

# WESTERN STATES REGIONAL SUMMIT

El Paso, Texas

• Hotel Paso del Norte

• May 19-22, 2022



*Prickly Pear 2021, Number 21*

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CONFERENCE HOSTS:





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The 2022 Western States Regional Summit is the 8th annual meeting of the ABA young lawyer division affiliates. The Western States Regional Summit began in 2015 as the Four Corners States Regional Summit and has expanded to include Rocky Mountain, Southwest, and Great Plains/Midwest Affiliates. This is the first time that the Texas Young Lawyers Association is hosting the Western States Regional Summit.

“Regional Summits” are meetings that are organized by two or more affiliates. The Regional Summits are designed to foster networking, information sharing, and to encourage education, leadership, and collaboration among affiliates, young lawyers, and law students.

The Western States Regional Summit would not have been possible without the logistical and financial support of the Co-Sponsoring Affiliates:



# LETTER FROM THE TEXAS YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION CHAIR

It is my honor to welcome you to Texas and the Sun City for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Western States Regional Summit.

Having attended several previous summits, I really wanted the opportunity for the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) to host the Summit in Texas. Thanks to the support of TYLA President Jeanine Rispoli and State Bar of Texas President Sylvia Borunda Firth, TYLA is able to host the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Western States Regional Summit in El Paso, Texas.

Planning this Summit has been a labor of love— my love for TYLA, my love for the Western State Regional Summits, and my love for bar service. The first summit I ever attended was in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and it made a huge impact on my life. I have lifelong friends and memories that I still cherish from my very first summit. It is my hope that your experience at the Summit, whether it is your first time or your sixth time, is one that leaves lasting memories, creates new friendship, and becomes a weekend to remember.

For this Summit, up to twelve hours of continuing legal education credits are available, including a diversity and inclusion workshop, professional development trainings, a leadership panel, and sessions dealing with evolving areas of the law. We are also honored to feature a trial skills panel with the illustrious “Cat Lawyer Judge,” the Honorable Judge Ferguson, and two distinguished young trial lawyers.

Continuing legal education isn’t the only purpose of this Summit; you will also get a taste of El Paso and have an opportunity to network with other young lawyers. The Summit will start out with a welcome reception at the Hotel Paso del Norte’s rooftop bar, a Friday evening reception and dinner at the El Paso Chihuahuas ballpark, an optional attorney wellness activity at the Alligator Plaza, and a closing reception under the stars at Zin Valle Vineyard.

This Summit wouldn’t have been possible without the support of TYLA, the State Bar of Texas, the planning committee, the co-sponsoring states, and our very generous sponsors.

A huge thanks goes to the TYLA ladies: Tracy Brown, Michelle Palacios, and Bree Trevino without whom I could not have made it through the Summit nor the past seven years on the TYLA board.

Finally, the largest thank you goes to my co-chair, Kirk Cooper. Kirk embraced the idea of the Summit immediately, and his hard work and love of El Paso shows in every part of this Summit.

I am so excited to share a little piece of Texas with y’all.

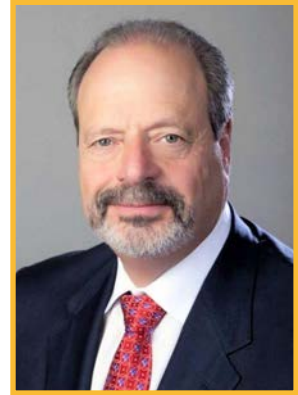
Welcome to Texas!



**Sara Anne Giddings**  
*Chair, Texas Young Lawyers Association*



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**OSCAR LEESER**  
MAYOR

As Mayor of the City of El Paso, Texas, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Western States Regional Summit to our great city. El Paso offers a vibrant international experience and friendly hospitality, combined with extraordinary weather that is the jewel of the Southwest. We are called the Sun City, and our breathtaking sunsets and striking Franklin Mountains are surpassed only by the warmth of the wonderful people of El Paso, who always make every visitor feel special. We are full of a variety of bustling activities, from a multitude of culinary offerings to magnificent nature trails, a large assortment of shopping choices, our beloved zoo and a vibrant art and music scene. We've recently had a remarkable revitalization throughout the City, and particularly in our completely revamped downtown area, which has something to appeal to all tastes. I'm certain your Texas Young Lawyer Association hosts will be glad to be our formal ambassadors and show you first-hand what I am describing!

El Paso offers over 400 years of rich history that is celebrated in a multitude of public exhibits and seasonal attractions. As the largest metropolitan border-region area in the world, the blending of cultures in El Paso, Ciudad Juárez and Las Cruces, N.M. offers you the best of three states and two countries. We are very proud of the fact that we are named one of America's safest cities year after year, and we were recently designated an All-America City for the 5<sup>th</sup> time in a row! The U.S.-Mexico border has become a critical economic driver for the United States, and particularly for Texas. In our region, we have 6 border crossings, and the City manages 3 ports of entry, in total handling over 70 billion in trade. We are the 6<sup>th</sup> largest city in Texas and our stretch of I-10 carries 20,000 trucks a day from east to west, which results in \$1.8 trillion in trade. We are home to Fort Bliss, the second largest military installation in the Department of Defense, and we are a hub for innovative green infrastructure, like the Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant, the largest in-land desalination plant in the world.

As you can see, we have many exciting things going on, but we've also overcome great challenges. A year and a half ago, we were the highest COVID-19-infected city in the nation. Yet we became the first city in Texas to reach herd immunity in the battle against COVID-19, a tremendous accomplishment and complete turnaround. We were able to achieve this by working together, unified in voice and action, with a resounding and supportive response from our community.

It is with this unity that we roll out the red carpet for your Regional Summit. Whether you are from our home state, or visiting from Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, or South Dakota, you are family here. And we are excited for you to personally experience the warm hospitality that we have become famous for. Thank you for being here, I wish you a most successful summit and safe travels back home!

Sincerely,

Oscar Leeser

Mayor

# Thank You to all of our sponsors for helping make this event successful!

## LONESTAR SPONSORS



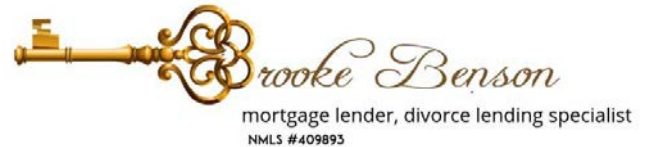
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# Program Agenda

CLE Credit Total: 12 CLE Hours (includes 4.0 Ethics Hours)

## Thursday, May 19

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Conference Check-In** – *Pancho Villa Ballroom Foyer*

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. **Opening Reception** – *Paso del Norte Hotel Rooftop Terrace*

## Friday, May 20

(6.25 CLE hrs, 2.0 ethics hrs) *All CLE programming will take place in the Pancho Villa Ballroom. Breakfast, lunch, and networking breaks are included in registration.*

7:30 a.m. **Conference Check-In** – *Pancho Villa Ballroom Foyer*

8:00 a.m. **Breakfast** – *Henry Trost Boardroom*

9:00 a.m. **Opening Remarks and Welcome**

*Sylvia Borunda Firth, President of the State Bar of Texas*

*Sara Anne Giddings, Chair of the Texas Young Lawyers Association*

*Jeanine Novosad Rispoli, President of the Texas Young Lawyers Association*

### Session One:

9:15 a.m. **Transitioning from Private Practice to Government (And Vice Versa)**

75 hr (.25 ethics)

*Peter Handy, Deputy Director, Nevada Department of Indigent Defense (Carson City, NV)*

*Billy J. Jimenez, Deputy Secretary and General Counsel, New Mexico Department of Health (Albuquerque, NM)*

*Laura Pratt, Associate, Brady & Hamilton, LLP (Lubbock, TX)*

*Holli Welch, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Wyoming Attorney General (Cheyenne, WY)*

### Session Two:

10:00 a.m. **Digital Impact: Key Legal Facets of Web3 and Blockchain** 1 hr

*Carlos Garcia-Aguilar, Web3 Lawyers and C.A. Garcia Law Firm*

11:00 a.m. **Morning Networking Break**

**Session Three:**

11:15 a.m. **International Business Immigration: The U.S.-Mexico Border Perspective** .75 hr  
*Andrea Moran, ScottHulse P.C. (El Paso, TX)*

12:00 p.m. **Lunch** – *Henry Trost Boardroom*

**Session Four:**

1:00 p.m. **Introduction to Movement and Community Lawyering and Other  
Community Driven Advocacy** .75hr (.25 ethics)  
*Abre' Conner, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley (Sacramento, CA)*

**Session Five:**

1:45 p.m. **Sharpening Your Legal Writing Skills: A Workshop** 1 hr (.5 ethics)  
*Kirk Cooper, Chief Staff Attorney, Texas Eighth Court of Appeals (El Paso, TX)*

2:45 p.m. **Afternoon Networking Break**

**Session Six:**

3:00 p.m. **Bankruptcy Law for Non-Bankruptcy Lawyers** 1 hr  
*Dylan Crouse, Crowley Fleck (Billings, MT)*

**Session Seven:**

4:00 p.m. **Leadership Development: How Bar Leaders Today Build Diversity, Equity,  
and Inclusion to Create Better Outcomes Tomorrow** 1 hr (1 hr ethics)  
*Dean Stephen Rispoli, Baylor University School of Law (Waco, TX)*  
*Dean Patricia Wilson, Baylor University School of Law (Waco, TX)*

5:00 p.m. **Adjourn for the day**

5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. **Happy Hour, Lawteria, and Dinner** – *El Paso Chihuahuas Ballpark* (Included in  
Registration)



## Saturday, May 21

(5.75 CLE Hours; 2.75 Ethics Hours)

7:15 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. **Sunrise Alligator Yoga @ San Jacinto Plaza**

8:00 a.m. **Conference Check-in – Pancho Villa Ballroom Foyer**

8:00 a.m. **Breakfast – Henry Trost Boardroom**

### Session Eight:

9:00 a.m. **Phishing, Hacking, Ransomware: How to Protect Yourself in the World Wide Web** 1hr (1 hr ethics)

*Sara Anne Giddings, Law Offices of Trent Nichols, PLLC (Shiner, TX)*

### Session Nine:

10:00 a.m. **Making Networking Work for You: Expanding Beyond Client Connections** .75 hr  
*Cali Franks, Lawline (Dallas, TX)*

10:45 a.m. **Morning Networking Break**

### Session Ten:

11:00 a.m. **Tips for Building and Maintaining Resiliency in the Practice of Law** 1 hr (1 hr ethics)  
*Erica Grigg, Director, Texas Lawyers Assistance Program (Austin, TX)*

12:00 p.m. **Lunch – Henry Trost Boardroom**

### Session Eleven:

1:00 p.m. **Trial Perspectives: A Courtroom Roundtable** 1hr  
*Hon. Roy Ferguson, Judge of the 394<sup>th</sup> District Court/"Lawyer Cat" Judge (Alpine, TX)*  
*Raleigh Hansman, Meierhenry Sargent, L.L.P. (Sioux Falls, SD)*  
*Kylie Schmidt, Ogborn Mihm LLP (Denver, CO)*  
*Kirk Cooper, Moderator, Chief Staff Attorney, Texas Eighth Court of Appeals (El Paso, TX)*

### Session Twelve:

2:00 p.m. **The Good, the Bad, the Ugly: Leadership from the Trenches** 1 hr  
*Sylvia Borunda Firth, President of the State Bar of Texas (El Paso, TX)*  
*Sara Anne Giddings, Chair of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (Shiner, TX)*  
*Shasta N. Inman, ABA YLD Assembly Clerk (Albuquerque, NM)*  
*Jessica Perez, Chair of the State Bar of New Mexico Young Lawyers Division (Bernalillo, NM)*  
*Hon. Lauren Renee Sepulveda, Moderator, Chair-Elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (McAllen, TX)*

3:00 p.m.

### Afternoon Networking Break

#### Session Thirteen:

3:15 p.m.

#### Employment Law for Remote Workers 1 hr

*Richard L. Clifton, Jr., Schmoyer Reinhard (San Antonio, TX)*

*Michael Ritter, Schmoyer Reinhard (San Antonio, TX)*

4:15 p.m.

#### Closing Remarks

*Kirk Cooper, TYLA District 14 Director*

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m

#### Closing Reception & Wine Under the Desert Sky (Ticketed Event)

Zin Valle Vineyards, Canutillo, TX



## Artist Spotlight

*"It is always about color"- Patrick Gabaldon*

Patrick Gabaldon was born and raised in the Sun City of El Paso, Texas. His passion in art began after returning home after law school to the vibrant color and vast expanse of the desert sky. His time away gave him a new perspective on the often forgotten west Texas desert. Gabaldon took his new found inspiration and made it his quest to show others his colorful interpretation of the borderland.

Attorney by day and artist by night, Gabaldon's colorful stylings drew public appreciation with multiple features in digital, print media, and on local airwaves.

Today, it is difficult not to find Gabaldon's work on display across the city.

The bright tones that have become synonymous with Gabaldon's work illuminate the cross border culture he attributes as the inspiration behind his painting. Find his work at [www.gabaldonart.com](http://www.gabaldonart.com) or on Instagram [@GabaldonArt](https://www.instagram.com/GabaldonArt).

**GABALDONART**



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## CLE CREDIT SUBMISSION

All attendees have been provided with a CLE credit form in order to keep track of the CLE sessions attended. All attendees are responsible for reporting their own CLE hours. The Summit has been preapproved for 12 hours of Texas CLE including 4.0 of Ethic hours.

**Texas Attorneys:** All Texas attorneys will use Course Number **174159683** to register their CLE hours on their bar page on **texasbar.com**.

**Non-Texas Attorneys:** For all attorneys claiming credit other than Texas CLE, use the CLE Credit Form to self-file in your own state. Please note: your state may require additional documentation for credit submission such as the program agenda or session materials. All conference materials will remain on the TYLA website (**tyla.org**) through the end of 2022.

If you have any questions or need any additional information regarding claiming CLE credit, please contact the TYLA office at (800) 204-2222 ext. 1529.

# Session Descriptions

## **Session One: Transitioning from Private Practice to Government (And Vice Versa)**

**1 hr (.25 Ethics)**

9:15 a.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Peter Handy, Nevada Department of Indigent Defense; Billy J. Jimenez, New Mexico Department of Health; Laura Pratt, Brady & Hamilton, LLP; Hollie Welch, Office of Wyoming Attorney General*

A roundtable discussion of the challenges to be aware of switching between government and private practice, and vice versa, including:

- Ethical considerations such as criminal work as former prosecutors, how zealous advocacy changes based on who your client is, consideration of applicable “cooling off” periods, and the ongoing conflict of interest from your former practice
- Defining your representation and separation of former and current clients
- How practicing between the two areas can shape your career path
- Issues to watch out for in switching within small bar associations

## **Session Two: Digital Impact: Key Legal Facets of Web3 and Blockchain**

**1 hr**

10:00 a.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Carlos Garcia-Aguilar, Web3 Lawyers and C.A. Garcia Law Firm*

Crypto currencies and non-fungible tokens (NFT) have exploded in popularity over the last year. This presentation will provide you with an overview of new technologies, and will prepare you in the event that you have a client with a “blockchain” issue.

## **Session Three: International Business Immigration: The US-Mexico Border Perspective**

**.75 hr**

11:15 a.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Andrea Moran, ScottHulse P.C.*

The U.S./Mexico border, particularly the El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua region is composed of many businesses (small and large) that benefit from the movement from people across borders.

Businesses in the U.S., especially today in the changing employment atmosphere, are seeking to hire specialized and trained (professional) foreign nationals in different specialty areas such as engineering and accounting and for different managerial and executive positions. In addition, some foreign nationals with plans to invest and open new business are bringing their business operations and ideas into the U.S.

With these types of international movements of people taking place more and more frequently, it is important to have a basic understanding of how to begin navigate through the complex system of immigration rules and regulations to successfully acquire work visas for foreign nationals planning to work in the U.S. With this in mind, we will delve into some of the different types of visas most commonly sought out in border region, a basic overview of the processes for acquiring such visas and the benefits of hiring foreign workers for U.S. businesses across the border.

## **Session Four: Introduction to Movement and Community Lawyering and Other Community Driven Advocacy**

**.75 hr (.25 ethics)**

1:00 p.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Abre' Conner, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley*

Join us for a conversation regarding movement and community lawyering and navigating identity in the public interest and other workplaces. We will discuss the similarities and differences of community and movement lawyering, how identity or personal privilege shows up in community and movement lawyering work, and ways to incorporate these frameworks into your practice.

## **Session Five: Sharpening Your Legal Writing Skills: A Workshop**

**1 hr (.5 ethics)**

1:45 p.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Kirk Cooper, Texas Eighth Court of Appeals*

Legal writing is a vital skill, but many lawyers do not feel confident in their ability to draft clear contracts, write compelling motions, or craft persuasive appellate briefs. This session will discuss the nuts and bolts of legal writing, include the origins of "legalese," the advantages and disadvantages of taking a plain language approach to legal writing, how the canons of interpretation affect transactional document drafting, and how to strike a balance among precision, brevity, and tradition when writing. The session will also provide practical tips on how to structure legal documents, how to avoid common writing pitfalls, and what persuasive techniques work best when drafting advocacy documents. This session will also discuss ethical duties a writer has in drafting documents, including duties of disclosure and duties of candor to courts.

## **Session Six: Bankruptcy for Non-Bankruptcy Lawyers**

**1 hr**

3:00 p.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Dylan Crouse, Crowley Fleck*

No matter the area of practice, lawyers of all kinds are likely to encounter individuals and business in financial distress – whether as a debtor or creditor. When dealing with such situations, attorneys unfamiliar with bankruptcy often fail to identify key issues or overlook available remedies. This presentation will decode the mystery of bankruptcy by introducing non-bankruptcy attorneys to the basic features of individual and business bankruptcies. Topics include basic issue spotting; the effect of a bankruptcy filing; the impact on pending matters; and a basic overview of case progression and outcomes. Even attendees with limited bankruptcy experience will leave the program empowered to address these issues and answer related client questions.

## **Session Seven: Leadership Development: How Bar Leaders Today Build Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Create Better Outcomes Tomorrow**

**1 hr (1 hr ethics)**

4:00 p.m., Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

*Dean Stephen Rispoli, Baylor University School of Law; Dean Patricia Wilson, Baylor University School of Law*

It's not enough to just affirm the singular importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion; we must equip ourselves to effectively lead our bar associations as they grow increasingly diverse in the broadest sense. While this session will discuss the challenges that bar associations face as they work to create more inclusive environments, the focus will primarily be on practical ideas about what bar associations can do to move beyond superficial diversity to become more inclusive. The session will include interactive exercises, measures that bar associations have already implemented, and some concrete actions that can be taken going forward to increase membership and prepare future leaders.

## **Session Eight: Phishing, Hacking, Ransomware: How to protect yourself in the World Wide Web**

**1hr (1 hr ethics)**

9:00 a.m., Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

*Sara Anne Giddings, Law Offices of Trent Nichols, PLLC*

Technology is a mainstay of legal practice; however, most attorneys do not understand that the ethical obligation that accompanies the use of technology nor the inherent risks that accompany the use of technology. This presentation will focus on the ethical implications in using technology, the threat that the use of technology poses, tools for protecting data, and how to respond to a cybersecurity attack.

## **Session Nine: Making Networking Work for You: Expanding Beyond Client Connections**

**.75 hr**

10:00 a.m., Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

*Cali Franks, Lawline*

So often, young lawyers are expected to network to build their book of business. However, the skills used to build a book of business can also be used to advance other areas of a young attorney's professional and personal life. This CLE will dive into standard methods for building your book of business and explore how those same methods can be used to expand your connection outside of the office.

## **Session Ten: Tips for Building and Maintaining Resiliency in the Practice of Law**

**1 hr (1 hr ethics)**

11:00 a.m., Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

*Erica Grigg, Texas Lawyers Assistance Program*

Discover evidence based tips on how to build and maintain strategies to manage one's mental health while engaging in the very demanding practice of law.

## **Session Eleven: Trial Perspectives: A Courtroom Roundtable**

**1 hr**

1:00 p.m., Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

*Hon. Roy Ferguson, Judge of the 394<sup>th</sup> District Court; Raleigh Hansman, Meierhenry Sargent, L.L.P.; Kylie Schmidt, Ogborn Mihm LLP; Kirk Cooper, Moderator, Texas Eighth Court of Appeals*

This session's panelists—an accomplished trial judge and two seasoned trial practitioners from different Mountain West states—will share practical trial tips with attendees, with a focus on skills development. Topics will include jury selection, witness examination, and opening and closing statements, as well as reflections on the challenges that COVID-19 presented to trial practice in the panelist's respective communities and whether teleconference and other technologies that came to prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic will remain in use moving forward as part of trial practice. The session will end with a brief Q&A session from the audience.

## **Session Twelve: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly: Leadership from the Trenches**

**1 hr**

2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

*Sylvia Borunda Firth, President of the State Bar of Texas; Sara Anne Giddings, Chair of the Texas Young Lawyers Association; Shasta Inman, YLD Assembly Clerk; Jessica Perez, Chair of the State Bar of New Mexico Young Lawyers Division; Hon. Lauren Renee Sepulveda, Moderator, Chair-Elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association*

This session's panelists, bar leaders on both the state and national level, will engage in a thought-provoking discussion on leadership as they discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly of being a bar leader. The discussion will include an examination of challenges facing leaders, leading during a pandemic, how to increase diversity and inclusion in leadership and membership, effective leadership techniques, and the importance of leadership in bar associations and similar organization.

## **Session Thirteen: Employment Law for Remote Workers**

**1 hr**

3:15 p.m., Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

*Richard L. Clifton, Jr., Schmoyer Reinhard; Michael Ritter, Schmoyer Reinhard*

This presentation will address legal and practical issues that arise in the employment law context with employees working from home. Topics to be addressed include factors to consider in creating or reviewing a remote work policy, worker's compensation and tort liability issues, documentation of remote workplace issues, mental health factors that can contribute to employment disputes, employment trends during and after the pandemic, and how general employment statutes might apply to employees working remotely.

# Speaker Bios



**RICHARD L. CLIFTON, JR.** is an associate at Schmoyer Reinhard LLP. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Clifton served as a law clerk to the Honorable D. Gordon Bryant of the Northern District of Texas, and the Honorable Henry J. Bemporad of the Western District of Texas, and as a staff attorney to Justice Yvonne Rodriguez on the El Paso Court of Appeals. His practice encompasses handling all aspects of employment law in state and federal cases. Ricky received his BA from Southern Methodist University, and J.D. from the University of Mississippi School of Law. He is also the Secretary-Elect of the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association.



**ABRE' CONNER** leads the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley's litigation, direct legal services, and advocacy regarding health equity and the social determinants of health that impact historically excluded communities across Silicon Valley. Additionally, Abre' sits on the Law Foundation's race, equity, and inclusion steering committee and leads work regarding jail conditions in Santa Clara County. At the Law Foundation, Abre' specifically focuses her team's work in community and movement lawyering that centers Black, Indigenous, AAPI, and Latinx communities. Prior to this position, Abre' was a staff attorney with the ACLU Foundation of Northern California, where she advocated for the civil rights and liberties of people in the Central Valley and Northern California. She regularly represented activists, students and parents, and organizers in a myriad of issues including free speech and education rights issues. Previously, Abre' worked at the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, and on Capitol Hill.

She is currently the chief policy officer and Speaker of the American Bar Association YLD and a member of the ABA Litigation Section's Children's Rights Litigation Committee. She was named a top 40 under 40 Nation's Best Advocate by the National Bar Association, 40 under 40 alumni by the University of Florida, and has appeared in the New York Times' The Daily, American Bar Association Journal, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated's National Magazine, The Archon, and Cosmopolitan Magazine.



**KIRK COOPER** is the chief staff attorney for the Texas Eighth Court of Appeals, an intermediate state appellate court located in El Paso. In that role, he provides general counsel to the Court's justices, oversees day-to-day operations, and handles a select portfolio of original proceedings and emergency matters. He is board certified in civil appellate law, is past president of the El Paso Young Lawyers Association, and was named El Paso's Outstanding Young Lawyers in 2017. Kirk is District 14 Director for the Texas Young Lawyers Association and sits on the State Bar of Texas Appellate Section's Diversity Committee. He obtained his B.A. from the University of North Texas and his J.D. from the George Washington School of Law, where he was vice president of the Hispanic Law Student Association. Kirk has lived on the border most of his life and is proud to be Mexican-American.



**DYLAN D. CROUSE** graduated from Colgate University in 2015 and completed his J.D. at the University of Wyoming College of Law in 2018. Dylan practices at Crowley Fleck P.L.L.P. where he advises clients in the areas of banking, regulatory compliance, bankruptcy, and debt collection. In that role, Dylan handles commercial and agricultural foreclosure actions, lease disputes, and eviction actions, recovery of collateral, and collection of unsecured indebtedness. Dylan also represents creditors involved in the bankruptcy process, particularly when negotiating the liquidation or future operation of a bankrupt debtor's enterprises. He regularly presents on these subjects in collaboration with the Montana State Bar, the American Bar Association, and the Montana Bankruptcy Section. Dylan spends his free time practicing photography, playing the piano, and downhill skiing.



**HONORABLE ROY FERGUSON** presides over the 394<sup>th</sup> District Court – the largest judicial district in Texas. Comprised of five rural counties, the District covers roughly 20,000 square miles of Far West Texas, and includes over 20% of the US-Mexico border. Ferguson was first elected to the position in 2012, and reelected in 2016 and 2020. He also serves by assignment as a visiting judge on the 8<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals. He is an avid proponent of equal access to justice for all, and a frequent educational speaker to law students, lawyers, and judges around the world for the Texas Bar, the Texas Center for the Judiciary, the National Judicial College, the ABA, and ABOTA.

Ferguson serves on the Family Law Section Council, the Computer & Technology Section Council, and as a Commissioner on the Texas Children's Commission. He previously served on the governing Councils for the GPSolo Section and the Judicial Section. An early adopter of technological innovation, Ferguson has conducted over 3,000 virtual hearings and trials via Zoom. He is

appointed to the Texas Supreme Court's Judicial Committee on Information Technology, Texas Supreme Court's Remote Proceedings Task Force, Uniform Case Management System Study Group, Judicial Needs Assessment Committee, and Judicial Council Civil Justice Committee's Advisory Council.

Ferguson is a sustaining Life Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, and a member of the Texas Bar College and the Champions of Justice Society. He is extremely active on social media, primarily on Twitter (@judgefergusonTX) and YouTube, which he uses to educate the public about the justice system in an uplifting and entertaining way. And yes, this Judge Ferguson is that Judge Ferguson – from the viral LawyerCat video, which was seen by over 2.5 billion people. Among his judicial skills is the ability to see that you're "here live," and "not a cat."



**SYLVIA BORUNDA FIRTH** is the first lawyer practicing in El Paso to be elected to serve as the President of the State Bar of Texas and the first Hispanic woman to hold the seat. She is a solo practitioner in El Paso. Prior to establishing her own firm, she was the El Paso City Attorney for 7 years. In addition to her legal work for the city, she also worked as chief of staff to the mayor and director of intergovernmental affairs. While in private practice she was associated with two local law firms and served as general counsel for the American Garment Finishers, Inc. Sylvia was a minority director on the State Bar Board from 2014 to 2018 and has served on numerous bar committees and on the Government Law Council. She was president of the Texas City Attorneys Association and served on TCAA board for 8 years and was on the El Paso Association Board of Directors. In 2017 she received the President's Award for exemplary service to the bar. She is a sustaining life fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation and served on the Texas Bar Foundation's Board of Trustees. She is a multi-year member of the Texas Bar College. Sylvia earned her B.B.A. from St.

Mary's University and her J.D. from the University of Texas in 1984. Sylvia has been married to El Paso attorney, Victor M. Firth for 37 years.





**CALI FRANKS** is a Program Attorney with Lawline where she curates CLEs for Lawline’s over 160,000 attorneys across the United States. She is a native Texan, receiving her BA in Government from the University of Texas in Austin in 2015. After graduating from St. Mary’s University School of Law and getting her Texas Law License in 2018, Cali practiced civil litigation/insurance defense in Dallas, Texas for three years. Cali is very active in both her community and bar service, serving on numerous boards and holding various elected positions. When not working, Cali likes to travel with her fiancée, and play with her two small dogs, Bailee and Murphy.



**CARLOS GARCIA-AGUILAR** is the founder of Web3 Lawyer and C.A. Garcia Law Firm where he helps clients innovate in web3. His journey in non-fungible tokens (NFT) and digital currencies started a year ago when he began collecting NFTs. Since then he has launched multiple NFT projects and advised clients on a variety of web3 issues. He firmly believes that blockchain technology will reshape society and provide unique solutions for tomorrow’s greatest challenges.

Carlos is also the managing partner for Digital Genesis Consulting where his team advises companies on how to use NFTs and cryptocurrencies to grow their brick-and-mortar operations. He serves as the Chair for the American Bar Association Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and NFTs.

Prior to his current ventures Carlos was the CEO of Far Fetched Labs, and spent seventeen years in the Army JAG Corps.

Carlos lives in El Paso with his wife and three kids who are also avid NFT collectors.

**Education**

- J.D., St. Marys University School of Law
- MBA, Florida International University
- MsF (Finance), Florida International University
- B.A., University of the Incarnate Word



**SARA ANNE GIDDINGS** practices estate planning, probate, business, and tax law in Shiner, Texas with the Law Offices of Trent Nichols, PLLC. Sara received her B.A. in English and Political Science with honors from Austin College in 2004 and her J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center in 2007. She works with individuals to develop estate planning solutions with an emphasis on income and estate tax planning. Additionally, she works with small to mid-size businesses, including wineries, oil and gas service companies, and investment companies, to develop business and tax planning strategies including formation, management, business sales, and employment matters.

Sara currently serves as the Chair of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA). Sara has served on the Board of Directors of TYLA since 2015. For her contributions to TYLA and the legal profession, Sara has received several accolades including the 2015-2016 Outstanding First Year Director Award, the 2016-2017 Joseph M. Pritchard Outstanding Director Award, the Legacy of Service Award, the Trial and Appellate Advocate Award, and a Presidential Citation by State Bar of Texas President Allan DuBois.



**ERICA GRIGG** is the director of the Texas Lawyers Assistance Program. Since receiving her JD from The University of Texas School of Law and her law license in 2001, Erica Grigg has gained work experience as a criminal prosecutor; general counsel in the Texas Legislature; Special Assistant to the Chancellor of Texas Tech University; and as a personal injury, civil rights, and wrongful death litigator at Spivey & Grigg, LLP. She has appeared on HLN and CNN for commentary regarding her involvement in high-profile civil rights cases. Erica is presently pursuing a master's in Clinical Mental Health, expected in 2022. She is currently Director at the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program where she helps connect judges, lawyers, and law students to the mental health and substance abuse recovery resources they need. Erica attended the 2018 Academy Awards for her role as plaintiff's counsel in an Oscar nominated HBO short documentary, Traffic Stop.



**PETER HANDY** (he/him/his) is a Deputy Director of the Nevada Department of Indigent Defense Services. He oversees the Nevada State Public Defender's Office and attorneys practicing indigent defense in Nevada's fifteen rural counties; develops and provides training and education to indigent defense practitioners; and reviews the qualifications of applicants desiring to serve as indigent defense counsel in the rural counties. Prior to becoming a Deputy Director, Peter served as a Deputy Attorney General with the Nevada Office of the Attorney General with the Office's Government and Natural Resources Division and served as a member of the award-winning Policy Research Team. Peter has litigated and argued before the Nevada Supreme Court and has prosecuted and litigated hundreds of cases in California and Nevada courts during his 8 years as a practicing attorney.

After law school, he worked as an associate attorney for a small, multistate law firm engaging in civil and administrative litigation in California and Nevada. Prior to becoming a Deputy Attorney General, he was a Deputy District Attorney in Douglas County, Nevada for four years. Peter obtained his Juris Doctor with Distinction from the University Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.



**RALEIGH HANSMAN** is a partner at Meierhenry Sargent LLP in Sioux Falls, SD. After graduating from the University of Colorado-Boulder and spending two years working in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles, CA, Raleigh returned to South Dakota to attend law school. She graduated from the University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law in May 2012 with Sterling Honors. Her present practice includes civil litigation, criminal defense, and appellate work. Raleigh has tried 12 cases to a jury, 25% of which were homicides.

In November 2020, after multiple attempts, Raleigh secured the compassionate release of an elderly man 36 years into serving two life without parole sentences for a double manslaughter. She is South Dakota's 2021 Young Lawyer of the Year, as well as the 2021 recipient of the South Dakota Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers' Outstanding Lawyer Award.

Raleigh and her husband are parents to two beautiful and obnoxious children, ages 3 and 5.



**SHASTA N. INMAN** (she/her) is a solo attorney in Albuquerque, New Mexico, working primarily in child welfare, contested custody, kinship guardianships, and adult guardianships. She was recently named amongst Albuquerque Business First's 40 Under 40 for career achievements and philanthropic & community outreach.

Outside of her day job, Shasta is the Immediate Past Chair of the State Bar of New Mexico YLD, and the Assembly Clerk for the ABA YLD. For the upcoming bar year, Shasta will proceed to serve as ABA YLD Assembly Speaker (the Division's Chief Policy Officer).

Also in the ABA, Shasta serves as the New Mexico young lawyer delegate to the House of Delegates; is the YLD liaison to the Commission on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity; and is on the Commission on Racial & Ethnic Diversity in the Profession. Shasta was previously honored as an ABA YLD Star of the Year, and twice as a Star of the Quarter.

Shasta earned her law degree and a Master of Arts in Gender & Women's Studies from the University of Arizona, James E. Rogers College of Law, after graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a dual-degree Bachelor of Arts in English and Women's & Gender Studies.



**BILLY J. JIMENEZ** is the deputy secretary and general counsel for the New Mexico Department of Health. He has worked in several private and public settings as a commercial litigator specializing in health and environmental law. In 2021, he received the Promise Award from the University of New Mexico School of Law's Alumni Association for his public service with the NM Young Lawyers Association and for serving as general counsel, deputy secretary, and acting secretary of the Department of Health during the COVID pandemic. Billy's proudest role continues to be his work as a certified medical assistant, which provides no additional salary but gives him healthcare worker street cred within the Department.



**ANDREA MORAN** is a shareholder with ScottHulse P.C. whose practice focuses on business immigration and U.S./Mexico cross-border business as well as corporate law. Ms. Moran's practice includes transactions related to cross-border business between Mexico and the United States.

Specifically, Ms. Moran has assisted several U.S. companies in obtaining business visas such as L-1 intracompany work visas for purposes of transferring company managers or executives to the U.S. She has also assisted U.S. companies in obtaining H-1B and TN (NAFTA) visas for individuals hired to work in the U.S. In addition, Ms. Moran has worked with people interested in investing in the U.S. to obtain investor visas (E-1 and E-2 Treaty Trader Visas).

Ms. Moran has also assisted several clients in obtaining permanent residence in the U.S. through family members or employment. She has experience in dealing with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), especially as it relates to determining visa processing times and getting case status updates for clients.

Ms. Moran's corporate experience includes the formation of business entities such as limited liability companies and corporations.



**JESSICA A. PEREZ** is the 2022 New Mexico Young Lawyer's Division Chair as well as the Region 5 Director. Currently, she works as an Assistant District Attorney in Bernalillo, New Mexico where she prosecutes felony offenses along with extradition cases for her office. She earned her law degree from the University of New Mexico School of Law in May 2018, after receiving her bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University. Jessica primarily prosecutes drug trafficking cases and serious juvenile delinquency matters as well as oversees the training for the magistrate court attorneys. In addition to her position on the New Mexico YLD, Jessica also serves as the Prosecutors Section 2022 Chair within her State Bar. When she is not at work, she enjoys curling up in her reading chair with her Kindle and going to the gym.



**LAURA PRATT** is a first-generation, scientist-turned-attorney at Brady & Hamilton, LLP, practicing commercial litigation with a focus on eminent domain, administrative law, and agricultural law.

After attending Texas Tech University School of Law, Laura began her diverse legal career at the City of Lubbock, practicing municipal law and specializing in environmental compliance and natural resources law. She was also a municipal prosecutor. After completing a two-year relocation overseas in the Middle East, Laura held the position of Executive Director for OneVoiceHome, a local non-profit she co-founded in 2015 that supports survivors of sex trafficking.

She is TYLA's current vice president, and she previously served for four years as the TYLA District 3 director. She has served on 15 committees and contributed to numerous TYLA projects. Laura frequently speaks to community organizations and schools. She has received several awards for her commitment to service. She is a Texas Bar College member, a Texas Bar Foundation fellow, and a member of the ABA.

Laura practices self-care by adventuring with her family and practicing piano and Irish fiddle. She lives in Lubbock with her husband, Josh, their three children, Zachary, Alexander, and Victoria, and their double-doodle, Shadow.



**JEANINE NOVOSAD RISPOLI** was inspired to be a family lawyer from an early age, after learning of her adoption. Jeanine was adopted in San Antonio and raised in Houston and Sugar Land. She graduated from Baylor University with a B.A. from the University Scholars Program and completed her thesis on American Divorce. She received her J.D. from Baylor Law and was licensed in 2011. Jeanine practiced in Houston before returning to Waco in 2015. Jeanine has a passion for helping families and she is honored to represent clients in complex property and conservatorship disputes.

Jeanine is the President of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. Jeanine is a McLennan County Young Lawyers Past President, a graduate of LeadershipSBOT and Leadership Plenty Waco, a former Local Bar Services Committee member, a Texas Bar Foundation Fellow, an American Bar Foundation member, a Texas Bar College member, and a member and mentor in the Judge Abner V. McCall Inn of Court. She volunteers her time with Baylor Law competitions, mentoring, and pro bono efforts.

Jeanine is a member of the Junior League of Waco, where she served as Secretary, and enjoyed trainings on leadership, nonprofit board governance, strategic planning, and diversity and inclusion. Jeanine and her husband, Stephen, an Assistant Dean at Baylor Law, team teach a pre-law internship class at Baylor and in their free time they enjoy being outdoors with their Labrador, Khaleesi.



**STEPHEN RISPOLI** earned his political science degree from Baylor University in 2009, his J.D. from Baylor Law in 2012, and his LL.M. from the University of Texas School of Law in 2018. Rispoli serves as Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Strategic Initiatives and as the Director of Innovation and Scholarship for the school's Executive LL.M. in Litigation Management.

Upon graduation from Baylor Law, Dean Rispoli began working with Professor Leah Teague to create the Leadership Development Program and the Leadership Engagement and Development Course, which they have been teaching since 2012. In 2020, Associate Dean Patricia Wilson joined the team and the three co-taught the class. Last year, Dean Rispoli, Professor Teague, and Professor Elizabeth Fraley teamed up to write *Fundamentals of Lawyer Leadership*, a textbook aimed at encouraging all law students and lawyers to use their time, talent, and training to make a positive difference in the world, no matter their position or title.

Fundamental to Baylor Law's mission is to prepare all students to be competent, ethical lawyer-leaders at graduation and beyond, who are prepared to serve their clients and their communities. As Assistant Dean, Rispoli seeks new ways to accomplish this mission and help law students succeed at Baylor Law and in their future careers.



**MICHAEL J. RITTER** is senior counsel at Schmoyer Reinhard LLP. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Ritter served as a staff attorney at the San Antonio court of appeals. His practice includes appeals, litigation support, and labor and employment law. He received his BA from Trinity University in San Antonio, and law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. He is board certified in Civil Appellate Law and Criminal Appellate law and is the President-Elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association.



**KYLIE SCHMIDT** has spent her entire career handling complex civil litigation matters and representing individuals in personal injury, employment, and medical malpractice cases. She enjoys working with people of all ages who have suffered injuries or injustices due to the wrongs of others.

After growing up in Colorado, Kylie spent her college years at Texas Christian University. She returned to the west and graduated from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 2015.

Kylie is currently an associate with Ogborn Mihm, LLP and devotes her practice to representing plaintiffs in high stakes litigation. Seeking out the truth and confronting wrongdoers with their bad behavior drives Kylie's passion for trial work. Kylie is prepared to take every case she litigates through trial, to verdict, and is proud to call herself a trial lawyer.

Kylie is on the Board of Directors of the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association and chairs the group's Amicus Curiae Committee. Outside of work, she spends her time exploring her new home in Jackson, Wyoming on bikes and skis.



**JUDGE LAUREN SEPULVEDA** is the presiding judge of the Municipal Court for the City of McAllen. Her duties include the arraignment of all arrests within the city of McAllen, magistrating juvenile offenders, and presiding over Class C misdemeanor dockets from Teen Court, Code Enforcement, Animal Control, the McAllen Police Department, the McAllen Fire Department, McAllen ISD Police Department, the Texas Department of Public Safety and South Texas College Police Department.

Judge Sepulveda earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a focus on Latin-American politics from Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government & Public Service in 2007 and her Juris Doctor from Baylor Law School in 2011.

Upon graduation, she served as an Assistant Public Defender for the Hidalgo County Public Defender's Office. In 2013, she joined the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office. In her last years at the District Attorney's Office, she served as the Chief Prosecutor in the 430<sup>th</sup> District Court and focused on prosecuting violent and capital felony offenses.

Judge Sepulveda was appointed as the Presiding Judge of McAllen Municipal Court in January of 2021. In addition to her duties as a magistrate and municipal judge, she supervises four associate judges and 24 clerks in her court.

Judge Sepulveda currently serves as Chair-Elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association and as a Director of the State Bar Criminal Justice Section. Judge Sepulveda is also currently a member of the 41<sup>st</sup> Class of Leadership McAllen and a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation.

In her free time, Judge Sepulveda is a voracious reader who enjoys collecting vinyl, true crime podcasts and tv shows, and loves spending time with her niece and nephew and two rescue dogs.



**HOLLI J. WELCH** serves as a Senior Assistant Attorney General in the Tort Employment Unit of the Wyoming Attorney General's Office.

Holli attended the University of Wyoming for both her B.S. in Business Marketing in 2012 and her law degree in 2015. Holli worked in private practice in Cheyenne across many specialties until joining the Attorney General's Office in March 2020. She is an active member of the American Bar Association Young Lawyer Division, and currently serves as the ABA YLD Administrative Director for the 2021-2022 term and as the Wyoming Young Lawyer Delegate to the American Bar Association House of Delegates. In her spare time, she can be found with her dogs and cat, reading, cooking, and crafting.



**PATRICIA WILSON**, a graduate of Northwestern University Law School, has been a member of the Baylor Law faculty since 1993. In 2021, she assumed the position of Associate Dean, with responsibility for faculty and academic matters. During her time at Baylor Law, Dean Wilson has taught courses on Employment Discrimination, Employment Relations, Labor Law, and Family Law, and co-taught the LEAD course, along with Dean Stephen Rispoli and former Associate Dean Leah Teague. She taught the first year Property course for 12 years, and she has also taught courses on Antitrust, Intellectual Property, Consumer Protection, and Legal Writing.

Dean Wilson has served on or chaired numerous University and Law School committees, including more recently the Underrepresented Minority Faculty Working Group, created to make recommendations about improving the experiences of minority faculty members at Baylor, and for which Dean Wilson was appointed chair by the Baylor University Provost. Dean Wilson has also served on the boards of a wide variety of non-profit organizations. She is currently the Moderator of the Global Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Her bar activities include serving as a member of the Consumer and Commercial Law Council of the State Bar of Texas and as President of the Waco-McLennan County Bar Association.

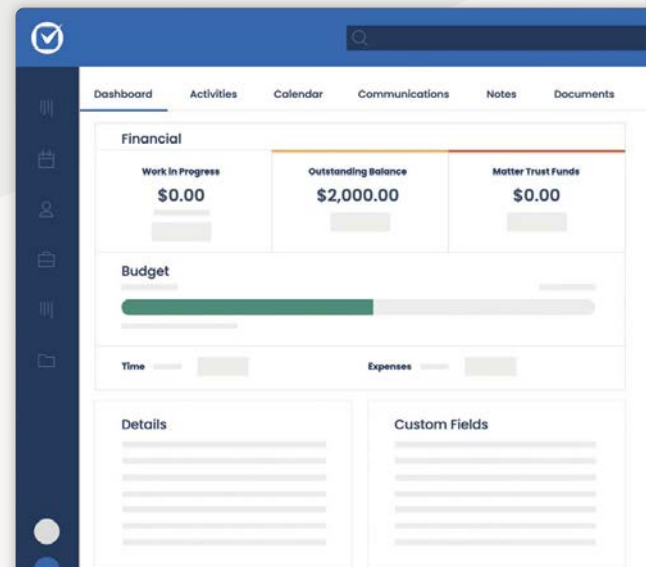


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## Conference Materials

All conference materials can be accessed digitally by scanning the QR code. All materials will remain on the Texas Young Lawyers Association website (<https://tyla.org/western-states-regional-summit-2022/materials/>) until the end of 2022. Feel free to download and save all materials as needed.

You can also access the materials directly by visiting  
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