



Choose to BE GRATEFUL

2020 IS FINALLY WINDING TO A CLOSE. For many, the first thing that comes to mind is *Good Riddance! Throw the WHOLE YEAR away!* I would be lying if I said these thoughts have not crossed my mind. This unprecedented year has been a roller coaster of emotions and utter chaos. It is hard not to dwell on all the negative things that have transpired. Like many of you, I have lost loved ones and did not get to say goodbye. I miss being able to drive down to Austin and spend time with my family. I have had to get used to this new way of living and practicing law from the confines of my home. However, this December, I am choosing to look back on the good that has occurred, take pride in the things I have accomplished this year, and choose to be grateful. At the end of the day, we are enduring and doing the best we can. Give yourself a hand!

The Texas Young Lawyers Association has worked hard these first two quarters to continue serving the public, our members, and our future members. Our board has come together and developed many projects already without ever getting a chance to meet in person. At our second quarter board meeting, I was amazed at all of the things our members have accomplished since September. To name a few:

- Launched the *Practice Areas 101* podcast series;
- Launched another season of *Young Gunners*, a podcast that focuses on business development strategies for young lawyers;
- Launched a social media campaign featuring Texas-based celebrities, such as Liza Koshy and Bri Bagwell, to encourage all eligible voters to get out and vote; and
- Zoomed across the state with our TYLA Virtual Roadshows featuring young lawyers Brandon Draper and Jackie Furlow in Houston.

We also honored our Second Quarter Small City and Large City Champs at our virtual meeting in November. Our previous Small City Champ passed the belt to Dave Hagan, of Longview. Hagan is a second-year TYLA director and has been instrumental in developing our expunction clinic materials. Our previous Large City Champ passed the belt to Johnathan Stone, of Austin. Stone is a second-year TYLA director and our “rules guru.” He led the development of new rules to govern our virtual advocacy competitions as well as our *Evidence Guide*, which we plan to distribute in the spring. Both directors have shown great leadership, and their hard work is invaluable.



HAGAN



STONE

This December will look a lot different than most years, but I encourage you to make the most of it. Create new traditions with your friends and family. Organize a virtual gathering for games and good times. Binge watch the latest Hallmark movies. Take some much-needed time off for self-care. Though we have all struggled this year, let's choose to be grateful for the positive things. We are resilient and will turn things around in 2021. I wish you all a wonderful holiday season, and I'll see you next year!

BRITNEY HARRISON

2020-2021 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association



A Full FALL

OCTOBER IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE MONTHS OF THE YEAR—scary movies, generally relief from this Texas heat, and countless *Hocus Pocus* showings. On a more serious note, since 1989, October has been designated National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As a family law attorney, I know the importance of bringing awareness to this issue. And since the pandemic began, family lawyers have seen many domestic violence-related cases. Under the leadership of past President Baili Rhodes, TYLA created the *Free From Violence* website, which contains information about domestic violence and elder abuse laws, community resources, video interviews with justice system participants, and testimonials from survivors. Our goal is to help those living with the harsh reality of physical, emotional, and mental abuse to feel empowered to get help. We endeavor to help every Texan live a life that is free from violence. If you or someone you know is affected by domestic violence, go to our website at freefromviolence.tyla.org or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. We also have resources available at tyla.org, including *Healing the Wounds* to assist with navigating the legal system after surviving domestic abuse and *Ending the Violence: How to Obtain a Texas Protective Order*. Please watch out for one another.

In September, our directors attended TYLA's virtual first quarter board meeting. Per usual, they have been busy working on projects for the year. Committee chairs and representatives gave updates on our latest projects, including two additions to our TYLA podcast repertoire:

1. *Young Gunners* Season 2: Business Development Series—Season two of our TYLA podcast focuses on the business side of practicing law with a series of episodes aimed toward business development. We will explore topics on landing clients, business development for the introvert, and many more. Stay tuned!
2. *Practice Areas 101* Podcast—Launching this month, this podcast features young lawyers from across the state discussing various aspects of their practice areas, including some funny stories and words of advice to law students wanting to learn more. We are seeking guests to appear on the podcast, so please reach out to Cali Franks (Dallas) at TYLAPodcast@gmail.com.

At our virtual meeting, we honored two directors who have gone above and beyond in their leadership and service. Laura Pratt (Lubbock) was our First Quarter Small City Champ and Brandon Draper (Houston) was our First Quarter Large City Champ. They truly embody the TYLA spirit of an uncommon leader. They received WWE-style champion belts and will hold the titles until our next meeting in November. TYLA continues to foster and develop future leaders in the community and this profession.



PRATT



DRAPER

October rounds out the last leg of TYLA Virtual Tri, which is the swim portion. We enjoyed participating in this wellness activity with our friends and family across the state. We continue to promote *Vote America: Court the Vote* and encourage all eligible voters to vote. Finally, we are bringing back the Barristers Out for Blood blood donation initiative to assist with the statewide shortage. Be well, everyone!

BRITNEY HARRISON

2020-2021 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association



Sharing Resources BASED ON LESSONS LEARNED

TEN YEARS. IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT 10 YEARS AGO, I looked at the pass list for the July 2010 bar examinees and saw my name. It was a moment of shock and utter joy—my biggest accomplishment. I am in a completely different place than I envisioned back then. My journey of navigating law school, finances, and finding the practice area that brings me joy inspired some of the projects the Texas Young Lawyers Association is developing this year.

When I started at the University of Texas School of Law (hook 'em!), I had no idea what I was doing or what I was in for at the time. I just knew I needed to work hard, get good grades, and obtain a job that would help me pay for my student loan debt. I simply took out the loans each year and went to school. If I knew then what I know now, I would have made much smarter decisions with my finances and summer firm salaries. I have learned that many of my fellow young lawyers were in the same boat back then, so now, we want to help our future colleagues. With that, we are developing our *Financial Literacy and Debt Management Series*, which will have an entire section directed toward law students. Our goal is to better educate law students and young lawyers on how to successfully take charge of their financial well-being and make informed decisions earlier in the process. The project will also include information on retirement planning and disability insurance. We aim to assist all lawyers, especially solo and small firm attorneys.

When I began my legal career, I worked at a litigation boutique in Austin practicing commercial and employment litigation. It paid very well and allowed me to make those pesky student loan payments and more importantly, pay my dad's college tuition. However, that job brought me very little joy, and I was beginning to doubt my decision to practice law. It was not until I took a pro bono family law case that I realized I was meant to be a lawyer. I contemplated my transition to family law for about a year. I took family lawyers to lunch and coffee, attended CLEs, and met with a financial planner. In September 2013, I made the decision to leave my firm and started practicing at a prestigious family law firm in Austin.

In trying to develop additional projects for this year, I spoke with fellow board member Meagan Harding, of Houston, and we discussed the difficulties lawyers desiring to transition to a new area of practice may have. And from that, we developed the idea for *Transitioning Your Area of Practice: A Guide to Ease the Transition*. This guide will consist of advice and accounts from lawyers who have successfully transitioned from one area to another and provide information about some of the changes to expect. We are looking forward to launching this spring.

We cannot wait to share these resources with you!

BRITNEY HARRISON

2020-2021 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association