Charges*.

Professor Stephens earned his J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law in 2010 and his bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University in 2004.

Known for his collaborative approach and deep passion for justice, Professor Stephens is poised to inspire the next generation of attorneys and help them build careers focused on advocacy, justice, and meaningful community impact.



## BRIAN SHANNON

Paul Whitfield  
Horn Distinguished  
Professor; Texas Tech  
University Faculty  
Athletics Representative;  
Adjunct Professor, Texas Tech

University Health Sciences Center School of  
Medicine Department of Psychiatry

Horn Distinguished Professor Brian Shannon is widely regarded as the state's leading expert on mental health law. In 2024, he was appointed to a third consecutive term as a Commissioner on the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health, where he chaired the Commission's Legislative Drafting Committee. In the fall of 2024, the 7th edition of his guidebook, *Texas Criminal Procedure and the Offender with Mental Illness: An Analysis and Guide*, was published. As with previous editions, this book project received support from a grant provided by the Texas Bar Foundation to NAMI-Texas, and Professor Shannon prepared the book pro bono. A free online version is available at:

<https://namitexas.org/resources/family-member-arrested/texas-criminal-procedure-and-the-offender-with-mental-illness/>.

Professor Shannon continues to serve as Texas Tech's NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). In that role, he also acts as the Big 12 Conference's representative on the board of directors for the national 1A FAR association.



## BRIE D. SHERWIN '01

Glenn D. West Endowed  
Research Professor  
of Law and Dean's  
Scholar and Director of  
Interdisciplinary Research

Professor Sherwin was named the Glenn D. West Endowed Research Professor of Law, Dean's Scholar, and Director for Interdisciplinary Research in 2023. She serves as a Texas Tech University (TTU) Faculty

Senator and has been appointed to the Advisory Board for *Rural Health Quarterly*, a national magazine published by the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC). She also serves as an Adjunct Professor of Public Health, teaching annually at TTUHSC and the TTU Graduate School. Her law review article, "Hocus Pocus: Modern-Day Manifestations of Witch Hunts," was published in the Fall 2023 issue of *The Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy*.



## ROBERT T. SHERWIN '01

Champions in  
Advocacy Endowed  
Professor of Law and  
Director of Advocacy  
Programs

Professor Sherwin's leadership of the Law School's advocacy program continues to shine; for the second-straight year (and fourth time in the last seven) Tech Law won the ABA Competitions Championship trophy as the top-ranked advocacy program in the country. In January, he was awarded the Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching Award—the most prestigious teaching distinction in the Texas Tech University System. He continues to serve as a co-faculty advisor to the Student Public Interest Initiative, which raised more than \$30,000 to support public interest internships. On a national level, he is a member of the Enactment Committee for the Uniform Law Commission's Uniform Public Expression Protection Act, which has now seen a total of nine states adopt the Act since 2020. Locally, Professor Sherwin serves as the President-Elect of the Lubbock Area Bar Association.



## NANCY SOONPAA

Professor of Law and Dean  
Richard B. Amandes Senior  
Scholar in Legal Practice

Professor Soonpaa served as Treasurer of the Section on Teaching Methods and Immediate Past Chair of the Section for New Law Professors for the Association of American Law Schools. She chaired the 2024 Workshop for New Law Teachers, marking a first for a non-decanal skills professor in this role. As the incoming North American representative to the Executive Committee of the International Negotiation Competition for Law Students, she delivered a successful master class to an audience ranging from Amazonian judges to government officials in Brazil. She is also on the Board of Directors of the Legal Writing Institute (LWI) and presented at various legal writing conferences, including SEALS and the LWI Biennial Conference. She has also coached teams for several negotiation competitions and recently began her term as Chair of Texas Tech's Teaching Academy Executive Council.



## LARRY SPAIN

Alvin R. Allison Professor of  
Law and Director of Clinical  
Programs and the Civil  
Practice Clinic

Professor Spain serves as the Chair of the Advisory Board for the Office of Dispute Resolution in Lubbock County and is also a member of the Law School Advisory Committee for the Texas Access to Justice Commission. In October, he presented a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) session on Mediation Case Law Updates. Additionally, Professor Spain dedicates his time to volunteering at Pro Bono Evening Clinics with Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, demonstrating his ongoing commitment to access to justice initiatives.





## KENNETH WILLIAMS

Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law

Professor Williams joined the faculty in August 2024 as the inaugural Fred Gray Endowed Chair for Civil Rights and Constitutional Law. A nationally recognized expert in constitutional and criminal law, Professor

Beyond academia, Professor Williams has successfully represented death row inmates in federal habeas proceedings, securing constitutional relief for multiple clients before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. In 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a writ of certiorari he prepared for a death-sentenced client.

Professor Williams has taught internationally, including as a Fulbright Specialist at the Federal University of Bahia in Brazil. He is a well-known media commentator on criminal law and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of San Francisco and a Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law.

As the first holder of the Fred Gray Endowed Chair, established in 2023 with a \$1 million donation from Mark and Becky Lanier to honor civil rights icon Fred Gray, Professor Williams will lead students in exploring the intersections of law, equality, and justice.

Williams brings a dynamic mix of scholarship, advocacy, and teaching excellence to the role.

Known for his work in death penalty jurisprudence, Professor Williams has authored *Most Deserving of Death?* and co-authored *Criminal Law: Concepts, Crimes, and Defenses*. His groundbreaking research, published in numerous law reviews, delves into capital punishment and policing, advancing critical conversations in constitutional law.



## PAUL K. STAFFORD '94

Visiting Assistant Professor of Law

Professor Stafford has brought his expertise to the Law School by teaching courses in Constitutional Law, Civil Rights Law, and Insurance Law, building on over two decades of experience as an adjunct professor in Trial Advocacy and Insurance Law. He also serves on the Board of Trustees for the Texas Tech Law School Foundation, where he chairs the Law Student Committee and supports initiatives like mentoring, the food pantry, and wellness programs. In addition to teaching, Professor Stafford is a distinguished litigator and co-founder of Stafford Moore, PLLC, specializing in complex commercial litigation and insurance law. He is Chair of the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors, a position he will hold until June 2025. He was also honored with the 2024 Distinguished Aggie Lawyer Award.



## VICKIE SUTTON

Associate Dean for Digital Learning and Graduate Education; Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor; Director of the Center for Biodefense, Law and Public Policy and Director of the Law and Science Certificate Program

Professor Sutton writes weekly articles for "unintended consequences," covering topics in law, science, technology, the environment, and Native American issues. Her upcoming piece in the *Idaho Law Review* examines the Supreme Court's decision in *Sackett v. EPA*, while her research on online learning's impact on bar passage rates influences discussions on legal education post-pandemic. As the Associate Dean for Digital Learning and Graduate Education, she leads workshops on using AI in legal education and has spoken at two major conferences: the Indigenous Knowledge/Approaches to Climate Change Workshop at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Online and Hybrid Learning in Law Schools: The Pandemic Experiment Conference at the University of Denver. She also co-taught an "Indigenous Justice" course at Duke Law School. Her documentary, *When Water Speaks*, was featured in three film festivals and was a semi-finalist at the Chicago Filmmaker Awards.



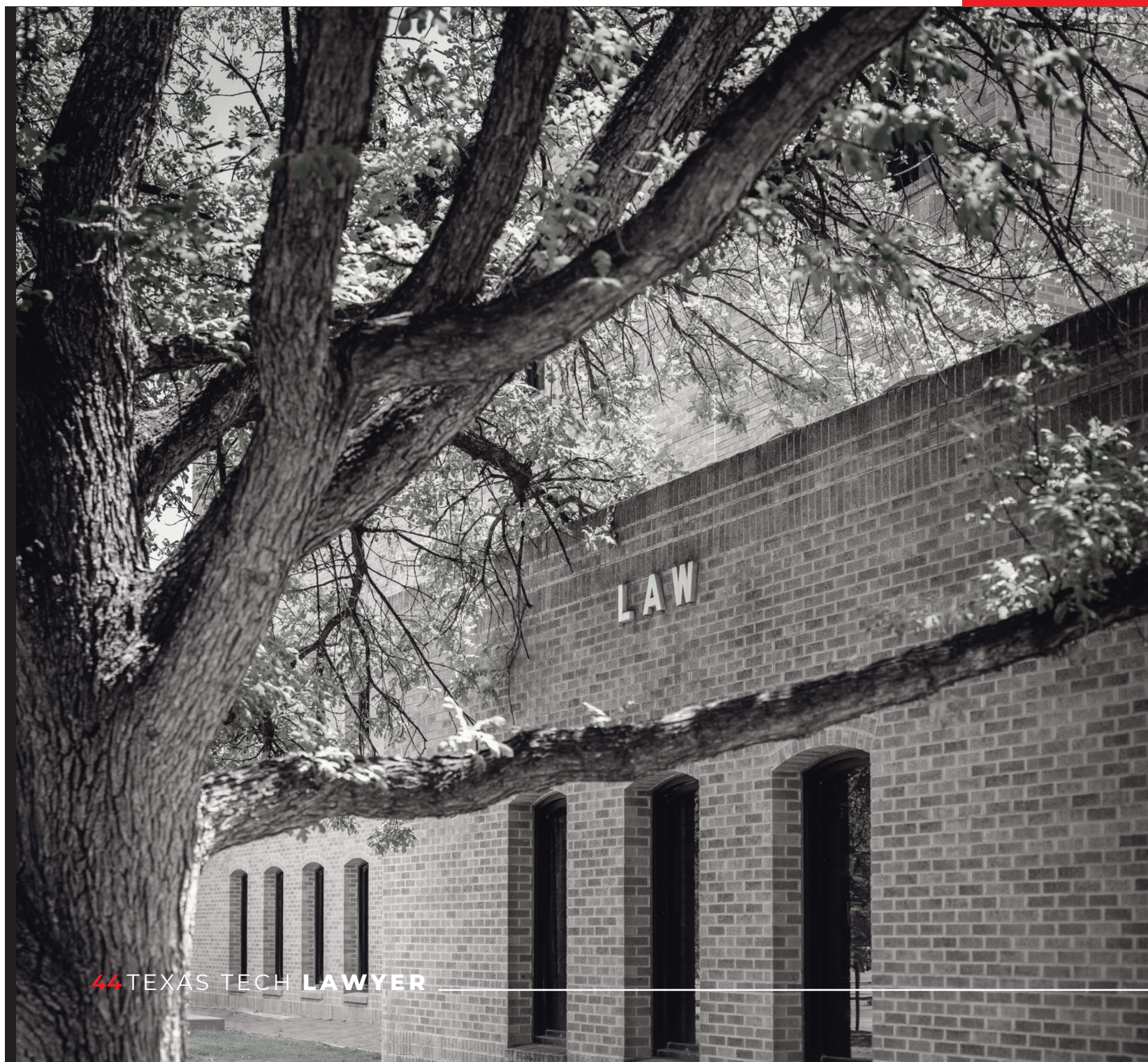
## JOHN WATTS

Charles B. "Tex" Thornton Professor of Law

Professor Watts' most recent publication, "The Confrontation Clause & State Action," appears in the *SMU Law Review*. He proposes a state action test as an alternative "primary purpose" to preserve the right of confrontation—the constitutionally mandated method for assessing the reliability of government witnesses—in cases where a potential for government abuse exists. The proposed "state action" test focuses on the government's role in the creation of out-of-court statements, thereby preventing attempts by the government to bypass live testimony and cross-examination at trial. The article illustrates how a focus on state action eliminates judicial discretion in mixed-motive cases, prevents the admission of out-of-court statements made to undercover government agents, and requires forensic experts working for the government to testify live and be subject to cross-examination. In short, it preserves the right of confrontation—the constitutionally mandated means of testing the reliability of government witnesses—in cases where there is a risk of government abuse.



# A STRONG FOUNDATION





The Texas Tech Law School Foundation endowment currently stands at an impressive \$48 million, with over \$30 million specifically designated for student scholarships. But it's not just about the numbers—it's about the **life-changing opportunities** it provides our students. A strong endowment opens doors to transformative educational experiences, empowering our students to become exceptional lawyers, leaders, and public servants.

We owe a huge **debt of gratitude** to the Texas Tech Law School Foundation Board for their unwavering dedication to strengthening and growing our endowment. Their commitment of time and expertise ensures that we can meet the evolving needs of our law school for years to come.

A big **thank you** is also owed to our amazing alumni and friends of the law school who have generously established new endowments. Your **gifts are a lasting legacy** that will shape the future of our students and the legal profession.

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Deborah Diane Reeves '99 Endowed Scholarship

Eliot '23 and Trace Hardee Endowed Scholarship

Emiko Coffey Endowed Scholarship

Janet Scivally Copeland '82 Legacy Endowed Scholarship<sup>+</sup>

Jerry '81 and Deborah Dixon Champions in Advocacy Endowed Scholarship\*

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The Fred Gray Endowed Chair in Civil Rights and Constitutional Law

The Honorable Kent Hance Scholarship

The Waggoner Blair Endowed Scholarship for the Study of Agricultural Law

*\*Established as part of the Thomas G. Hall '81 Champions in Advocacy scholarship match*

*+Established as part of the Thomas G. Hall '81 Distinguished Honoree scholarship match*

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## Hon. Gregory J. Fouratt '95

Las Cruces, NM

Greg has served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Las Cruces, New Mexico, since 2016, overseeing one of the nation's busiest border courts. He handles a wide range of civil cases, including civil rights, employment law, administrative appeals, and habeas corpus. From 2014 to 2016, Greg was the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, leading a 1,200-person department. Before that, from 1997 to 2014, Greg worked as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Mexico, specializing in organized crime and capital murder cases. From 2008 to 2010, he served as U.S. Attorney for New Mexico, reporting to the Deputy Attorney General of the U.S. Greg retired from the U.S. Air Force in 2012 as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Judge Advocate General Corps. He graduated first in his class in 1995, served on the Board of Barristers, and participated in national teams. In 2018, he received the Texas Tech University School of Law Distinguished Alumni Award.



## Karen M. Kennard '88

Austin, TX

Karen is a Co-Managing Shareholder at Greenberg Traurig's Austin office, focusing on government law, policy, and regulatory matters, with an emphasis on municipal law. She advises individuals, local governments, businesses, and non-profits on matters such as procurement, economic development, public transportation, land development, and government relations. Karen previously served as the City Attorney for Austin, Texas, and General Counsel for the Texas Municipal League. She delivered a powerful keynote address at the May 2024 Texas Tech Law School Commencement Ceremony.



## Matthew D. Orwig '84

Dallas, TX

Before retiring, Matt led the investigations practice at the Dallas office of Winston & Strawn. With over 30 years of experience, he handled complex civil and criminal cases, including high-profile matters involving money laundering, public corruption, securities fraud, insider trading, and healthcare fraud. He also focused on False Claims Act cases, internal corporate investigations, and litigation involving government agencies. Matt previously served in the U.S. Department of Justice as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and later as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, a presidential appointment. In 2007, he received the Texas Tech University School of Law Distinguished Alumni Award.



## Kevin P. Parker '86

Houston, TX

Kevin is the Managing Attorney of the Issues and Appeals Section at The Lanier Law Firm, where he focuses on ensuring cases will stand the test of an appeal. Board Certified in Civil Appellate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Kevin has handled more than twenty appellate cases. He played a key role in the firm's Pinnacle Hip Implant bellwether trials, contributing to \$1 billion combined jury verdicts, including a \$502 million jury verdict in 2016. In 2020, Kevin led an appellate team that preserved a \$2.11 billion judgment against Johnson & Johnson for talcum powder linked to ovarian cancer. Kevin is licensed to practice in Texas state and federal courts, the U.S. Courts of Appeal for the Second, Fifth, Eighth, and Tenth Circuits, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

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**T**om Hall '81 has been a passionate advocate for Texas Tech Law and its students throughout his impressive 30-year legal career. A dedicated believer in giving back, Tom has served as President of the Texas Tech Law School Foundation, taught at the Law School, and established scholarships to make a difference in the lives of young lawyers. His outstanding contributions to the Law School were recognized with the Distinguished Service Award in 2008.

In a recent show of leadership, Tom generously pledged \$125,000 in matching funds to establish scholarships for students dedicated to advocacy. Thanks to his generosity and alumni support, the effort raised an incredible \$250,000, creating life-changing opportunities for the next generation of advocates.



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## **DEBORAH DIANE REEVES '99: A LEGACY OF SERVICE**

**T**he Law School is proud to continue the inspiring legacy of Deborah Diane Reeves '99, who passed away in 2018, ensuring her commitment to helping others lives on through the scholarship that bears her name.

As a former briefing attorney for Judge Phil Johnson '75 and partner at Lovell, Lovell, Isern & Farabough in Amarillo, Deborah's remarkable journey is celebrated through a testamentary gift that has established a scholarship to support students with the greatest financial need. Her unwavering commitment to serving others continues to inspire, ensuring that future Texas Tech law students have the vital support they need to chase their dreams.



Dustin & Bonnie<sup>3</sup> Cordell  
 Lizette Cortez-Alfaro '15 & Anthony Alfaro  
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 Joshua Hernandez  
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 Sheldon Hodgson  
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## WILLIAM A. BROOKSHIRE FOUNDATION: EMPOWERING STUDENTS, HONORING VETERANS

**T**he William A. Brookshire Foundation has made a \$1.25 million gift to Texas Tech Law to establish the Law School's Veterans Clinic—the first pro bono legal clinic in West Texas dedicated exclusively to serving veterans.

This extraordinary gift expands our clinical offerings, giving more students hands-on training opportunities while addressing the pressing legal needs of our nation's heroes. The clinic will provide free legal assistance to veterans referred from VA hospitals in Lubbock and Amarillo, addressing benefits claims, discharge reclassification, and other civil matters.

The Brookshire Foundation's donation underscores their commitment to empowering those who work hard and serve others—a lasting legacy for William A. Brookshire and an incredible investment in Texas Tech Law's mission to prepare practice-ready lawyers who make a difference.

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# MARK '84 AND BECKY LANIER: HONORING FRED GRAY



**M**ark and Becky Lanier continue to shape the future of Texas Tech Law with their generous \$1 million gift establishing the Fred Gray Endowed Chair in Civil Rights and Constitutional Law. This is the first academic chair created in Fred Gray's honor, preserving his extraordinary legacy through impactful education and scholarship.

The Laniers' profound impact on the Law School includes their transformative gift to establish the Mark and Becky Lanier Professional Development Center and now the Fred Gray Endowed Chair. We are deeply grateful for their vision and unwavering dedication to our Law School.

Ken '75 & Carol Fields  
David '02 & Jennifer Glass  
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*These special gifts were made to honor the lives of those who touched our hearts and will always be remembered.*

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**Carolyn J. Watts**

**Robert A. Weninger, Ph.D.**

**The Honorable Rebecca D. Westfall '76**

**Tom H. Whiteside '76**

**Ellen M. Wilson '09**

**Kelln A. Zimmer '08**

## 2024 Texas Tech Law Alumni Reception







# Save the Date

## TEXAS TECH LAW ALUMNI RECEPTION

at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting

Mix, mingle, and make memories! Reconnect with old classmates, meet new friends, and celebrate our **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARD** recipients over great food and drinks.

Mark your calendar, spread the word, and get ready for a fantastic time. **WE'LL SEE YOU THERE!**

**Thursday, June 19, 2025**

JW Marriott Hill Country Resort | San Antonio

5:30 – 7:00 PM



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