

# THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

## A CATALYST FOR 2019 – 2020



Women and the Law Section Newsletter  
www.txwomenlawsection.org

FALL 2019

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### CHAIR'S CORNER



The State Bar of Texas in its duty to assist the Texas Supreme Court in overseeing all attorneys licensed to practice law in Texas makes its services and resources more accessible through Sections that are narrowly tailored to the interests of the practicing attorneys. The Section that you have chosen to be part of is Women and the Law. The mission of Women and the Law is to encourage and facilitate the active and effective participation of women in the legal profession and in the community, and to address the current needs of and issues affecting women. The current statistics indicate that even though the number of women attorneys have increased (2008 – 19,862; 2018 – 37,477), we still only comprise 36% of the total number of attorneys licensed to practice in Texas. If being a lawyer is to be part of a selective club, then being a women attorney is to be a part of an exclusive club. Welcome to the club!

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the United State Constitution was adopted ensuring that the right of a citizen of the United States to vote could not be denied on the basis of sex. This right to vote was earned through the works and efforts of persons impassioned with the belief that women could do more than they were being allowed to. The belief that women can do more still needs to be supported today. Women and the Law aims to support women practicing law. This Section provides tools for navigating the world as women attorneys and for supporting women attorneys. Free Continuing Legal Education is available to all members of Women and the Law on topics relevant to the practice of law in general, as well as on topics addressing the employment, hiring, promoting of women attorneys. Networking opportunities and opportunities for mentorship are benefits provided to the members. Women and the Law recognizes that sometimes being an attorney means more than just practicing law and provides service opportunities to its members. The Women and the Law Newsletter, Women's Advocate, provides information on upcoming events, informative articles, and spotlights on trailblazers in the legal profession. Additionally, Women and the Law provides scholarship opportunities for women law students.

Women and the Law strives to service the needs of its members and welcomes your input, ideas, and your energy towards this effort. Information will be provided throughout the upcoming year in the Women's Advocate and through emails regarding ways that you can become involved. Again, welcome to the exclusive club of being a women attorney; one in which you are supported.

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# *STATE BAR OF TEXAS WOMEN AND THE LAW*

## *MISSION STATEMENT*

The mission of the Women and the Law Section is to encourage and facilitate the active and effective participation of women in the legal profession and in the community, and to address women's current needs and the issues affecting them. Some of the projects the section has undertaken to fulfill this mission include:

- Helping pass the first alimony bill in Texas history.
- Supporting sexual predator legislation and legislation to prohibit gender discrimination in private clubs.
- Helping plan and produce one of the State Bar's first telephone CLE seminars with a national audience and national speakers.
- Honoring Sarah T. Hughes, an outstanding woman judge and mentor, by making a major contribution to furnish the Sarah T. Hughes Reading Room at the University of North Texas.
- Providing speakers on legal topics from the women's perspective for schools and civic groups, and more!

**JOIN US TODAY TO CONNECT WITH OTHER WOMEN LAWYERS!**

MEMBERSHIP IS ONLY \$25 A YEAR. MEMBERSHIP YEAR IS JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup> TO MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>.

## *Women & the Law*

### *Telephonic CLEs*

November 12, 2019 at Noon (1 hour CLE)

**Implications of Implicit Bias on Women in Law Practice:  
From our Careers, to our Clients, to the Courtroom**

Presented by: Mindy Gulati  
President, Fundamental Advisory

December 11, 2019 at Noon (1 hour CLE)

**Knock, knock! Who's There? CPS**

Attorney Artessia House will present on how to handle CPS presence from the time an outcry is made until a trial is held for a termination of parental rights case..

Presented by: Artessia House  
Tess House Law, PLLC

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***MEET YOUR 2019-2020 WAL OFFICERS & COUNCIL MEMBERS***



**Nikki Allen**  
Chair  
San Antonio, TX



**Teresa Schiller**  
Chair- Elect  
Waco, TX



**Judy Ney**  
Treasurer  
Houston, TX



**Leigh Goodson**  
Secretary  
Spring, TX



**Danae N. Benton**  
Newsletter & Website  
Houston, TX



**Deborah Race**  
Membership  
Tyler, TX



**Natasha Martinez**  
Chronologist  
McAllen, TX



**Kirby Drake**  
CLE  
Dallas, TX



**Itzel Martinez**  
Social Media Chair  
San Antonio, TX



**Deborah L. Cordova**  
Immediate Past Chair  
McAllen, TX



**Tuhina Sharma**  
Council  
Houston, TX



**Sharon Hemphill**  
Council  
Spring, TX



**Summer Olmos**  
Council  
Edinburg, TX



**Elizabeth Cantu**  
Council  
McAllen, TX



**Joann DeHoyos**  
Council  
San Antonio, TX



**Sylvia Lopez-Shafer**  
Council  
San Antonio, TX



**Denise Alex**  
Council  
Houston, TX



**Betsy Johnson**  
Council  
Austin, TX

**Ellis Iverson**  
Council  
Liberty, TX

## Seeking Contributions

Are you a WAL Section member and have something you would like to share with the rest of the Membership (i.e. Awards, Honors, Employment move or office relocation, Upcoming CLE speaking engagements, Employment search; hiring or seeking, etc.) Our newsletter reaches over 800 WAL members from across Texas. Please send your announcement(s) to:

**Danae N. Benton, Newsletter Editor**  
[danae@trammellpc.com](mailto:danae@trammellpc.com)  
Re: WAL Newsletter

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## State Bar of Texas Women and the Law Section 2020 Texas Law Student Writing Competition

The State Bar of Texas Women and the Law Section (the “Section”) invites students currently attending a law school in Texas to participate in its 2020 Texas Law Student Writing Competition (the “Competition”). The student who wins the Competition, as determined by the Section, in its sole discretion, will receive The 2020 Harriet E. Miers Writing Competition Award (the “Award”). The Award includes \$1,000 payable to such student for law-school educational expenses. The Section, in its sole discretion, will publish such student’s essay in its newsletter.

The student who wins second place in the Competition (“Second Place”), as determined by the Section, in its sole discretion, will receive Second Place recognition, including \$500 payable to such student for law-school educational expenses. The Section, in its sole discretion, will publish such student’s essay in its newsletter.

Students wishing to be considered for the Award and for Second Place should submit an essay of no more than 2,500 words on the below-referenced topic by no later than **February 28, 2020** to Section Chair Nicondra Chargois-Allen via email to [sbotwomenandthelaw@gmail.com](mailto:sbotwomenandthelaw@gmail.com) with the following subject line: “WAL Student Writing Competition.”

The topic of the essay is to identify and analyze a legal challenge for women in Texas and/or in the United States, based on recent news reports. Imagine that you have been invited to publish an op-ed in a newspaper read by the general public.

- What is the challenge? How are women harmed?
- What is the relevant law(s)?
- How should the challenge be addressed?

Submissions will be evaluated based on criteria including the following: (1) legal reasoning; (2) readability; (3) thoroughness; (4) timeliness of topic; (5) organizational structure; (6) *Bluebook* citation; and (7) grammar.

The Section has designed the Competition with the following goals: (1) to help participating Texas law-school students prepare to tackle legal and societal challenges after graduation and strengthen their written advocacy skills; (2) to increase awareness of and involvement with the Section; and (3) to further the Section’s mission. The Section’s mission is to encourage and facilitate the active and effective participation of women in the legal profession and in the community, and to address the current needs of and issues affecting women.

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## All Rise: Barbie Has A New Career

Mattel's Barbie has a new career just in time for the holiday season – judge! As reported by USA Today, Lisa McKnight, Senior Vice President of Barbie, stated the decision to introduce judge dolls was based on the statistic that only 33% of sitting United States judges are female.

“Our hope is that girls will enjoy playing with the dolls and imagine themselves protecting the rights of others,” McKnight said.

Every year, Barbie highlights a new career to inspire children. To date, Barbie has had over 200 careers. “We like to say, “There isn’t a plastic ceiling that Barbie hasn’t broken,” McKnight told USA Today.



*Promotional Image from Barbie.com*

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## Join the Conversation



What do you think of Barbie's new career? Take the poll using the QR code on your smartphone or the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3VQY92J>

Results and select responses will be published in our next newsletter.