



TEXAS YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2023 – 2024

*“No one can whistle a symphony.  
It takes an orchestra to play it.”*

~H.E. Luccock

.....

The Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) consists of over 40,000 Texas lawyers who are licensed twelve years or less at the beginning of each fiscal year beginning June 1, irrespective of age. TYLA is a division of the State Bar of Texas (SBOT). TYLA is the “public service arm” of the SBOT. The volunteer TYLA Executive Committee and TYLA Board of Directors assists the SBOT in furthering its mission of facilitating the administration of justice, fostering respect for rule of the law and, most prominently, advancing the role of lawyers in serving the public. Every year, TYLA reviews, creates, and publishes projects and develops, organizes, and shares programming for lawyers and the public to improve the quality of legal services and the functioning of the legal system.

.....



[www.tyla.org](http://www.tyla.org)

**Facebook: Texas Young Lawyers Association**



**Instagram: @texyounglawyers**



**Twitter: @TexYoungLawyers**



**LinkedIn: Texas Young Lawyers Association**



**YouTube: @texasyounglawyersassociation**





# LETTER FROM PRESIDENT AND CHAIR

We are thrilled as the president and chair of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA), the public service arm of the State Bar of Texas, to share some of the remarkable accomplishments that TYLA has achieved during the 2023-2024 bar year. With over 40,000 members, TYLA plays a crucial role in supporting the mission of the State Bar of Texas and empowering and supporting young lawyers across our great state.

Our vision for the 2023-2024 bar year centered around the quote, “No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it.” TYLA is an incredible team of diverse individuals each with a specific part to play unique to them. Just as an orchestra requires every instrument to play its part to create a beautiful melody, our organization requires every member to contribute. We must continue to foster a culture of open communication, meaningful connections, and strong community. We must be willing to listen to each other, share our ideas, and work together to find the best solutions to the challenges we face.


To that end our board of directors dedicated over 5,000 volunteer hours to its purposes of fostering respect for the law, facilitating the administration of justice, and advancing the role of the legal profession in serving lawyers and the public through its various initiatives and projects. Here are a few key focus areas from this year:

- **Reconnecting With Our Local Affiliates.** We recognize the importance of strong local bar associations in supporting young lawyers. TYLA actively sought to reconnect with and strengthen ties to local bar associations across Texas, fostering a sense of community and developing relationships for future growth and support.
- **Expanding and Updating Legal Resources.** TYLA organizes programming and maintains projects and resources on a full range of legal topics, skills, or practice issues that lawyers could find helpful in their practices. This year, TYLA developed, updated, or translated almost 30 different legal resource pamphlets to assist lawyers in their practices. TYLA now has over 110 projects available, free of charge, on its website to improve the quality of legal services and to educate the public about its legal rights.
- **CLE, Events, and Community Outreach.** Using past TYLA projects, TYLA updated discussion guides, organized programming, and hosted CLE events for young lawyers to use in their practices or with their local bar associations. Additionally, through local community outreach programs, we strived to promote understanding of the rule of law and its importance in society.

In closing, with our combined TYLA service equalling almost two decades, the emotions of our departure are hard to balance. This letter simply cannot be long enough to express our gratitude for every good thing we have experienced, accomplished, or learned over the past several years. We want to express our deepest gratitude to the board members of TYLA, the staff, and our dedicated volunteers who have made these achievements possible. Their passion, commitment, and unwavering support have been instrumental in driving TYLA’s success over the past year.

But the important work of TYLA that supports our newly licensed lawyers does not end with us. Even as our year ends, we encourage the next generation of new lawyers to follow our lead in continuing to say “yes” to playing their part in service to our profession.

Thank you,

  
Laura Pratt  
President 2023–2024  
Texas Young Lawyers Association

  
Ashley Hymel  
Chair 2023–2024  
Texas Young Lawyers Association



# BOARD *of* DIRECTORS

The TYLA Board of Directors is made up of an executive committee, directors, representatives, and liaisons.

The executive committee consists of the president, president-elect, chair, chair-elect, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and immediate past president. The president-elect is elected by TYLA membership and the other officers are elected by the board of directors, and each elected officer serves a one-year term. Each member of the executive committee acts as an adviser to at least one TYLA committee.

The 34 directors represent 21 districts from around the state and serve as liaisons to the local affiliates in their respective districts. Directors are nominated and elected by the TYLA members in their respective districts, and each elected director serves a two-year term. Certain directors serve as chairs or co-chairs of the various TYLA committees, and all directors serve on at least one TYLA committee.

Representatives include two American Bar Association Young Lawyer Division representatives and a member of the Access to Justice Commission.

Liaisons include a Supreme Court of Texas justice, a law school dean, and a law school student.

## OFFICERS



**Laura Pratt**  
**President**  
Sprouse Shrader Smith PLLC



**Ashley Hymel**  
**Chair**  
Hymel Law LLC



**Michael Hanson**  
**Vice President**  
Fort Bend County District  
Attorney's Office



**Aamir Siddik**  
**Secretary**  
Vinson & Elkins, LLP



**Tiffany Sheppard**  
**Treasurer**  
The Mathis Law Firm, PLLC



**Hisham Masri**  
**President-elect**  
Flowsolve Corporation



**Courtney M. White**  
**Chair-elect**  
City of Amarillo-City Attorney's  
Office



**Michael J. Ritter**  
**Immediate Past President**  
Schmoyer Reinhard LLP



**Timothy Adams**  
**District 6, Place 6**  
The Law Office of Timothy Adams,  
PLLC



**Anietie Akpan**  
**District 6, Place 5**



**Ryan R. Bauerle**  
**District 4**  
Goranson Bain Ausley, PLLC



**William Biggers**  
**District 5, Place 3**  
The Biggers Law Firm, P.C.



**Garrett S. Brawley**  
**At-Large Director, Large City**  
Beck Redden LLP



**Ashton Barrineau Butcher**  
**District 5, Place 4**  
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld  
LLP



**Jenna Castleman**  
**District 18, Place 1**  
Castleman & Associates, P.C.



**Garrett Coutts**  
**District 3**  
Brady & Hamilton, LLP



**Jenée Durán**  
**District 14**  
Blanco Ordonez Mata & Wechsler,  
P.C.



**Tyler Granger**  
**District 2**  
West, Webb, Allbritton & Gentry



**Michael Hanson**  
**District 21**  
Fort Bend County District  
Attorney's Office

## DIRECTORS



**Claire Harbert**  
**District 9**  
Naman Howell Smith & Lee



**Sushant Mohan**  
**District 6, Place 4**  
Bakerhostetler, LLP



**Steven M. Traeger**  
**At-Large Director, Large City**  
Traeger & Ricks, PLLC



**Guillermo M. Hernández III**  
**District 18, Place 2**  
Rivera Hernandez Campos, PLLC



**Chase Newsom**  
**District 5, Place 1**  
Brooker Law, PLLC



**Courtney M. White**  
**District 16**  
City Of Amarillo-City Attorney's office



**Kenneth Ferguson**  
**District 11**  
Ferguson Firm



**Katya Nikitina**  
**District 6, Place 3**  
Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr, P.C.



**Jackson Willingham**  
**District 17**  
Lynch, Chappell & Alsop



**Rachael K. Jones**  
**District 8, Place 1**



**Nadine Ona**  
**District 7**  
Germer PLLC



**Armin Salek**  
**ABA YLD District 25**  
**Representative**  
Youth Justice Alliance



**Rosalyn Lark**  
**District 10, Place 2**  
The Lark Law Firm, PLLC



**Julia Peebles**  
**District 6, Place 2**  
Haynes and Boone, LLP



**DAVID R. HAGAN**  
**ABA YLD District 26**  
**Representative**  
Attorney At Law



**Jenna Malsbary**  
**District 8, Place 2**  
Travis County Juvenile Probation Department



**Micah Satterwhite**  
**District 1**  
Sloan Law Firm, PC



**MARSHALL SALES**  
**Access to Justice**  
**Representative**  
Hennan Culp PLLC



**Matthew S. Manning**  
**District 12**  
Webb Cason, P.C.



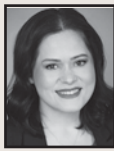
**Hon. Lauren Renee Sepúlveda**  
**At-Large Director, Small City**  
McAllen Municipal Court



**Justice Jeff Boyd**  
**Supreme Court Liaison**  
Supreme Court of Texas



**Alyson A. Martinez**  
**District 19**  
Webb & Zapata County CSCD



**Tiffany Sheppard**  
**District 15**  
The Mathis Law Firm, PLLC



**Jack Wade Nowlin**  
**Law School Liaison**  
Dean and W. Frank Newton  
Professor of Law  
Texas Tech University School of Law



**Hisham Masri**  
**District 5, Place 2**  
Flowserve Corporation



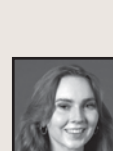
**Russell Shrauner**  
**At-Large Director, Small City**  
The Carlson Law Firm



**Christy Mazurek**  
**District 10, Place 1**  
Maz Law Firm, PLLC



**Austin W. Stevenson**  
**District 13**  
City of McAllen



**Caitlin McDuffee**  
**Law Student Liaison**  
South Texas College of Law

## REPRESENTATIVES

## LIAISONS



# TYLA PROJECTS

## BUILDING BLOCKS FOR NEW ADULTS

TYLA's signature project, *Adulthood*, closes the legal education gap on growing up.

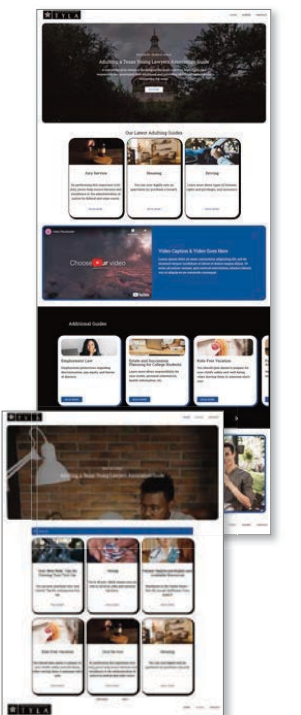
WRITTEN BY ERIC GOUTUGUA

The Texas Young Lawyers Association's *Adulthood* website, [adulthood.tyla.org](https://adulthood.tyla.org/), is live online. Backed by funding from the Texas Bar Foundation, the signature project of TYLA President Laura Pratt strives to help attorneys, educators, and newly minted adults navigate the changing application of law. *Adulthood* features short-form videos in which members of the TYLA Public Service Committee speak on an array of legal topics such as jury duty and voting. The project may fill in the gaps of knowledge between understanding basic legal structures and how they affect everyday life, Pratt said.

"The harsh reality is that many emerging adults are ill-equipped to deal with the realities of adulthood," Pratt said.

*Adulthood*'s genesis began in Lubbock, where Pratt and volunteers from the Lubbock Area Bar Association spoke to high schoolers about common legal rights and responsibilities. Many students had a foundational understanding of the nation's legal machinations, she said. But few understood where to turn for answers to their legal questions. Motivated to teach young people beyond the time constraints of a visit in class, Pratt made it the focus of her project as president of TYLA.

Pratt enlisted TYLA directors Anietie Akpan and Ashton Butcher and the TYLA Public Service Committee, along with TYLA and State Bar of Texas staff, to create short-form, social media-friendly videos for the *Adulthood* website. The series provides new adults with a snapshot of the how-tos in several areas, including consumer protection, credit, contracts,



ABOVE AND NEXT PAGE: Photos courtesy of the Texas Young Lawyers Association

## Adulthood

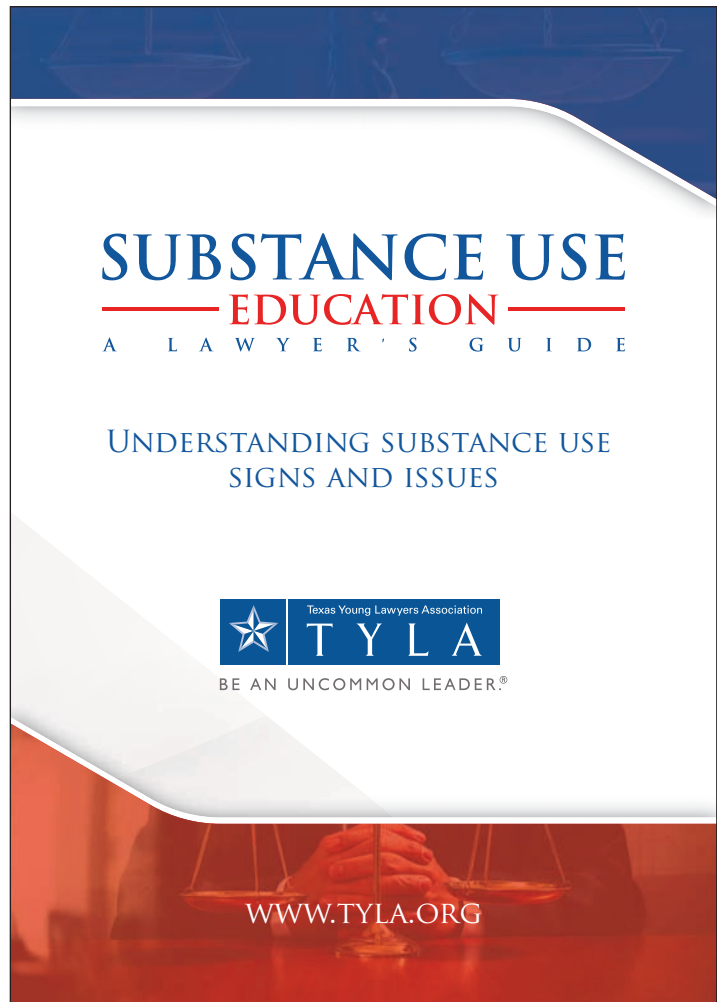
Available at <https://adulthood.tyla.org/>, *Adulthood*, a project sponsored by the Texas Bar Foundation, is an engaging and comprehensive website and video project centered on the theme of “adulthood” through a legal lens. This project focused on the most prevalent legal rights and responsibilities associated with adulthood while equipping individuals with additional resources to navigate these matters effectively. *Adulthood* ambitiously covers a spectrum of crucial legal topics, including voting, jury duty, driving, criminal charges, contracts, credit, consumer protection, marriage, divorce, children, housing, employment, health care, and military service. In essence, TYLA's *Adulthood* project is designed to empower individuals with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate the legal complexities of adulthood confidently and responsibly.



## Substance Use Education:

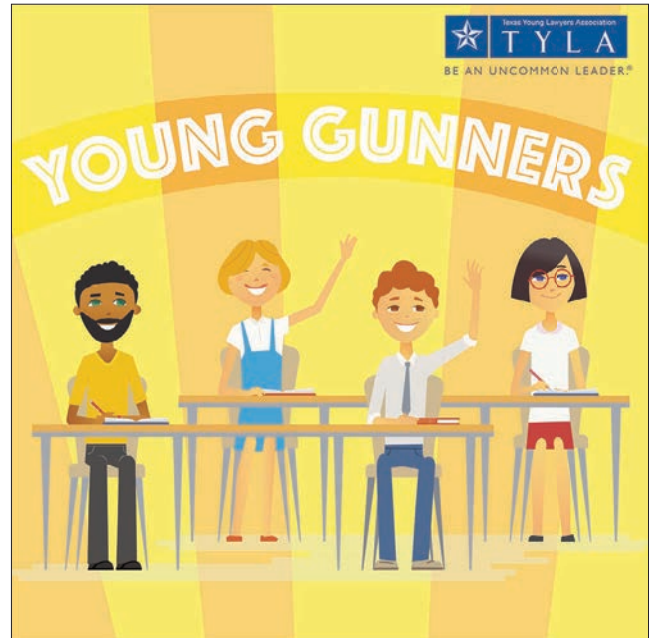
### A Lawyer's Guide to Understanding Substance Use Signs and Issues

Available at <https://tyla.org/resource/lawyers-guide-to-substance-use/>, this TYLA project focused on educating lawyers about substance use in a trauma-informed way. About 10 years ago, TYLA developed a previous project "Battling Substance Abuse for Everyone" or BSAFE, but this project was not originally written with legal professionals as the intended audience and was not drafted with trauma sensitivity. Thus, TYLA embarked on a comprehensive redesign and rewrite of the project. TYLA also filmed additional videos to broaden the scope of information. The result was an updated comprehensive project that provided educational videos and a booklet brimming with invaluable guidance regarding substance use issues and ways to recognize the signs of someone battling substance use issues. The electronic publication resource is available on the TYLA website.



## Young Gunners Podcast: Professionalism and the Texas Lawyers Creed

The “Professionalism and the Texas Lawyers Creed” miniseries of the Young Gunners podcast, which is inspired by a San Antonio Young Lawyers Association project of the same name, consists of interviews and conversations with attorneys sharing intriguing and insightful stories about professionalism in the practice of law targeted toward young lawyers. Episodes include “The History Behind the Texas Lawyers Creed,” “Promoting Ethics and Professionalism,” and “What Would Ted Lasso Do?”



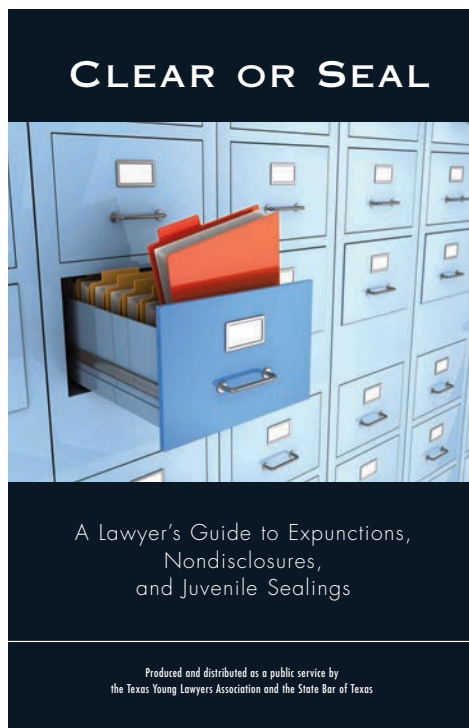
## Ten Minute Mentor Podcast

The Ten Minute Mentor (TMM) podcast, which was developed from a former video project of TYLA, provides short, practical, and helpful information from leading lawyers, designed especially for new lawyers that may not have strong mentors. New attorneys often lack practical experience despite their legal education. This podcast is dedicated to practical tips and offers new attorneys valuable guidance on navigating the complexities of the legal profession, including advice on legal research, writing, client communication, courtroom etiquette, and more.



## PAMPHLETS

TYLA spent considerable effort this year to develop, update, or translate over 30 different legal resource pamphlets to assist lawyers in their practices and improve the quality of legal services. All of these resources are available at [www.tyla.org](http://www.tyla.org). A few of these pamphlets are highlighted below:



### Clear or Seal: A Lawyer's Guide to Expunctions, Nondisclosures, and Juvenile Sealings

TYLA embarked on a comprehensive rewrite of this legal pamphlet focused on expunctions, nondisclosures, and juvenile sealings under Texas law. Though the project's overall design remained straightforward, the content underwent substantial refinement, demanding extensive research, and expertise. TYLA went the extra mile by incorporating links to sample pleadings and orders essential for executing various legal proceedings.

### Health Care Patients' Legal Rights and Responsibilities

TYLA developed this new guide on patient rights and responsibilities, including information on privacy laws and billing/collections practices in health care.



Whether you just turned another year older and are due for a physical, you are experiencing illness or an injury, or you're just trying to figure out the whole "health insurance" thing, healthcare can be confusing, overwhelming, or intimidating. While this resource can't help you overcome the anxiety of talking to a physician's receptionist over the phone or magically make your insurance policy easily understandable, it will help you navigate challenges and legal aspects of obtaining healthcare and help prepare you to take charge of your care and the care of those who depend on you.

#### I. The Right to Control Your Treatment

To begin, one of the ethical foundations of medicine is your right to autonomy, which takes different forms. Within the healthcare system, you have the right to:

##### A. Refuse treatment

As a patient, you have the right to refuse treatment. Patients can refuse treatment even in critical situations, where refusal of life-preserving medical treatment could result in grievous bodily harm or death.<sup>1</sup>

##### B. Make informed consent

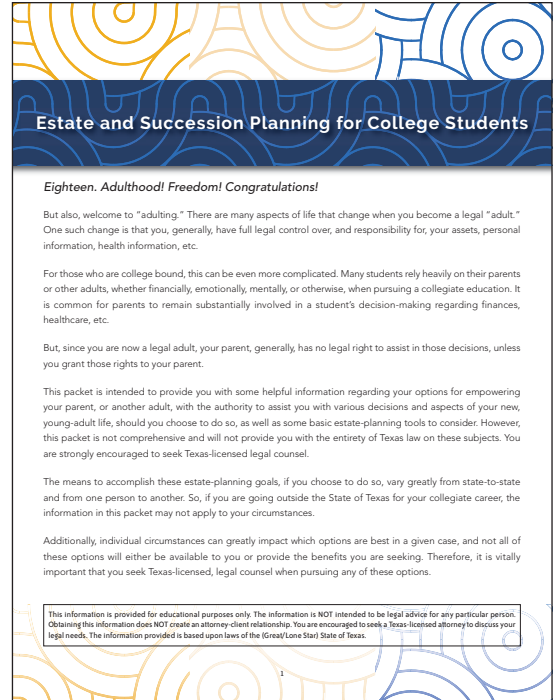
In conjunction with the above, you have the right to make informed decisions about your healthcare. It is your physician's duty to make sure that he/she explains, and that you understand, (1) the nature of the procedure, (2) the risks and benefits of the procedure, (3) reasonable alternatives, and (4) the risks and benefits of alternatives.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See 25 Tex. Admin. Code § 33.20; 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 353.202; 25 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.42; 26 Tex. Admin. Code § 511.63.

<sup>2</sup> Olejarczyk, J.F., Young M. Patient Rights and Ethics, available at <https://www.nds.inl.nh.gov/books/NBK538279/>.

## Estate and Succession Planning for College Students

TYLA developed this new guide on the recommended estate and succession planning documents for a young adult, including power of attorneys, HIPAA forms, directives, and more.



### Estate and Succession Planning for College Students

*Eighteen. Adulthood! Freedom! Congratulations!*

But also, welcome to "adulthood." There are many aspects of life that change when you become a legal "adult." One such change is that you, generally, have full legal control over, and responsibility for, your assets, personal information, health information, etc.

For those who are college bound, this can be even more complicated. Many students rely heavily on their parents or other adults, whether financially, emotionally, mentally, or otherwise, when pursuing a collegiate education. It is common for parents to remain substantially involved in a student's decision-making regarding finances, healthcare, etc.

But, since you are now a legal adult, your parent, generally, has no legal right to assist in those decisions, unless you grant those rights to your parent.

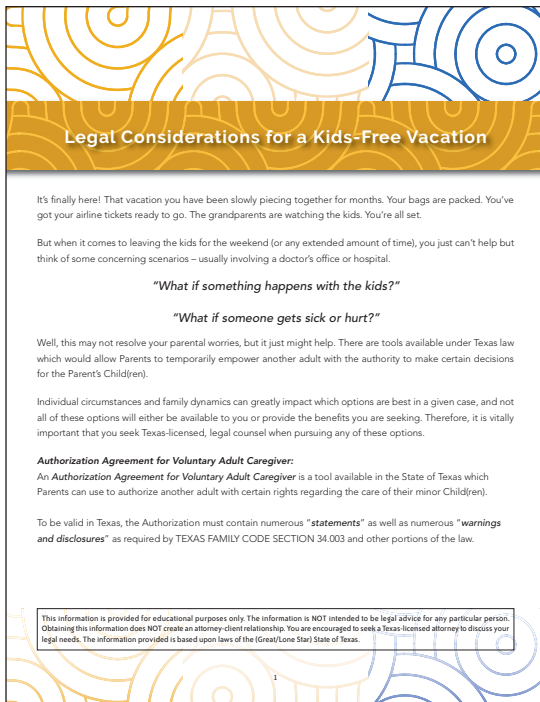
This packet is intended to provide you with some helpful information regarding your options for empowering your parent, or another adult, with the authority to assist you with various decisions and aspects of your new, young-adult life, should you choose to do so, as well as some basic estate-planning tools to consider. However, this packet is not comprehensive and will not provide you with the entirety of Texas law on these subjects. You are strongly encouraged to seek Texas-licensed legal counsel.

The means to accomplish these estate-planning goals, if you choose to do so, vary greatly from state-to-state and from one person to another. So, if you are going outside the State of Texas for your collegiate career, the information in this packet may not apply to your circumstances.

Additionally, individual circumstances can greatly impact which options are best in a given case, and not all of these options will either be available to you or provide the benefits you are seeking. Therefore, it is vitally important that you seek Texas-licensed, legal counsel when pursuing any of these options.

This information is provided for educational purposes only. The information is NOT intended to be legal advice for any particular person. Obtaining this information does NOT create an attorney-client relationship. You are encouraged to seek a Texas-licensed attorney to discuss your legal needs. The information provided is based upon laws of the (Great/Lone Star) State of Texas.

1



### Legal Considerations for a Kids-Free Vacation

It's finally here! That vacation you have been slowly piecing together for months. Your bags are packed. You've got your airline tickets ready to go. The grandparents are watching the kids. You're all set.

But when it comes to leaving the kids for the weekend (or any extended amount of time), you just can't help but think of some concerning scenarios—usually involving a doctor's office or hospital.

**"What if something happens with the kids?"**

**"What if someone gets sick or hurt?"**

Well, this may not resolve your parental worries, but it just might help. There are tools available under Texas law which would allow Parents to temporarily empower another adult with the authority to make certain decisions for the Parent's Child(ren).

Individual circumstances and family dynamics can greatly impact which options are best in a given case, and not all of these options will either be available to you or provide the benefits you are seeking. Therefore, it is vitally important that you seek Texas-licensed, legal counsel when pursuing any of these options.

**Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver:**  
An **Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver** is a tool available in the State of Texas which Parents can use to authorize another adult with certain rights regarding the care of their minor Child(ren).

To be valid in Texas, the Authorization must contain numerous "**statements**" as well as numerous "**warnings and disclosures**" as required by TEXAS FAMILY CODE SECTION 34.003 and other portions of the law.

This information is provided for educational purposes only. The information is NOT intended to be legal advice for any particular person. Obtaining this information does NOT create an attorney-client relationship. You are encouraged to seek a Texas-licensed attorney to discuss your legal needs. The information provided is based upon laws of the (Great/Lone Star) State of Texas.

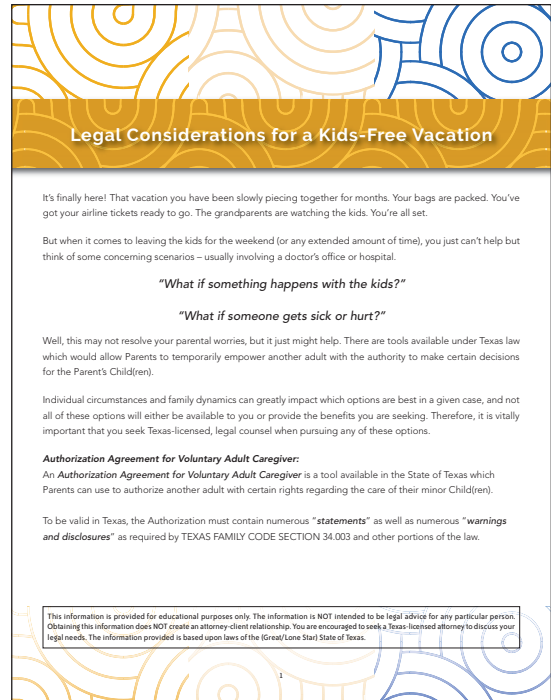
1

## Legal Considerations for a Kids-Free Vacation

TYLA developed this new guide that discusses authorization agreements for vacationing parents or guardians to consider completing and leaving with a child's caregiver when they travel.

## Your New Ride: Legal Considerations for Owning Your First Car

TYLA developed this new guide on buying, selling, leasing, or donating motor vehicles in Texas. It includes information regarding taxes, titling, and motor vehicle insurance.



### Legal Considerations for a Kids-Free Vacation

It's finally here! That vacation you have been slowly piecing together for months. Your bags are packed. You've got your airline tickets ready to go. The grandparents are watching the kids. You're all set.

But when it comes to leaving the kids for the weekend (or any extended amount of time), you just can't help but think of some concerning scenarios – usually involving a doctor's office or hospital.

**"What if something happens with the kids?"**

**"What if someone gets sick or hurt?"**

Well, this may not resolve your parental worries, but it just might help. There are tools available under Texas law which would allow Parents to temporarily empower another adult with the authority to make certain decisions for the Parent's Child(ren).

Individual circumstances and family dynamics can greatly impact which options are best in a given case, and not all of these options will either be available to you or provide the benefits you are seeking. Therefore, it is vitally important that you seek Texas-licensed, legal counsel when pursuing any of these options.

**Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver:**  
An **Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver** is a tool available in the State of Texas which Parents can use to authorize another adult with certain rights regarding the care of their minor Child(ren).

To be valid in Texas, the Authorization must contain numerous "statements" as well as numerous "warnings and disclosures" as required by TEXAS FAMILY CODE SECTION 34.003 and other portions of the law.

This information is provided for educational purposes only. The information is NOT intended to be legal advice for any particular person. Obtaining this information does NOT create an attorney-client relationship. You are encouraged to seek a Texas-licensed attorney to discuss your legal needs. The information provided is based upon laws of the (Great/Lone Star) State of Texas.



### GUIDE TO FEDERAL APPOINTMENTS AND FEDERAL PRO BONO CIVIL CASES

Every year there is a massive, unmet need for representation in federal court. Taking cases in Federal Court by appointment or on a pro bono basis is vital to helping address this need. Moreover, appointed and pro bono cases can be exceptionally rewarding, as they provide attorneys the opportunity to give back to the community and garner experience in federal court. This guide is meant to improve and regulate the practice of law by providing insights, guidance, and information on how to accept appointments and pro bono cases in federal court.

#### Getting the Case

Accepting appointed and pro bono clients is a proactive process. The first step to taking on appointed and pro bono clients is to identify sources, as there are ways to get clients directly from the court and indirectly from volunteer groups.

#### Accepting Cases by Appointment

The process for being appointed to a case in federal court can vary. It is best to reach out to your federal district court and ask about getting an assigned client. You should be sure to clarify: the subject matter, whether you would like one appointment, or whether you would like to be put on a list for recurring appointments.

#### Taking on Pro Bono cases

Perhaps the most effective way to find clients in need of pro bono representation is to get involved in local legal clinics or similar associations, such as a local non-profit that assists victims of family violence or those seeking asylum under immigration proceedings. For example, in Texas, Lone Star Legal Aid, Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program, and Human Rights Initiatives handle pro bono matters. This is a unique opportunity for a couple of reasons: in choosing a clinic you can narrow the practice areas in which you are most comfortable and in volunteering you can help address the broader unmet legal needs in your community.

## Guide to Federal Civil Appointments and Federal Civil Pro Bono Cases

With assistance from the Northern District of Texas, TYLA developed this new guide summarizing the steps to federal civil appointments or civil pro bono cases. The guide includes information on the benefits of appointments, an overview of the appointment procedure, and tips for succeeding in these appointments.



# OTHER PROJECTS

## Diversity Scholarship Program

TYLA has a steadfast commitment to diversity in the legal profession to further the State Bar of Texas' purposes of improving the quality of legal services and regulating the legal profession. Consequently, TYLA seeks to help and encourage persons with diverse experiences and backgrounds to enter the legal profession and to promote increased participation by diverse lawyers in the activities, programs, and projects of the Texas Young Lawyers Association and the State Bar of Texas. To this end, every year, TYLA awards three scholarships (first place: \$5,000; second place: \$3,000; and third place: \$1,500) to one or more law students from the ABA-accredited law schools or ABA-provisionally approved law schools in Texas. The recipient must be attending one of these Texas law schools.



First place

***Samantha Delgad***

SMU Dedman School of Law



Second place

***Deborah Billy Gillis-Harry***

University of Houston Law Center



Third place

***Jason Patalano***

SMU Dedman School of Law

## Grants

TYLA supports its affiliated young lawyer associations by providing funding to support local programs and projects. The Member Services Committee awarded grants to eight local affiliates totaling over \$19,000. The grants provide much needed assistance for restarting and supporting local affiliates, service projects that benefit the community, diversity programming, and service projects that support the members of the bar. In awarding these grants, TYLA seeks to provide seed money to get a new project off the ground or to expand the scope of an existing project.

# COMPETITIONS

## Paper Chase Legal Writing Competition

In fall 2023, TYLA, in partnership with Baylor Law School, assisted with the annual “Paper Chase” writing competition for law students at Texas law schools. TYLA members coordinated with the law school liaison and law student liaison to help promote participation in the competition and served as the sole judges of the anonymized entries. This annual competition consistently distinguishes itself from other legal writing competitions by challenging participants to craft practical, efficient legal documents, rather than traditional essays, under tight time constraints. This year, Baylor Law received the largest pool of entries ever, with eight different Texas law schools participating.



The competition was designed to feature a real-world problem of the type a new associate may face during their first or second year as an attorney. This year’s problem focused on a § 1983 case involving a plaintiff’s allegations of arrest in retaliation for expressing political views. The defendant, a Texas municipality, contended that the arrest was based on probable cause for disorderly conduct, challenging the causal connection required by *Nieves v. Bartlett*. Competitors prepared a response to the city’s motion to dismiss. Per Professor Lee Ann James, “as all attorneys are aware, the legal writing skills of analysis and persuasion are paramount to the successful representation of our clients.”

TYLA is honored to assist with this competition every year.

**1st Place:** **Nabutsingso Hoshut**, *University of North Texas at Dallas College of Law*

**2nd Place:** **Lauren Bush**, *University of Texas School of Law*

**3rd Place:** **Sarah Chavey**, *University of Texas School of Law*

### SEMIFINALISTS

Wyatt Macfarlane, *Texas Tech University School of Law*  
Berenis Ibarra Lopez, *St. Mary’s University School of Law*  
Graysen Mechler, *The University of Houston Law Center*

### HONORABLE MENTIONS

Emily Garcia, *St. Mary’s University School of Law*  
Shelby Lepley, *SMU Dedman School of Law*  
Jonathan Voos, *Texas A&M University School of Law*  
Zoe Azebe-Osime, *Thurgood Marshall School of Law*

## State Moot Court Competition

TYLA hosted the 2024 State Moot Court Competition (SMC) in conjunction with the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Dallas. SMC is a moot court round robin to which all Texas law schools are invited. Preliminary rounds were judged by practicing attorneys, the semifinal rounds were judged by Texas court of appeals justices and sitting trial judges, and the final round was judged by the Supreme Court of Texas.

### CHAMPION TEAM

St. Mary's University School of Law

*Nadine Cox and Emily Mann*

*Coached by Ricky Poole and Stephanie De Sola Acosta*



### FINALIST TEAMS

South Texas College of Law

*Caroline Lubel, Memona Niazi, Ivan de Leon, and Garrett Gray*

*Coached by Rob Galloway, Andrew Bender, and Sharon McCally*



### SEMIFINALIST TEAMS

SMU Dedman School of Law

South Texas College of Law Houston

St. Mary's University School of Law

Texas Tech University School of Law



### BEST BRIEF

Baylor University School of Law

### BEST ORAL ADVOCATE

*Tiffani Skroch*

Baylor University School of Law





## National Trial Competition

TYLA, in partnership with the American College of Trial Lawyers, hosted the National Trial Competition (NTC) in Houston.

Hailed as one of the oldest and most prestigious competitions in the United States, the NTC consists of 30 of the best law school mock trial teams from around the nation. Established in 1975, NTC's purpose is to advance future lawyers' advocacy through competition among peers and interaction with the bench and bar.

This year's competition constitutes the 49<sup>th</sup> year, and the champions hailed from the UCLA School of Law.



### 2024 NATIONAL CHAMPION TEAM

#### **UCLA School of Law**

Team Members: *Edouard Goguillon and Peter Jones*  
(NTC Team 113)

Coaches: *Justin Bernstein, Avery Hitchcock, and Nat Warner*

### NATIONAL FINALIST

**UCLA School of Law** (NTC Team 116)

### SEMI FINALIST TEAMS

**Boston College of Law** (NTC Team 110)

**University of Missouri-Kansas City** (NTC Team 130)

### QUARTER-FINALIST TEAMS

**Campbell University Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law** (NTC Team 114)

**Lewis and Clark Law School** (NTC Team 111)

**University of California, Berkeley School of Law** (NTC Team 125)

**University of Minnesota Law School** (NTC Team 127)

### BEST ADVOCATE AWARD

*Corbin Healy*

**University of Missouri-Kansas City** (NTC Team 130)

### PROFESSIONALISM AND CIVILITY AWARD

*Jacob Serafini and Amy Sohlberg*

**Lewis and Clark Law School** (NTC Team 111)

## 2024 National Trial Competition





# EVENTS

## Law School Orientations

Throughout the year, TYLA representatives and TYLA law student liaisons attended orientations for all of the Texas law schools. TYLA also provided information about the resources TYLA offers students during school and when students start their law practices. TYLA members spoke about the benefits of joining the Law Student Division of the State Bar while still in law school.





## Local Bar Leaders Conference

The Local Bar Leaders Conference brings State Bar of Texas and TYLA elected leaders together with lawyers in various leadership positions with local bar organizations and young lawyer affiliates from across the state. This two-day training program inspires and engages effective leaders, addresses common concerns among bar associations, and offers valuable resources available from the State Bar of Texas.

The 2023 conference was held July 20-22 in Houston and was attended by more than 100 young lawyers from local affiliates across Texas. Attendees enjoyed sessions outlining strategies for effective use of social media, driving up local affiliate membership numbers, successful project rollouts, and creative sources of revenue. A highlight of the conference was the local affiliate showcase, which was an opportunity for local affiliates to feature their exceptional projects completed throughout the bar year and provide information, materials, tools, and insight for implementing similar successful projects.





## Lubbock Outreach Project

In conjunction with its November board meeting, the TYLA board conducted community outreach and assisted the local nonprofit OneVoiceHome, which supports survivors of sex trafficking.





## El Paso – Women in the Law

At its January board meeting, TYLA sponsored and hosted a special panel discussion featuring minority women lawyers and judges from El Paso. This panel discussed entering the legal field as a woman and the unique journeys that each panelist has taken in their career. TYLA partnered with the El Paso Women's Bar Association, the El Paso Young Lawyers Association, and the local nonprofit, Mija, Yes You Can, in hosting the event.





## Arlington – Adulthood Roll-Out

In conjunction with the TYLA board meeting in May, the TYLA Executive Committee, director Armin Salek, and director Kenneth Ferguson performed an *Adulthood* roll-out at Arlington High School focused on jury service and voir dire.



# AWARDS

## **American Bar Association – Young Lawyer Division Awards of Achievement**

The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) presents the annual Awards of Achievement Program. This program is an opportunity for state and local young lawyer organizations affiliated with the ABA Young Lawyers Division to submit their best projects for evaluation and recognition by a jury of their peers. It is designed to encourage project development by recognizing the time, effort, and skills expended by young lawyer organizations in implementing public service and bar service projects in their communities.

This year, TYLA was awarded the following for its 2023-2024 projects and programming:

### **Outstanding Affiliate Award**

#### **Service to the Bar – State A**

*Substance Use Education A Lawyer’s Guide: Understanding Substance Use Signs and Issues*

#### **Service to the Public - State A**

*Adulting*

#### **Diversity – State A**

*Women in Law Finding Your Path Panel CLE*

#### **Newsletter – State A**

*TYLA Local Affiliates Update*

#### **Comprehensive – State A**

- *Adulting*
- *Substance Use Education*
- *Clear or Seal*
- *TYLA Podcasts*
- *State Moot Court*



## TYLA Local Affiliate Awards of Achievement

The TYLA Awards of Achievement Program provides TYLA affiliates the opportunity to submit their best projects for evaluation and recognition. The awards are designed to encourage project development by recognizing the time, effort, and skills expended by these affiliates in implementing public and professional service in their communities. Award recipients are recognized at the Local Bar Leaders Conference. This year, TYLA recognized the following young lawyer organizations for their impactful projects and programs:

### Single Project – Service to the Public (Large City)

1st Place: Houston Young Lawyers Association

*Nonprofit Institute*

2nd Place: Austin Young Lawyers Association

*Center for Child Protection: Community Service Project*

3rd Place: Dallas Association of Young Lawyers

*Bingo, Baby!*

### Single Project – Service to the Public (Small City)

1st Place: Denton County Young Lawyers Association

*Adoption Day Volunteer*

### Single Project – Service to the Bar (Large City)

1st Place: Austin Young Lawyers Association

*Freshquires*

2nd Place: Houston Young Lawyers Association

*Giving Thanks*

3rd Place: Dallas Association of Young Lawyers

*Family Fall Festival*





**Single Project – Service to the Bar (Small City)**

1st Place: Denton County Young Lawyers Association  
*Sip and Snap*

**Diversity**

1st Place: Houston Young Lawyers Association  
*HYLE Allyship Committee Programming*  
2nd Place: Dallas Association of Young Lawyers  
*Allyship: Pushing the Needle Forward All Together*



**Newsletter**

1st Place: Tarrant County Young Lawyers Association  
2nd Place: Dallas Association of Young Lawyers

**Comprehensive (Large City)**

1st Place: Austin Young Lawyers Association  
2nd Place: Dallas Association of Young Lawyers  
3rd Place: Houston Young Lawyers Association

**Comprehensive (Small City)**

Denton County Young Lawyers Association



## TYLA 2023-2024 HONOREES

### Outstanding Young Lawyer of Texas Award Recipient

*Nora Picasso-Uvalle, Austin*



Each year, the Texas Young Lawyers Association presents the Outstanding Young Lawyer of Texas Award to one attorney who has exemplified professional proficiency, service to the profession, and service to the community.

Nora Picasso-Uvalle is a licensed attorney in Texas and Mexico. She holds an LL.M. from Harvard Law School, a master's degree in legal theory from Los Andes University in Colombia, and a bachelor's degree in law from Facultad Libre de Derecho de Monterrey, Mexico. Picasso-Uvalle has worked at various institutions in Mexico, Colombia, and the United States. She worked at the Federal Electoral Court in Mexico and at PARCES, a non-profit organization in Colombia, where she advocated on behalf of different communities, including people affected by the carceral system. Picasso-Uvalle has also worked as a researcher and a lecturer at Los Andes University. Before joining Capital Area Private Defender Service/myPadilla (her current organization), she worked at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA), where she provided legal services to asylum-seeking families detained in Dilley. Currently, Picasso-Uvalle runs myPadilla.com, a project that offers free advice to appointed defense attorneys and public defenders throughout the state. The website helps attorneys provide better representation by explaining the immigration consequences of a criminal charge for non-US citizens. In 2023, myPadilla provided opinions in over 605 cases, serving more than 65 counties.

### Liberty Bell Award Recipient

*Janet Jensen, Dallas*

The Texas Young Lawyers Association presents this annual award to one outstanding non-lawyer who has made the most selfless contribution to his or her community to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of justice. The Liberty Bell Award recognizes categories of community service that: (1) promote a better understanding of our government, especially the Bill of Rights; (2) encourage a greater respect for the law and the courts; (3) stimulate a deeper sense of individual responsibility of citizens' rights and duties; (4) contribute to the effective functioning of our institutions of government; and (5) instill a better understanding and appreciation of the law.

Janet Jensen has spent the last 40 years dedicating her time and resources to creating pathways for survivors of sexual violence to have healing opportunities and promoting policies to prevent the occurrences from happening in the first place. She is the founder and CEO of the Jensen Project, where she leverages her strengths in business, innovation, and policymaking to cultivate opportunities for individuals and organizations dedicated to reducing exploitation and empowering survivors of sexual violence.



## Outstanding Mentor Award

*Lauren Black, Dallas*

The Texas Young Lawyers Association presents the Outstanding Mentor Award to the attorney who has consistently demonstrated a commitment to mentoring young lawyers in his or her legal community.

Lauren Black is the deputy administrator of Bureau B at the Dallas County District Attorney's Office. She oversees the Appellate Division, Misdemeanor Division, Grand Jury/Intake, Restorative Justice and Mental Health, and the newly created Vehicular Crimes Unit that she was instrumental in establishing in 2022. She is also a faculty adviser and frequent speaker for the Texas District & County Attorneys

Association where she trains new Texas prosecutors and helps develop training curricula for prosecutors statewide. Passionate about mentoring the next generation of trial attorneys, Black works with UNT Dallas College of Law as a mock trial competition coach and Baylor Law School as an adjunct professor. In her role as an adjunct mock trial advocacy professor at UNT Dallas College of Law, Black has had the opportunity to inspire students and provide them with a road map to a successful career as a litigator and strong advocate. Before her promotion as deputy administrator of Bureau B earlier this year, Black served as the administrative division chief, responsible for supervising 36 prosecutors and the development of a new training curriculum.

## TYLA BOARD AWARDS

### Joseph M. Pritchard Inn Outstanding Director Award

*Ashton Barrineau Butcher, Dallas*



The Joseph M. Pritchard Inn of former and current officers and directors of the Texas Young Lawyers Association was established in 1979 in honor of the late Joseph M. Pritchard, a former TYLA director and active civic leader. The inn is pledged to support the programs and objectives of TYLA and annually presents the Joseph M. Pritchard Inn Outstanding Director Award to the TYLA director who has shown outstanding leadership and exemplary efforts to further the projects and purposes of the Texas Young Lawyers Association.



## Texas Young Lawyers Association Keith L. Krueger Leadership Award

*Sushant Mohan, Houston*

The Keith L. Krueger Leadership Award is named in honor of the late Keith L. Krueger, a former secretary of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, who passed away on July 14, 2012. During his tenure on the TYLA board, Krueger selflessly and tirelessly worked to further the objectives of the association. This award is given at the discretion of the Texas Young Lawyers Association's president and director of administration to a TYLA board member who exhibits the same leadership skills as Krueger: (1) leads by example; (2) exhibits the highest integrity; (3) demonstrates a commitment and passion for public service; and (4) earns the respect and trust of the board through hard work and fun.

## Outstanding First Year Director Award

*Anietie Akpan, Houston*

The Outstanding First Year Director Award is given at the discretion of the president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association based on outstanding service by a director during his or her first year on the TYLA Board.



## Texas Young Lawyers Association Outstanding Chair Award

*Garrett Coutts, Lubbock*

The Outstanding Chair Award is given at the discretion of the president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association based on outstanding service by a director serving as a chair of a TYLA committee.

## **Texas Young Lawyers Association Believe Award**

*Cindy V. Tisdale, Granbury | Fort Worth*

The Believe Award is given at the discretion of the Texas Young Lawyers Association's president. Serving as president of TYLA is always a hard job, but the president of the State Bar of Texas has an even harder job. Yet, the 2023-2024 State Bar of Texas president has been one of the best supporters of TYLA and the bar.

## **Texas Young Lawyers Association Trial and Appellate Advocacy Award**

*Timothy Adams, Houston*

*Dave R. Hagan, Longview*

*Ryan R. Bauerle, Plano*

The Trial and Appellate Advocacy Award is given at the discretion of the Texas Young Lawyers Association's president for outstanding contributions and leadership of TYLA's National Trial Competition and State Moot Court Competition.



## **Texas Young Lawyers Association President's Award of Merit**

The President's Award of Merit is given at the discretion of the Texas Young Lawyers Association's president to recognize individuals who have made a significant contribution to the furtherance of the goals and objectives of TYLA, or who have performed above and beyond the call of duty while conducting the business of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. This year's awards are presented to individuals who put forth exceptional efforts on behalf of TYLA through their committee service. This year's recipients are:

*Alpha Behavioral Health*

*Amanda Engle*

*Maj. Atina Stavropoulos*

*Armin Salek*

*Becky Braden*

*Caitlin McDuffee*

*Chris Ritter*

*Coy A. Westbrook*

*Elizabeth Geary*

*Michael Hanson*

*Michaell J. Ritter*

*Steven M. Traeger*

## **Texas Young Lawyers Association Special Awards of Merit**

Special Awards of Merit are given at the discretion of the Texas Young Lawyers Association's president to recognize the staff of TYLA who have made a significant contribution to the furtherance of the goals and objectives of TYLA, performing above and beyond the call of duty while conducting the business of the Texas Young Lawyers Association.

*Tracy Brown*

*Bree Trevino*

*Michelle Palacios*



# TYLA BY THE NUMBERS

Traffic to the After the Bar Exam online resource:

*1,524 watched segments; 487 downloaded segments*

Traffic to the TYLA Ten Minute Mentor online resource:

*20,783 watched segments; 9,111 downloaded segments*

Traffic to the TYLA Ten Minute Mentor Goes to Law School online resource:

*1,739 watched segments; 260 downloaded segments*

Number of TYLA presentations given at law schools:

*4 law school orientation presentations*

Number of TYLA presentations by attorneys and judges in public schools:

*15 presentations reaching 500 kids*

Distribution of TYLA resources and information regarding legal issues of interest to the public through community service and education:

*1,900 project distributions*

**Number of volunteer hours by the TYLA Board: Over 5,000**



**Texas Young Lawyers Association  
2023-2024 Board of Directors**



BE AN UNCOMMON LEADER.®



Texas Young Lawyers Association  
P.O. Box 12487  
Austin, TX 78711-2487  
800-204-2222

[tyla.org](http://tyla.org)