



EQUAL TIMES

BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This year's Law Day theme challenges us to explore how lawyers in the past and present have promoted justice by defending unpopular clients. This year's theme celebrates *The Legacy of John Adams, From Boston to Guantanamo*.

John Adams has been described as a patriot, advocate, diplomat, constitutional theorist, and political activist. Notably, Adams became the first lawyer-president of the United States in 1797. Prior to becoming President, Adams demonstrated this year's theme when he was involved in the 1770 Boston Massacre trials. Adams defended British soldiers who were indicted for murder in the deaths of several Boston residents. Lawyers in the Boston area would not represent the accused men, as they were concerned about the career impact of representing such unpopular clients. Adams agreed to represent the accused British soldiers to ensure a fair trial, despite concern over his own promising career. Adams worked to expose the true facts surrounding the deaths and succeeded in getting several British soldiers acquitted of murder, and others convicted of manslaughter rather than murder.



Laura C. Mason

I recently saw a movie based on a true story that also occurred in Massachusetts, reminding me of Adams's courage in defending unpopular clients in the pursuit of the rule of law. *Conviction* is about a single mother — Betty Ann Walters (played by Hillary Swank). I saw the movie after seeing Betty Ann interviewed on television and being intrigued by her story.

Years earlier, Betty Ann tended bar. Betty Ann's brother, Kenny, was frequently in trouble. Kenny was unpopular with law enforcement in his town, ultimately leading to being charged and convicted of the murder of a local woman. Kenny maintained his innocence, and Betty Ann believed him. After Kenny was convicted, Betty Ann obtained her GED, college degree, and law degree for the sole purpose of overturning her brother's wrongful conviction. Amazingly, she succeeded. Kenny was freed from prison after 18 years based on DNA evidence, Betty Ann's work, and the work of Barry Scheck and the Innocence Project. Betty Ann pursued the rule of law, albeit out of loyalty to and love of her brother. She learned the law and used it to pursue the truth. She exemplified tremendous determination and courage, while being told that her unpopular brother was a troublemaker and surely committed the murder.

Betty Ann is a present-day example of promoting justice in the manner of Adams. I encourage you to observe other examples of promoting justice as we celebrate Law Day.

APRIL 2011

In this issue:

BCWBA 1011 President's Party & President Laura C. Mason	2
Law Day Luncheon Reminder	2
Community Service Corner	3
Women's Law Association Update	4
SchmoyerReinhard LLP Announcements	5

BCWBA 2011 President's Party & Our 2011 President Laura C. Mason

By Julia Mann



Julia Mann

On March 31, 2011, we honored the presidents of our organization at the annual President's Party. The Bexar County Women's Bar Association has had an impressive list of leaders and this year's President Laura C. Mason is no exception.

Laura grew up in El Campo, Texas. She attended Texas A&M University, receiving her B.B.A. in Accounting (magna cum laude) in 1996 and then earning her C.P.A. license. Although Laura could have continued on a wonderful career in accounting, lucky for us she discovered that what she really wanted to do was practice law. Laura attended law school at Southern Methodist University and was an Articles Editor of the SMU Law Review, graduating in 2000 (cum laude).

Laura began her legal career with Vinson & Elkins in Dallas where she focused on tax law. After a few years, she and her husband Bill, who is also a lawyer, decided to make San Antonio their home.

Laura landed at Oppenheimer, Blend, Harrison & Tate, Inc. where she is now a shareholder in the Corporate and Securities Practice Group. Laura takes an active role within her firm by chairing her firm's Marketing Committee and leading her firm's marketing campaigns, and helping plan her firm's Beyond the Glass Ceiling program during Women's History Month each March.

In addition to the honor as serving as President, Laura has been recognized a "Rising Star" by both *Texas Monthly* and *Scene in SA*. She also received the Belva Lockwood Outstanding Young Lawyer Award in 2006 and the SAYLA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award in 2009. Laura was recognized by the San Antonio Business Journal in the "Forty Under Forty" Awards in 2009.

Outside of her practice and the Women's Bar, she is active in Mission Road Ministries and the San Antonio A&M Club. In addition, Laura and her husband have season tickets for Texas A&M football and spend their Fall weekends in College Station cheering for the Aggies.

Luncheon Announcement

By Monica Lerma

Don't forget to join us at the Law Day Luncheon! On Wednesday, April 6, 2010, the Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation will host a luncheon at the Plaza Club for the law-magnet students at Fox Tech High School. Local criminal attorney, Cynthia Orr, will explore this year's Law Day theme — how lawyers in the past and present have promoted justice by defending unpopular clients. Several students participated in the Law Day poster/editorial contest, portraying their view of this year's Law Day theme.

The Fox Tech students are excited about the luncheon, so we hope you'll come out and visit with them. RSVP on our website or by emailing Monica Lerma at mjlerma@sr-llp.com. Cost is \$25.

COMMUNITY SERVICE COLUMN

By Elena Villasenor

Looking for a rewarding experience? Have you been feeling like you want to do more for the community? Do you need CLE hours?

The BCWBA Community Service Committee seeks volunteers to participate in the San Antonio Bar Association and Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's Community Justice Program ("CJP") on May 10, 2011 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's University. The CJP provides free neighborhood-based legal services to individuals who may not otherwise have access to the legal system. As a CJP volunteer, you will likely be assigned an uncontested divorce case, but you do not have to be a family law attorney to volunteer. Before the clinic, the CJP prescreens each case to determine it is uncontested. On the night of the clinic, the CJP provides you with sample documents that you might need throughout your case, a page by page orientation, and an army of people to assist with any aspect you may need help on. In short, CJP is a great opportunity to engage in pro bono work within a comprehensive and efficient clinic setting. Plus, as a CJP volunteer, you are also entitled to receive five free CLE hours (which includes 1 hour of ethics). To "Just Take One" pro bono case, RSVP to Lorie.Blout@uhs-sa.com. Your participation will help open the doors of the Courthouse to those in need. We look forward to seeing you there!

The Community Service Committee would also like to highlight Junior Achievement (JA) as an organization that benefits another group in need – our children! JA is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. Its programs help prepare young people for the real world by showing them how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, create jobs that make their communities more robust, and apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Students are empowered to own their future economic success and see the relevance of their education to their future earning power.

JA's unique approach allows volunteers from the community to deliver quality curriculum while sharing their personal experiences with students. Programs are available for K-12 grade students, as well as one-day volunteer commitments at JA Finance Park. To see upcoming events and learn more about JA, check out www.jast.org. For information on volunteering, please contact Bernadette Byrd at bbyrd@jast.org or (210) 490-2007 x106.

As a final note here, there are still copies of the 2010 *Elder Law Handbook* available for distribution. If you are aware of any churches, senior centers or other organizations that may like to have a copy of the handbook (in the English and/or Spanish version), please send an email request to Graciela Cigarroa at gcigarroa@aol.com.

BCWBA – Lites wants to hear from you!

BCWBA is interested in news of your professional accomplishments or activities, awards, marriages, changes of address, or other news you would like to share. Also, if you know any BCWBA member who is not receiving *Equal Times*, please send us a current address. BCWBA wants to stay in touch. Email your new information or announcement to Regina Stone-Harris at ReginaStoneHarris@yahoo.com.

Women's Law Association Update

By Teresa Reyes-Bonar

The Women's Law Association (WLA) had a wonderful, busy March! On March 8 we had the privilege of hosting the Fourth Court of Appeals on the law school campus. The WLA officers escorted the judges to oral arguments and then co-hosted a luncheon with Sister Grace Wale in honor Women's History Month. Former Chief Justice Alma Lopez attended to celebrate the nine women nominated for the "Justice Alma Lopez: Woman in Law Student Leadership Award." Vanessa Hernandez received this year's award. The WLA members had a great time visiting with the Fourth Court Justices during the luncheon!

On March 24 we met up with the BCWBA at Taco Garage for an awesome mentor/mentee mixer! Everyone had a blast getting to know each other, snacking on the great food and trying some of the fun margaritas. There was a great turn out from both the mentors and the mentees. The WLA members look forward to these events every year.

WLA is currently in the middle of officer elections and planning our end of the year celebration. Once the new board is elected, the old officers and the new officers will go out to dinner to officially "pass the torch." We are also looking forward to a (yet to be determined) final happy hour with our members before the school year comes to an end.



Teresa Reyes-Bonar
President,
Women's Law Association



Nominees for the Alma Lopez Award. From left to right: Ashlee Peña, Nicole Monsibais, Teresa Reyes-Bonar, Mel Anderson, Jessica Estorga, Vanessa Hernandez, Jami Nance, Neha Vasani and Miranda Guerrero.



Nominees with Justices from the Fourth Court of Appeals



3619 Paesanos Parkway, Suite 202 • San Antonio, Texas 78231 • Office: 210.447.8033 • Fax: 210.447.8036 • www.sr-llp.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annalyn Smith Joins Schmoyer Reinhard LLP

SAN ANTONIO, TX – March 3, 2011 – Schmoyer Reinhard LLP is pleased to announce that Annalyn Smith has joined the firm as a partner. Ms. Smith will be in charge of Schmoyer Reinhard’s business litigation practice.

“We are excited to have Ann join the firm. Her experience and depth give us the ability to expand the services we provide to our clients. We now can assist our clients with their general business litigation needs, which is a wonderful complement to our labor and employment law practice,” said Shannon Schmoyer, partner at the firm.

Ms. Smith has more than 27 years of litigation experience, representing clients in a variety of industries from trial through appeal. She has extensive experience in not only general business litigation, including contract disputes, trade secret litigation, bankruptcy litigation, collections, and title insurance defense, but also in construction litigation. Her construction litigation practice focuses on the representation of builders, general contractors, owners, subcontractors and engineers on issues ranging from lien disputes and condemnation to construction defect claims.

In addition, Ms. Smith has experience in labor and employment litigation. She counsels clients and has tried cases involving the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), workers' compensation retaliation, employment contracts, Title VII, and breach of covenants not to compete. Also, Ms. Smith has substantial experience in personal injury cases for non-subscribers to workers' compensation insurance and arbitrations of union grievances.

Prior to joining Schmoyer Reinhard LLP, Ms. Smith was a partner with the international law firm of Bracewell & Giuliani LLP in the San Antonio office.

Ms. Smith received her B.A. with honors, Phi Beta Kappa in 1972 and her J.D. with honors in 1984, both from the University of Texas at Austin. Ms. Smith is Board Certified in Civil Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas and is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern Districts of Texas and the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the 5th Circuit. Ms. Smith served as a briefing attorney for the Honorable Blair Reeves, Fourth District Court of Appeals for the State of Texas.



3619 Paesanos Parkway, Suite 202 • San Antonio, Texas 78231 • Office: 210.447.8033 • Fax: 210.447.8036 • www.sr-llp.com

Ms. Smith is a member of the San Antonio Bar and the Construction and Litigation Sections of the State Bar of Texas. Ms. Smith served as a director of the San Antonio Bar Association from 2009-2010 and as the Litigation Section Chair from 2005-2006. She has served as a San Antonio Bar Foundation Trustee since 2004 and served as the Secretary from 2008-2009, the Treasurer from 2009-2010 and as Vice Chair for 2010-2011.

Ms. Smith has been selected by her peers for inclusion in the 2010 and 2011 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* guide for Commercial Litigation. In addition, she was named in a survey of her peers as a Thomson Reuters Texas "Super Lawyer" in 2005.

About Schmoyer Reinhard LLP

Schmoyer Reinhard LLP is a San Antonio-based law firm that focuses on advising and representing companies throughout the Southwest United States in labor and employment law and business litigation. Both founding partners, Shannon Schmoyer and Christine Reinhard, are Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, and all attorneys at the firm have experience counseling their clients on best practices to avoid litigation. When litigation does arise, Schmoyer Reinhard's qualified trial attorneys help to achieve the best possible result for the client.

For more information, please contact Christy Meador, director of marketing and account services, at Schmoyer Reinhard LLP, at 210.447.8033 or cmeador@sr-llp.com.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Christine E. Reinhard and Justin Sobey Named 2011 Texas Rising Stars

SAN ANTONIO, TX – March 23, 2011 - Schmoyer Reinhard LLP is pleased to announce that Christine E. Reinhard and Justin Sobey are featured as 2011 Texas Rising Stars in the April 2011 issue of *Texas Monthly* magazine and in *Texas Super Lawyers – Rising Star Edition*, which is sent to all active Texas attorneys.

Ms. Reinhard is a founding partner of the law firm of Schmoyer Reinhard LLP. Her practice focuses on the representation of employers in employment litigation, including class-actions, and labor arbitration. She also counsels employers on all aspects of labor and employment law and advises management on strategic and complex employment decisions. Ms. Reinhard is Board Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Labor and Employment Law. This is the seventh year that she has been recognized as a Texas Rising Star.

Mr. Sobey is an associate with Schmoyer Reinhard LLP, and his practice focuses on the representation of employers in all areas of employment litigation in state and federal court. Mr. Sobey also counsels and advises employers regarding compliance with labor and employment laws, as well as on workplace policy issues. He is Board Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Labor and Employment Law. This is the second year that Mr. Sobey has been recognized as a Texas Rising Star.

To develop the latest *Texas Rising Stars* edition, researchers with Thomson Reuters' legal division solicited nominations from attorneys across the state who are members of the prestigious Texas Super Lawyers list, asking them to identify the top lawyers in Texas age 40 or younger and those who have been practicing law fewer than 10 years. The annual list honors less than 2.5 percent of all eligible Texas attorneys.

About Schmoyer Reinhard LLP

Schmoyer Reinhard LLP is a San Antonio-based law firm that focuses on advising and representing companies throughout the Southwest United States in labor and employment law and business litigation. Both founding partners, Shannon B. Schmoyer and Christine E. Reinhard, are Board Certified in Labor and Employment Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and all of the attorneys at the firm have experience counseling their clients on best practices to avoid litigation. When litigation does arise, Schmoyer Reinhard's qualified trial attorneys help achieve the best possible result for the client.

For more information, please contact Christy Meador, Director of Marketing and Account Services at Schmoyer Reinhard LLP, at 210.447.8033 or cmeador@sr-llp.com.