

## TYLA in Action at Recent Events

TYLA members attended the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division fall conference October 20-22 in Detroit, which featured CLE offerings, opportunities to meet legal influencers, and information on best practices regarding diversity and inclusion.



Above: TYLA President Sam Houston gives a presentation on bar work at the Affiliates Showcase during the ABA YLD fall conference.

TYLA officers attended a LeadershipSBOT Class of 2016-2017 meeting September 29-October 1 in Austin. LeadershipSBOT is a State Bar program that provides its members with an introduction to bar service and tools to develop their leadership skills.



From left: Panelists James Nortey, an associate of Duggins Wren Mann & Romero in Austin; 250th District Court Presiding Judge Karin Crump, TYLA Vice President Sally Pretorius, and Jennifer Wang, an attorney with Whitehurst, Harkness, Brees, Cheng, Alsaffar & Higginbotham in Austin.



Above: The 2016-2017 LeadershipSBOT class with State Bar of Texas President Frank Stevenson (back row far left) and TYLA President Sam Houston (back row far right).

TYLA made a few more stops in its roll out of *Vote America!*, which aims to educate students about democracy and their civic duty to vote.



From left: TYLA Director Kimberly C. Clark and Houston Young Lawyers Association board member Samantha Torres spoke to approximately 200 students October 4 at Huntsville High School in Huntsville.

# Outreach and Redemption

**CHRISTMAS** has always been my favorite holiday. The food, family, and fun make it such a special time. My wife and I are excited to begin building our own traditions with our daughter.

A holiday work of literature I particularly enjoy is Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, with its themes confronting social injustice and redemption. I am also a fan of a few of its adaptations, including those featuring Mickey Mouse and the Muppets. Kermit the Frog—Mr. It's Not Easy Being Green—could not have portrayed a more sympathetic Bob Cratchit. And who can forget Bill Murray in *Scrooged*? Nothing says "Merry Christmas" like a performance by the Solid Gold Dancers.

The themes raised in that holiday story can be seen in the Texas Young Lawyers Association's public service mission and charge to support Texas young lawyers. TYLA projects have a long history of addressing social justice issues, and the association's efforts to educate the public about the law and its legal rights help level the playing field. The phrase, "knowledge is power"—first attributed to Sir Francis Bacon back in 1597—underlies our public-outreach efforts.

TYLA projects are intended to empower. We are well on our way to designing and distributing our web-based *Sexual Assault Survivor Rights Guide*. During the process of researching how TYLA could address this sensitive subject, our committee discovered that there was not a resource specifically addressing what a survivor should expect as he or she goes through the criminal justice or administrative law systems and interacts with law enforcement, judges, defense counsel, and university administrators. Our guide aims to fill this gap. It is a tragedy that anyone is ever sexually assaulted, and we hope that our guide will provide needed answers to questions that survivors might not have known to ask.



We have a new project that puts resources in the hands of young Texans whose parents are going through a divorce or custody battle. This illustrated guide walks kids and their caregivers through the process of settling custody disputes. The committee, including TYLA Vice President Sally Pretorius and directors Veronica Wolfe and Britney Dieng, worked with mental health professionals Cassie Reid and Ruth Guerreiro to identify specific topics that most concern children going through this stressful experience.

On redemption, we should continue to be mindful of the obligation to be civil to one another. Prior to being visited by three ghosts, Ebenezer Scrooge was not in the running to be named person of the year, much less boss of the year. Although Mr. Scrooge represents an extreme example, I do think that it is helpful to take a step back every now and again to reflect on the way in which we interact with one another. Given all the stress that comes with a legal career, it is probably safe to say that we can benefit from a tune-up in this area. Please be on the lookout for a new TYLA publication addressing professional etiquette and emphasizing the need to respect one another. A big thank you goes out to TYLA Treasurer Nick Guinn and directors Ryan Scharar and Charlie Ginn for their work in putting this together.

As 2016 comes to a close, I am thankful for the opportunity to lead such a great organization. Hopefully, I won't be visited by any ghosts this Christmas Eve.

*Sam Houston*

**SAM HOUSTON**

President,  
Texas Young Lawyers Association