



MY OPINION

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Leading the Way

There are two things to be excited about in July. The first, of course, is July 4th. The second is the State Bar Local Bar Leaders Conference. If you haven't been, you really should try to go. Representatives from bar associations across the state will gather in Houston this year to share information and ideas and to find inspiration at the Bar Leaders Conference. In addition to focusing on what services bar organizations, state or local, provide to lawyers, the organization recognizes the outstanding work local bars have done in the past year.

Bar organizations fulfill two broad roles for lawyers. They assist us professionally by providing member services and they enrich our lives personally by enabling us to provide much needed services to the public. TYLA (together with its local affiliates), as the service arm of the bar, works particularly hard to see that young lawyers have ample opportunity to serve on meaningful projects that make a difference in our lives as lawyers — and in the lives of people in the community at large.

Each year, TYLA honors local affiliates that provide outstanding opportunities to their members either through service to the public or service to the bar. Awards are given to both large- and small-city local affiliates. I am pleased to share the local affiliates and their award-winning projects with you!

Awards of Achievement — Service to the Bar

The **Dallas Association of Young Lawyers** won first prize for a large city project by creating a monthly *Lunch and Learn* series for young lawyers needing substantive training in a variety of prac-

tice areas. DAYL focused on providing resources to sole practitioners and small firm lawyers who do not typically have access to internal training programs.

The **Tarrant County Young Lawyers Association** received second place for a large-city project for conducting a salary benefits survey of young lawyers that provided vital information during a difficult economic year.

Taking third place for a large city project, the **Houston Young Lawyers Association** hosted a swearing-in ceremony welcoming the newest members of the profession to the area and giving those who could not travel to the Austin ceremony a meaningful alternative.

Winning first place for a small city was the **Texarkana Young Lawyers Association**. The organization created an adoption day and an ad litem training project to assist young lawyers with handling adoptions and guardianships.

The **Greater Denton County Young Lawyers Association** won second place for its efforts mentoring pre-law students. A young lawyer judicial reception helped the **Collin County Young Lawyers Association** place third.

Awards of Achievement — Service to the Public

The **Austin Young Lawyers Association** created a *Reentry Resource Guide* for anyone who has been in contact with the criminal justice system and is trying to get back on their feet as they re-enter Texas communities. The guide is intended to be distributed statewide through various agencies. This project earned them first place for a large-city project.

Consumer fraud perpetrated against the Spanish-speaking community was

addressed by the **Dallas Association of Young Lawyers** in their second-place project, *Protejase! Luche Contra Fraude* (*Protect Yourself! Fight Against Fraud*) — a public service campaign that details the warning signs of different types of fraud, including credit repair scams and notario (immigration consultants) fraud. The **Houston Young Lawyers Association** won third place with *What's So Special About Special Education*, a seminar that provided parents, advocates, attorneys, and teachers with information about special education and topics related to special needs children.

Continuing the focus on special needs children, the **Jefferson County Young Lawyers Association** won first place for a small city by providing free legal seminars to parents of special needs children.

The **Cameron County Young Lawyers Association's** *Lending Hands* project won second place, and the **Collin County Young Lawyers Association** placed third with its high school scholarship project.

Congratulations to all of the local affiliates for an outstanding year!

And, the next time you question what bar associations do for you, remember that just a handful of the hundreds of projects available across the state this year provided free CLE and ad litem training, addressed employment issues, and offered numerous avenues for serving citizens of Texas, including Spanish-speaking individuals, parents of special needs children, and young students.

If you would like more information about any of these award-winning projects, visit our website (www.tyla.org) to find local affiliate leadership contact information. Better yet, we will see you at Bar Leaders! ★