

THE EQUAL TIMES

Bexar County Women's Bar Association

BCWCB

Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation

December 2017

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It has been such an honor to serve as President of Bexar County Women's Bar over the last year. We've had quite a year—we got a snazzy new Newsletter, launched our LEAD Academy, grew our membership by leaps and bounds, and raised a whopping \$40,000 for Thru Project. Thank you for your help in achieving those goals. We couldn't do this without you! Even though I approached this year with trepidation, I am so grateful for the experience. I've learned a lot about myself and leadership. I shudder to think how long it would have taken me to learn some of these lessons if I had continued to say "no" when I was asked to run for an officer slot all those years ago. I sometimes feel like a broken record when I talk about what Bexar County Women's Bar has given me, but I can't say enough how much my practice has been changed by being an active participant in this network. I knew BCWB had given me a network of women in the legal field upon whom to call for everything from legal to babysitter questions. Among these women I have found sounding boards, mentors, and friends. Perhaps more importantly, I found my cheerleaders, by which I mean a group of women who encourage me to do more, try more, and have more faith in myself. As I sign off on my last newsletter as President, I simply want to say thank you once again for your help and dedication to our community.

Join Kathleen Church and Durime Fahim
at the **BCWB December Around Town Lunch!**



When: Friday, December 15th at noon

Where: Snooze at the Quarry

Who: Your fellow BCWB members!

No Need to RSVP - See You There!

SAVE THE DATE

The Bexar County Women's Bar will be volunteering at the Community Justice Program Wills Clinic on Tuesday, January 23. Please save the date and join us!

BCWB Mentor Program

Are you interested in serving as a mentor in 2018?

If so, please contact Durime Fahim at dfahim@lisavancelaw.com or Robin Thorner at rthorner@stmarytx.edu.

More information to come in 2018!!

Swearing In Ceremony 2017:

Welcome New Attorneys!

By: Kathleen H. Church

The most stressful day of a recent law school graduate's life is most likely the first Thursday of the first November following graduation: Texas Bar Exam results day! No bigger relief is felt than when one finds their name on the list of graduates who passed. A brand new class of attorneys joined us this November and in an event hosted by the Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation and the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association, we welcomed them. On November 9th, over twenty new lawyers, along with their supportive family and friends, attended our Swearing In Ceremony held in the Central Jury Room of the Bexar County Courthouse.

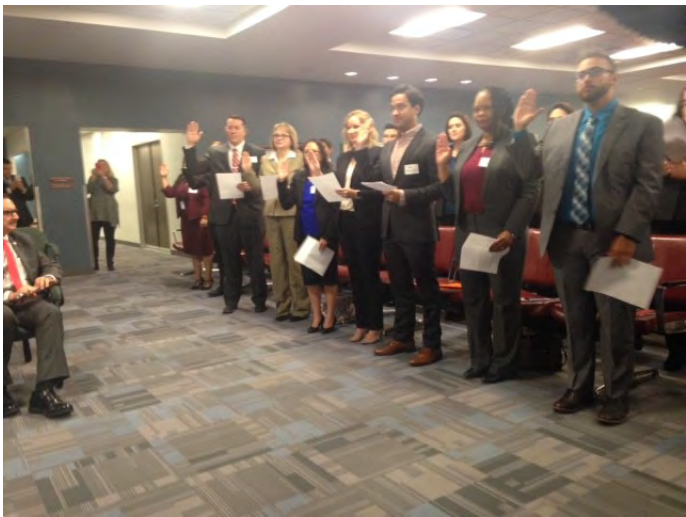
It all started in the room where it happens, where the road to justice starts to take shape! New attorneys were welcomed by Senior U.S. District Judge David A. Ezra. Judge Ezra spoke last year and reprised his role this year where he gave a delightful speech full of advice and humorous anecdotes, but also touched on the seriousness of the expectations and responsibilities all attorneys, not just new ones, face throughout their careers.

Next came the moment new attorneys have spent the last three plus years working for, being sworn in and officially becoming an attorney. New attorneys had the honor of being sworn in by Chief Justice Sandee Bryan Marion of the Fourth Court of Appeals. Before the true swearing in happened, Chief Justice Marion asked all the supportive crews of the new attorneys to claim their perfect paparazzi spot for the occasion. Once everyone was in place with their cameras poised and the new attorneys had their right hands up, Chief Justice Marion led everyone through the oath; which finished to loud applause and cheers.

As in introduction of new attorneys to the Bexar County legal community,

various heads of associations were invited to speak at the event. Everyone enjoyed short speeches from representatives of the San Antonio Bar Association, the Mexican Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, the San Antonio Trial Lawyers Association, the Family Law Section, and the Immigration and Nationality Law Section, as well as the Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation and the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association.

After the ceremony concluded, both Chief Justice Marion and Judge Ezra stayed to take pictures with the new attorneys and everyone got the chance to mingle and get more information from the various legal associations who attended.



Cookies by Sweet & Salty Baking Co.



La Vernia High School Needs a Mock Trial Attorney Advisor

La Vernia High School is seeking a local attorney to help their mock trial team prepare for mock trial competition in February 2018. No trial experience necessary. For more information contact Melissa Garcia at mgarcia@dallasbar.org.

Welcome New Members!

- Natalie Arledge
- Kelley Depew
- Holly Fudge-Nieto
 - Cassidy Ross
 - Karina Cantu

Congratulations to the 2018 Bexar County Women's Bar Board of Directors

We have tallied the votes from our Board election. Congratulations to the following women who have been elected to serve on your 2018 Board of Directors:

Officers:

	Cassie Matheson
Greta McFarling, President	Serina Rivela
Hella Scheuerman, President-Elect	Danielle Rushing
Shari Mao, Vice President	Rachel Skinner Fernandez
Lindsay Riley, Treasurer	Robin Thorner
Brittany Weil, Treasurer-Elect	Judge Renee Yanta
Nicole Jackson, Secretary	Lauren McCollum, WLA Student Director
Lisa Alcantar, Immediate Past President	

Board of Directors:

Laura Cauley
Kathleen Church
Amanda Crouch
Durime Fahim
Melanie Fry
Leslie Hyman

This is YOUR Women's Bar Association!
If you ever have any suggestions, ideas, comments, or complaints, please do not hesitate to reach out to me! We're looking forward to a great 2018!

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON RECAP

Thanks to everyone who attended our Holiday Luncheon Recap at Silo! We enjoyed great food and the opportunity to look back on a fabulous 2017!

Many thanks to the 2017 Board of Directors and our fearless President, Lisa Alcantar, for all of the hard work this past year. Thanks to the efforts of the Board and our entire Bexar County Women's Bar Membership, we were able to give back to the bar and the community in meaningful ways.

In the season of giving, we had several amazing opportunities to give at the holiday luncheon. We had the pleasure of presenting a check for \$40,000 to our Autumn Affair

Beneficiary, Thru Project. We have enjoyed partnering with Thru Project this year and look forward to celebrating their successes in the years to come.

We also collected books to donate to SA Reads. Thanks to all of the members who contributed to the book drive and helped us donate to this worthy cause!

Finally, Bexar County Women's Bar donated money as our thank you for attending the luncheon to the Young Women's Leadership Academy.

Thanks to each of you who attended the 2017 Holiday Luncheon. We look forward to ringing in another year of luncheons with you in January 2018!





Lisa Alcantar, Greta McFarling and Rachel Skinner present Thru Project with the proceeds from Autumn Affair!



Thanks to our members' generosity, BCWB donated **143 books** to SAREads at this year's Holiday Luncheon!



We appreciate all who donated and helped spread holiday cheer!

COOKIES WITH SANTA



Santa visited the Doseum for the Cookies with Santa event on Saturday, December 2, 2017. Thirty families came out to enjoy cookies, take pictures with Santa, and enjoy the Doseum's amazing facilities. A great way to start the Holiday season for the Bexar County Women's Bar!







BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR FOUNDATION
LEAD ACADEMY
LEAD. EMPOWER. ADVANCE. DEVELOP.

Congratulations Graduates

On November 30, 2017, the LEAD Academy Class of 2017 graduated from a rigorous and rewarding year of training. Their completion of the program was celebrated with a formal ceremony featuring keynote speaker Major General Angelia Salinas, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired). Retired Maj. Gen. Angela Salinas is a trailblazing Latina leader who made history as the first woman to command a Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and the first Hispanic woman to become a general in the Marines. On behalf of the LEAD Academy Steering Committee and Advisory Board, please join us in congratulating the 2017 graduates!

Lara Brock
The Espinoza Law Firm



Ashley Senary Dahlberg
Norton Rose Fulbright



Dannick Hernandez
Plunkett Griesenbeck & Mimari



Stephanie Curette
Homberger Fuller & Garza



Jane Ann Fosson
Schmoyer Reinhard



Nada L. Ismail
Nustar Energy



Vanessa H. Kemmy
Law Offices of Thomas G. Kemmy



Cassie Garza Matheson
Hornberger Fuller & Garza
Patricia M. Oviatt
Cokinis Young



Christine Rudy
Tessmer Law Firm



Kayla Tanner
Jackson Walker



Rebecca Magee
United States District Court,
Western District of Texas



Mary Lisa Mireles
The Rosenblatt Law Firm
Lindsay S. Riley
Dykema Cox Smith



Shavonne L. Smith
Thornton Biechlin Reynolds & Guerra



Pictured right: LEAD Director Tiffanie Clausewitz and Retired Maj. Gen. Angela Salinas



Front row: Mary Lisa Mireles, Shavonne L. Smith, Ashley Senary Dahlberg, Rebecca Magee, Nada L. Ismail, Patricia M. Oviatt, Vanessa H. Kemmy, and Stephanie Curette.
Back row: Cassie Garza Matheson, Christine Rudy, Jane Ann Fosson, Lindsay S. Riley, Dannick Hernandez, Kayla Tanner, and Laura Brock.



The Fossons and Christine E. Reinhard



Elaine Simons, Christine Rudy, Heidie Helstrom, and Heather Tessmer



Donna McElroy, Retired Maj. Gen. Angela Salinas, and Malinda Gaul





BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR FOUNDATION
LEAD ACADEMY
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The BCWB Foundation LEAD Academy Welcomes New Class Members

After a successful inaugural year, the Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation LEAD Academy has wasted no time in continuing its efforts to assist women attorneys in attaining the highest level of success in their firms and organizations, in their communities, and in the legal profession. The attorneys listed below were recently selected for the LEAD Academy Class of 2018. Class members are chosen based on their accomplishments in the legal field, leadership experience and potential, and commitment to the promotion of women in the legal profession. The 2018 program will kick off with a welcome and networking mixer in early January, followed by a two-day symposium in early February. Symposium speakers are comprised of an impressive list of female leaders, including Karen Morris, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, USAA; the Honorable Catherine Stone, Shareholder & Former Chief Justice of the 4th Court of Appeals, Langley & Banack, Inc.; Jennifer Ostrich, PCC, Owner & President, Ostrich Coaching & Consulting; Cameron Vann, J.D., Senior Staff Attorney, Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program; Michelle Banks, Senior Advisor & Executive Coach, BarkerGilmore LLC; and Gindi Eckel Vincent, Counsel, Exxon Mobil. Congratulations to the 2018 Class!

LEAD Academy Class of 2018



Alicia Perez, Law Office of Alicia Perez, Esq.

Alicia is a solo practitioner with ten years of experience in both the public and private sector. Her work focuses on Immigration and Nationality Law, specifically removal defense. Through her charitable work, she has provided free Know Your Rights presentations and consultations in the local community and has served in leadership of the Immigration and Nationality Law Section of the San Antonio Bar Association for three years. She lives in San Antonio with her husband and three children.



Amanda Merced, USAA

Amanda is Enterprise Operations Counsel at USAA providing operational legal advice for the areas of Information Technology, Third Party Risk Management, and Procurement. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a BA in Government, received her J.D. from St. Mary's University School of Law and has a wonderful toddler.



[Aurora Blackwelder-Baggett, Law Office of Steven C. Benke](#)

Aurora, an attorney with the Law Office of Steven C. Benke, is a native San Antonian and St. Mary's University School of Law Alumna. She possesses expert knowledge of the complexities associated with family-based legal issues and related courtroom proceedings, and has vast experience as a Certified Family Law Mediator.



[Claire Tracey, USAA](#)

Claire serves as Labor and Employment Counsel at USAA. She enjoys traveling, especially to the beach, and finding great food with her husband, Michael, and her toddler, Mackenzie.



[Colleen Mulholland, Equal Justice Center](#)

Colleen is a staff attorney at the Equal Justice Center's San Antonio office, a non-profit law firm and employment justice organization that represents low-wage workers in employment litigation regardless of immigration status. Colleen graduated from University of Texas School of Law after teaching pre-kindergarten with Teach For America in Houston. She also holds a B.A. from Stetson University in Florida.



[Delilah Evans, Schmoyer Reinhard, LLP](#)

Delilah is a counsel at Schmoyer Reinhard LLP, where she focuses on representing employers and business leaders in all aspects of employment and general commercial litigation. Ms. Evans earned her J.D. from Cornell Law School, with a Concentration in Advocacy, in 2002. Ms. Evans has been licensed to practice law in the State of Texas since 2002, and the State of Louisiana since 2004 (inactive).



[Hannah Hembree, Dykema Cox Smith](#)

Hannah is a Labor and Employment Associate with Dykema Cox Smith. Prior to attending law school, she owned her own business, recruiting Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants for hospitals and clinics across Texas. While working full-time, Hannah had three children and completed her MBA. Hannah then went on to St. Mary's University School of Law, where she won a moot court national championship, published a law comment that received top honors through the State Bar's writing competition, and graduated valedictorian.



Elizabeth LaBarge, Texas Medical Consultants, LLC

Liz is the Co-Owner and CEO of Texas Medical Legal Consultants, LLC which is a San Antonio based expert witness facilitation company. She is licensed in Missouri (inactive), Illinois (inactive), and Texas (active).



Marina Gonzales, Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA)

Marina is the Chief Executive Officer of Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA), a non-profit agency that trains and oversees volunteer advocates certified by the Bexar County Children's Court to be the voice for children who are victims of abuse and neglect. At CASA, she leads a dedicated team of 40 full-time employees and over 500 volunteers advocating for the physical, emotional, medical, and educational well-being of children in our County's welfare system.



Melanie Fry, Dykema Cox Smith

Melanie is a member in the litigation and appellate groups at Dykema Cox Smith. Before moving to San Antonio, she served as a law clerk for Justice Don Willett on the Texas Supreme Court. She and her husband Kyle enjoy running after their two inquisitive and active kiddos, Ethan (4) and Hannah (1).



Molly Neck, The Rosenblatt Law Firm

Molly graduated from St. Mary's University School of Law in 2008. She has worked in business litigation, municipal law, appeals and now business transactions. She also has two amazing dogs who she spoils with tons of food and they spoil her with tons of love.



Natalie Wilson, Langley & Banack, Inc.

Natalie represents debtors, creditors, and trustees in bankruptcy proceedings and related litigation and appeals. She is also actively involved in professional organizations and the military community. Natalie is married to an active duty Air Force Senior Non-Commissioned Officer and has four young children.



Rachel Skinner Fernandez, Dykema Cox Smith

Rachel is an Associate at Dykema Cox Smith where she practices Commercial Litigation. She is the proud parent of her Doberman Pinscher "Scully," and enjoys burning calories at her favorite fitness studio, OrangeTheory Fitness.



Sarah Donahue, Pulman, Cappuccio, Pullen, Benson & Jones LLP

Sarah, a San Antonio native, recently joined Pulman, Cappuccio, Pullen, Benson & Jones after practicing for four years at the Colorado Office of the Attorney General in the Consumer Fraud Unit. She enjoys running, live music, and Fiesta season.



Shellie Reyes, The Rosenblatt Law Firm

Shellie Reyes is an Associate Attorney at the Rosenblatt Law Firm. She primarily practices in the areas of business and commercial litigation, including cases regarding oil and gas, fiduciary duties, contracts, and consumer disputes. Prior to her current position, she was an associate attorney at The Whitley Law Firm, practicing family law, including civil appeals. Shellie is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and St. Mary's University School of Law.

THE GIFT OF READING

By: Kathleen Church

On December 8, BCWB held their annual holiday luncheon and as many members are aware, we always keep the charitable spirit of the season alive as we dine together. This year, members who attended were asked to bring a donation of books for the organization, SAReads. (<http://www.literacysanantonio.com>)

Luncheon attendees received an overview on this organization, but I'd like to use this space to shine a spotlight on their cause and how they achieve it, for all our members to learn.

Anyone who has spent time with a young child, who has yet to learn how to read, knows things can get difficult in situations when reading is required. Frustration can abound from all parties and, if like me, you lack the skills to teach reading, you simply end up just reading to them instead of with them. SAReads is an organization who recognized the frustration of trying to teach a child to read without being fully equipped to do so, is not restricted to outside the classroom. A project of Literacy San Antonio, SAReads focuses on successfully teaching children in high poverty schools how to read by equipping teachers with

science based reading instruction, or what they refer to as SBRI.

SBRI remains the only proven method, backed up by years of research and data studies, of teaching all people how to read. Direct and efficient as they come, SAReads starts by reviewing and analyzing scholastic data on students provided by the school districts and from there, plans are constructed. All SBRI's are organized around five key components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. These components working in alignment with the complex cognitive processes of how the brain reads, creates the most fail proof approach in teaching children to read.

As with any learning situation, adequately prepared teachers working with a support team plays a crucial role in the implementing of any SBRI. SAReads attacks this issue three ways, one is obviously by empowering the classroom teachers through continuing training, coaching, and lesson plans. Not only does SAReads involve the teachers in seminars and training, but they also include support staff and school administrators because they recognize it takes a village

and programs lacking the unity of all involved parties can lead to disaster. Multiple events and celebrations designed for parental involvement as well are planned throughout the year; all in the effort of creating "a culture of reading" that will hopefully last a lifetime.

Second, SAREads maintains a tutoring corps of undergraduates from the Texas A&M-San Antonio's College of Education and Human Development. Weekly small group tutoring of students from kindergarten to 5th grade; helps reinforce techniques learned in the classroom and gives the clinical college students the opportunity to create custom SBRI's for students. Each of these sessions consists of both scientific based teaching and then application through reading.

The third component is the SAREads' Book Bank, a project that functions as a clearinghouse for collecting, cleaning, sorting, and redistributing books to the community so there is always a book available to read. These books are provided free to teachers and nonprofit organizations upon request. SAREads' Book Bank opened in 2010 and since then, over 300,000 books have been delivered to grateful classrooms and libraries all over the county.

Donations and volunteering help SAREads and Literacy San Antonio complete their goals at peak efficiency. There are volunteering opportunities for individuals, families or groups. From helping plan, oversee, and sort book drives; to assisting in creating the SBRI's; to doing outreach in the community, there is a volunteer position for everyone. Book drives are held in the summer and the holiday season but books can be donated at all times at the Firstmark Credit Union's Gulfdale's branch. SAREads is also involved in the Amazon Smile program, so as holiday shopping gets completed; please remember to select them for benefits when checking out. If you are interested in volunteering at or hosting a book drive of your own, please visit their page for more information, <http://www.literacysanantonio.com>

If you would like to volunteer in another way, please visit their general volunteer page, <http://www.literacysanantonio.com/vol>

As the year comes to a close, on behalf of the BCWB, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for any and all of the community service or charitable contributions our members made in the last 12 months. We thank you and the community thanks you, here's to next year and hopefully more ways to give back!

Big Little Lies

Mini-Series Review

By Rachel Skinner Fernandez



When I saw that Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, and Shailene Woodley had teamed up in this HBO mini-series, I knew I had to check it out. A steal of my parents' HBO account (don't judge me—I share my Starz account with them—I swear I'm an adult) and a weeknight where the husband was off sharing financial advice with a client, I started the first episode. Only a couple days later, I had managed to find enough time to finish the season.

The show, written and created by David E. Kelley and co-executive produced by Witherspoon and Kidman, is set in Monterey, a wealthy town on the coast of California. The show revolves around a murder, spending seven episodes giving you small clues as to who was murdered and who committed it up until the end. As the mystery unfolds, the action focuses on three moms and their relationships with each other and their families—Madeline (Witherspoon), Celeste (Kidman), and Jane (Shailene Woodley). Madeline is a full-time mom whose fire-cracker personality can get her into trouble. Celeste is a former lawyer with a marriage that often crosses the line from passion to abuse. Jane is the newcomer to Monterey and a single mom who is clearly trying to escape a traumatic experience in her past. Madeline takes Jane under her wing when a fellow mom in their kids' kindergarten class singles out Jane's son, Ziggy, for an act he claims he didn't commit.

While we may not be able to relate to the ocean front views of the women's multi-million dollar homes, the everyday issues plaguing them seem all too close to heart. The stellar acting brings a humanity to all the women characters, focusing on their need to connect with each other, difficulties in raising their children, and struggles in their marriages. These issues tied together with the mystery and drama surrounding a murder in a town like Monterey, results in a stellar story that is directed, acted, and filmed exceptionally. I highly recommend the seven hours or so it takes to watch it. Just beware, it seems more binge watching is ahead since HBO just gave the green light for a second season.

La Panaderia

Restaurant Review

By Amanda Crouch



La Panaderia, an artisan bakery that has been located on Broadway since 2014, recently opened a second location downtown on Houston Street. Co-owned by brothers Jose and David Caceres, La Panaderia serves artisan breads, pastries, soups and salads. The downtown location also offers dinner options as well as beer and wine.

I have eaten at la Panaderia several times and never had something I didn't like. The Chicken Milanese torta is phenomenal and perfect when paired with a cup of Fideo soup on a cold day. To satisfy your sweet tooth, you can't go wrong with a chocolate croissant or a homemade cinnamon roll.

If you have some time to kill between meetings, the downtown location features a bread lab where customers can watch the 48-hour fermentation and bread-making process. Stop in for a pastry and a cup of coffee and enjoy a few minutes of relaxation! With the success of the first two locations in full swing, the brothers plan to open a third location in 2018.



Help St. Mary's University law students dress for success

The Office of Career Services is accepting donations of business attire to help law students build their professional wardrobes.

Donations can be dropped off at the Office of Career Services in the Sarita Kenedy East Law Library, Room 216, or at the next monthly luncheon.

Please contact Kim Underdown at 210-436-3511 or kunderdown@stmarytx.edu to arrange a donation pick-up.



ST. MARY'S
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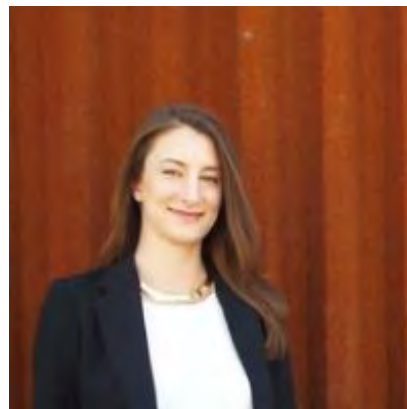
law.stmarytx.edu

BCWB Lites

- Danielle N. Rushing has been selected as a member of the Junior League of San Antonio, Inc.'s LeaderBOARD Community Leadership Academy Class of 2018. Established by the Junior League of San Antonio, LeaderBOARD is a six-month training program for JLSA members, San Antonio-area community members, and partner agencies to provide training on the operation and function of nonprofit boards. Upon completion, LeaderBOARD class members will be equipped with the necessary skills to effectively serve the San Antonio community as a member of a nonprofit board. Ms. Rushing is a commercial litigation associate with the law firm of Curl Stahl Geis, P.C., and is an active member of Bexar County Women's Bar, San Antonio Young Lawyers Association, the Honorable Larry E. Kelly American Inn of Court, and Junior League of San Antonio, Inc.



- Meredith Cooper has recently changed jobs and is now an advisor at Raymond James Financial, Inc.



- Congratulations to BCWB Secretary Brittany Weil for her first oral argument at the Texas Supreme Court! Way to go, Brittany!



- Kim Tindall & Associates Court Reporting and Litigation Support Services was named one of the top Women Owned Businesses in SA by the San Antonio Business Journal.



OUR MISSION

The mission of the Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation is twofold: to provide educational opportunities to its members; and to protect and strengthen local families by supporting legal and charitable programs.

Bexar County Women's Bar Association

BCWB

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**Please Direct All
Questions, Comments and
Submissions to:**

Newsletter@BexarCountyWomensBar.Org

THE EQUAL TIMES

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