



Denton County Lawyer

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The Fine Art of Retirement

By Patricia L. Ryan, Attorney at Law; patricialryan.com

Bear with me for a minute as I discuss a few movies that share a common theme with my next step in life. Perhaps you've seen one of these movies; here are the synopses.

It's the end of the world as we know it, and Will Smith combines forces with a former Vietnam veteran fighter pilot and other patriotic citizens in RVs to save the planet from aliens (Independence Day). Or perhaps the one starring a trio on their way to a boxing match in an RV, but with one wrong turn, they're fighting for their lives (Judgment Night). How about Albert Brooks who quits his fast-paced corporate job to find a new life on the road in an RV (Lost in America). And who can forget Cousin Eddie who rolls in for the Griswold family Christmas celebration only to empty his RV's holding tanks into the storm drain (National Lampoons' Christmas Vacation). Then there is one with John Candy and Bill Pullman traveling through space in an RV to save a princess from an evil lord (Spaceballs). Or Lucille Ball and Desi Arnez experiencing newlywed life in a trailer while Desi's job takes him around the country (The Long, Long Trailer).

Or the classic with Robin Williams who, as a workaholic father losing touch with his family, persuades them to forgo their Hawaiian vacation for a business trip disguised as an RV

adventure. Despite a damaged parking brake, running over various cars and shopping carts, a raccoon infestation, a clogged sewage system, car chases, and the RV sinking in a lake, the white-collar workaholic deceptively persuades his family to forgo their much-anticipated Hawaiian vacation for a cross-country road trip in a fully loaded RV, during which they discover the true meaning of family bonding, in Men in Black director Barry Sonnenfeld's family-friendly road comedy starring Robin Williams, Jeff Daniels, and Cheryl Hines. Bob Munro (Williams) is overworked and overstressed, and though his proposal to hit the road with his wife and two children at first sounds like a heartfelt bid to get better acquainted with his increasingly dysfunctional family, it soon becomes obvious that he had more career-oriented goals in mind when planning the trip. The Munros have always managed to get by in the past, though, and as they slowly become immersed in RV culture with a little help from a full-time troupe of Winnebago warriors, they might just make it to the Rocky Mountains without driving each other totally insane. Munros slowly become immersed in the RV culture with a little help from full-time Winnebago warriors (RV).

What do all these have in common? That's right; each features

a cameo by a "recreational vehicle," a/k/a RV (a motor vehicle or trailer equipped with living space and amenities found in a home); a motorhome (a motor vehicle that has facilities for cooking, living, and sleeping); or a motor coach (a large motor vehicle or type of bus used for conveying passengers on excursions).

Why do I tell you this? Similar to Albert Brooks' character, I too am leaving a lucrative career practicing law and hitting the road full-time to "see America." Although we haven't sold everything as in that movie, we have had curious experiences selling selected items on Craig's List while the heirlooms remain safe in a storage shed.

Based initially in Dallas, my

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From the President

Time to start over, again. May brings about a change of leadership, kind of, for our association. New officers come in, board members rotate off, and new directors fill their shoes. Luckily, for our Bar, we have lots of great folks willing to invest many—otherwise billable—hours, volunteering to help keep DCBA on track, and moving forward. And, those good people serve for years (I think this is my 8th), so while May brings change, that change is tempered by consistency.

This month, we say goodbye to our Past President, Don White, who has spent countless hours in leadership positions for our Bar and for the Denton County Alternative Dispute Resolution Program, the mediation program that works hand-in-hand with our Bar. Dena Reecer, who has led as Bar President this past year, fills Don's shoes as Past President and now has the unenviable job of imparting her learned wisdom to me.

I happily begin my year as President leading a Bar association that, due to the diligent efforts of its

members and leaders, has consistently outshone many of Texas' much larger county Bars. We're in great financial shape—despite the country's financial woes and growing pains of our own—our membership during the past year was at an all-time high, and we have a lot of fun and educational events on the horizon.

I came to Denton 14 years ago because I was looking for a place to establish a practice. I had heard good things about the economic prospects of Denton and Collin counties and felt like it'd be a good place to start a business.

More importantly, I wanted to work in a place where the lawyers and judges knew each other's names. Where they see each other regularly enough, in work and social situations, that there'd be some level of accountability—for both how well you do your job and how you do your job.

You don't want to disappoint people on either of those counts when you know you'll be seeing them again soon. And, more importantly, while I think most of us aim pretty high when it comes to how we treat others, we



Duane L. Coker, President

seem to hit our marks a little more often when we know building up some good karma will likely pay off as soon as we're working with that colleague again.

Denton has, for the most part, turned out to be even better than expected. I look forward to going across the street to the courthouse; not just because I enjoy the rush of a hard-fought hearing, but because I enjoy saying "hi" to people I truly like

President continued on page 5.

DCBA Officers

President, Duane L. Coker
Immediate Past President,
Dena A. Reecer
President-Elect,
Theodore D. Ogilvie
Vice President, Amie Peace
Treasurer, Travis Biggs
Secretary, Vicki Isaacks
CLE Director, Julia Kerestine

DCBA Directors

Leah Harbour, Brent Hill, Fon Laughlin, Andrew M. Lloyd, Virginia Moore, Jill O'Connell

DCBA Committee Chairs

Courts Committee,
Theodore D. Ogilvie
Library Board of Governors,
Andrew M. Lloyd
Social Committee, Brent Hill
CLE Committee, Julia Kerestine
Communications Committee,
Andrew M. Lloyd and Joe Zellmer
Fee Dispute, John Rentz
Pro Bono, Cynthia Burkett and Vicki Isaacks

Membership, Travis Biggs
Awards, Dena A. Reecer
Planning Committee,
Duane L. Coker
Local Rules, Theodore D. Ogilvie

DCBA Sections

- Trial Lawyer's Association
- Family Law Section
- Greater Denton County Young Lawyers Association
- Real Estate, Trust, and Probate Law Section
- Criminal Law

DCBA Membership

Your DCBA Membership includes

- Free and discounted CLE programs
- Monthly luncheon & happy hour
- Networking opportunities
- Listing on the bar website, including photo, two practice areas, and a link to your website.

For more information see our website: www.dentonbar.com.

60th Anniversary ... But What is Legal Aid?

By Delia Parker Mims, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, Denton office, www.lanwt.org.

Our journey began 60 years ago, when 11 lawyers decided that legal advice and aid should be available to anyone, regardless of ability to pay. From that vision came Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, the fifth-largest legal services program in the United States.

Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas (LANWT) consists of 15 branch offices covering 114 counties in North and West Texas. The Denton Office covers the counties of Denton, Wise, Cooke, Montague, and Jack with a combined poverty population of 63,818, which translates to a ratio of one attorney for every 15,955 people who fall within federal poverty guidelines.

LANWT's mission is to help provide equal access to justice to those who might not otherwise receive representation. Often confused as a government agency, LANWT is a nonprofit organization that receives its funding through public and private grants. Although client representation is based on several factors—most often financial—some grants allow for consideration of other criteria such as an applicant's disability or employment status or whether there has been domestic violence.

Our Denton office holds intake hours on Tuesdays but accepts emergency intakes throughout the work week. We also hold monthly intakes in Lewisville, Decatur, Gainesville, and at Friends of the Family, and we perform quarterly

intakes in Jack and Montague Counties.

There are numerous legal aid organizations throughout Texas, each of which uses its own intake or applicant interview process to screen potential clients. Most of these organizations do extensive outreach, as well, within the counties each serves, and the Denton office is no exception. Our staff attorneys often make presentations and present programs to the community on a variety of legal issues. For example, we provide a quarterly Pro Se Divorce Clinic for people with no children and no property. This clinic enjoys an 85% success rate among its participants. We also conduct a yearly program on life documents, the "Suddenly Senior Seminar," at the Lewisville Senior Center and the Denton Senior Center.

In 2012, our office began working with the Lewisville School District to provide training to parents on bullying and hosts an elementary school program to help promote positive social development among young girls. One of our recent grants enables us to provide services to students with disabilities to help them receive educational accommodations within the academic environment and provides community training regarding on disability rights, including access to local facilities and businesses. We welcome the opportunity to work with any organization within our service area.

So, this is what LANWT is, but

who are we? We are working mothers and fathers, wives and husbands, daughters and sons, much like you and those whom we serve. Professionally, we are paralegals, administrators, and lawyers, like you members of the Denton Bar.

As we enter our 60th year of providing legal services to those who are unable to afford to hire an attorney, LANWT invites members of the Bar to help us celebrate the work that we do and those who perform this work. On June 7, 2012, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Texas Woman's University Hubbard Hall Banquet Room, we will honor past volunteers, members of the Bench and Bar, and local partners who help us make a difference in our community. Please join us in celebrating the vision of our founders and the accomplishment that is Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas.

Calling Aspiring Authors!

Your Bar needs YOU!!!

We need contributing authors and photographers to submit content for the Denton County Lawyer!

Interested? Please contact

**Andrew M. Lloyd
(andrew@lloydfirm.com)
Jill O'Connell
(jill@oconnellfirm.com)**

Denton County's Own 2011-2012 "Stars of Bars" Awards

By Dena Reece, Attorney at Law; www.sheltonreece.com

The success of the Denton County Bar Association is largely due to the hard work and dedication of our members, directors, and officers. Each year we like to recognize those members who make an extra effort to make our Bar excel.

Cynthia Burkett, who has served on our Board since 2007, is recognized as the 2011-2012 Member of the Year. Cynthia spear-headed the Adoption Day program in Denton County, coordinating training with CASA, obtaining sponsors, and overseeing the media coverage. Approximately 30 children were adopted through the program this past year. Cynthia is a solo practitioner who focuses on the areas of family, criminal, and juvenile law.

Amie Peace, who served on our Board as Treasurer for the 2011-2012 Bar year, is the 2011-2012 Board Member of the Year. Amie demonstrated outstanding leadership in setting and managing our budget, as well as working tirelessly on numerous Bar projects and issues. Amie is a partner in the law firm of Coffey & Peace, focusing her practice in the area of family law. Amie also serves on the State Bar of Texas Local

Services Committee.

Joseph F. Zellmer, who served on our Board as a director since 2008, is recognized as the 2011-2012 Outstanding Pro Bono Committee Co-chair for his hard work and determination in establishing Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans in Denton County. The success of the program was largely due to Joe's efforts in recruiting volunteers and coordinating the quarterly clinics. Many veterans were honored as they were assisted with their various legal needs. Joe is Board Certified in Family Law and focuses his practice in the area of family law, including collaborative law.

Kristin M. Pannell is also recognized as the 2011-2012 Outstanding Pro Bono Committee Co-chair for her efforts to establish the Wills for Heroes program. Kristin was instrumental in organizing and coordinating the inaugural program, which resulted in over 100 firefighters and police officers receiving wills and ancillary documents. Kristen is an attorney with EFA Processing and focuses her practice in the area business and consumer law.

Kimberly P. Killebrew is

recognized as the 2011-2012 Outstanding Program Chair for her outstanding and tireless work in establishing and coordinating the Denton County Bench Bar Conference. Thanks in large part to Kim, the Bench Bar Conference is now a very popular annual event. Kim is a member of the Neal, Ashmore, Evans and Stuntebeck law firm and focuses her practice in the areas of family law and mediation. Kim also serves on the State Bar of Texas Local Services Committee.

In addition to our awards, we also like to recognize our Board members who are stepping down after many years of endless hours of service to our Bar. Joe Zellmer is leaving the Board after serving from 2008-2012. Cynthia Burkett is stepping down after six years of service from 2007-2012. John Curtis Rentz, an Assistant District Attorney with the Denton County District Attorney's Office, leaves our Board after four years of service from 2009-2012. John chaired the Fee Arbitration Committee during his time on the Board. We are very thankful for these outstanding Board members and will miss their wise counsel.



Around the County

Fine Art continued from page 1.

introduction to Denton was a case involving child custody in Honorable Judge L.D. Shipman's court. Our clients despised each other. They never understood why Carmen Urias and I, as their attorneys, treated each other with any civility. That was a given, not only because of the creed with which we ran our practices, but also because of our deep and abiding faith in God. Both relatively new to the practice of law, we were separated only by an age difference of some twenty years. For Carmen, it was a first vocation; for me, a third. We coordinated lunch dates around our court schedule, making sure our clients had disappeared before we met to ride together. Lunches were reserved for moments of laughter with little time to discuss legal aspects of the case. Those could be handled during regular business hours. For more than ten years since that case, we have shared divorces, the marriages and subsequent breakups of our children, the birth and death of grandchildren, celebrations and sorrows.

When given the opportunity to focus practice primarily in Denton County, I jumped at the chance. As true now as it was then, I found the legal community here to be—for the most part—fair, ethical, considerate,

trustworthy, and supportive. I would be remiss if I did not credit the professionals who have been unfailing in their friendships. First is Bill Neal, who exemplified the true meaning of "Mentor." Never too busy to answer my legal questions (some of which could be classified as from "Captain Obvious"), Bill bailed me out on more than one occasion. Thank you, Bill.

The other is Andrew Lloyd. Andrew has been like a son to me (yes, I really am that old). One of the best things I ever did was to agree to share office space with Andrew. Over the last four years, we shared excitement over victories, commiserated over cases gone awry, and laughed at each other's fumbles and gaffes. I respect and admire Andrew tremendously, not only for his professional expertise, but for his personal integrity. He, his office personnel, and family will be deeply missed.

So what is the impetus for me leaving now versus waiting five or ten years? Maybe it is my love for travel and adventure. Or perhaps it stemmed from counseling my adult children to follow their dreams. Each was faced with continuing to receive a guaranteed salary doing something they liked versus pursuing a career doing something they loved. Granted, they would be solely responsible for

their own success or failure, and in this economy, that could be difficult. But, as the saying goes, the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. I advised them that life is too short and too precious to waste doing something you don't absolutely love.

Of one thing I am sure—I do not desire to look back on my life with any regrets. Now in the late summer (okay ... perhaps autumn) of my life, I choose to spend every minute I can doing things I love. So, for as many remaining years as God chooses to bless me, I will use my talents to pen articles about His grace and to capture photographs of His extraordinary world. And I thank Him daily for the blessing of knowing each of you.



President's Letter continued from page 2.

and respect. While things have grown to the point that I sometimes don't know everyone's name, it seems that Denton county just naturally attracts good people and, once I do get to meet them, I'm usually glad I did.

I think a strong Bar association helps with that collegiality. According to our mission statement on our home page at DentonBar.com:

The Denton County Bar Association works collectively to

preserve high standards of integrity, honor and courtesy within the legal profession; promote positive relations among the judiciary, legal profession and community; advance the professional interests and education of its members; and facilitate the effective administration of justice, while maintaining the historic collegiality of the association and its members.

We do a great job of fulfilling that mission. It's not just some feel

good fluff on our website, and that's something to really feel good about.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Bench/Bar Conference on Lake Texoma in May. If you haven't signed up already, there's still room at the inn. This event gets bigger every year and this year won't disappoint. In the meantime, feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments or concerns about the Bar.

I look forward to serving you this year!

From the Sponsors

Texas Advanced Paralegal Seminar | A Three Day Multi-Track CLE Seminar sponsored by the Paralegal Division State Bar of Texas

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Register Early and Save!

Early registration deadline is Friday, August 24, 2012. Register at www.txpd.org/taps in June 2012.

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PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN BENCH/BAR III

8.75 MCLE hours including 1 hour of ethics

BENCH/BAR III AGENDA

FRIDAY AFTERNOON:

12:30–1:30 PM Cheryl Isbell and Bryan Rice—X Marks the Spot; Reimbursement Claims & S-Corps—Possible Hidden Treasure? (Family Law)

1:30–2:15 PM 2nd Court of Appeals Panel—Appellate Case Update: Know how the Court of Appeals is ruling so you don't sink your ship in court (Civil Trial, Civil Appellate)

2:15–3:00 PM Charles Kramer—What every non-Real Estate lawyer needs to know about title companies and pirates (aka underwriters)(Real Estate, Family Law, Estate Planning/Probate)

3:00–3:15 PM Break

3:15–4:00 PM Mark Bennett—The Color Code: How to Use Personality Types in Dealing with Clients and Opposing Counsel (.25 in ethics)

4:00–4:45 PM Melinda Eitzen and Lisa Duffee—Civil Case Law Update and Family Law Case Update (Civil Trial and Family Law)

BENCH/BAR III

DATES:

May 18–20, 2012

LOCATION:

Tanglewood Resort
Pottsboro, Texas

DETAILS:

Come join us for Pirates of the Caribbean on Sundance Isle, The Search for the Lost Fountain of Law. Register online at www.dentonbar.com.

REGISTER ONLINE OR CONTACT MICHELLE HOUSTON

Download the registration form and pay online at www.dentonbar.com.

5:30–6:00 PM Duane Coker—Yo Ho Ho and A Bathtub of Rum: Understanding alcohol and maritime laws in the State of Texas (Administrative Law)

SATURDAY MORNING:

8:00–8:30 AM Julia Kerestine—Interest Based Negotiation (Civil Trial)

8:30–9:00 AM Kirk Pittard—Collateral source rule regarding evidentiary issues (Civil Trial, Civil Appellate, Personal Injury)

9:00–10:00 PM Rick Hagan—VoiR Dire Demonstration: Learn to conduct voir dire on a Pirate Jury Pool (Criminal Law, Civil Trial)

10:00–10:15 AM Break

10:15–11:00 AM Chad Baruch—Marbury vs. Madison (Civil Appellate)

11:00–11:45 AM Jay Freeman—The Texas Safety Responsibility Law and the Ethical Treatment of Your Client (.75 ethics) (Criminal Law)

11:45 AM–12:30 PM Jim Turnage—Drug Testing tips for Pirates and Attorneys (Family Law, Criminal Law, Personal Injury Trial Law, Juvenile Law)

Announcements and Events

DCBA in 2012-13

May Bar Luncheon

Date:

Friday, May 4, Noon
Meal included

Location:

Oakmont Country Club
1901 Oakmont Drive
Corinth, Texas 76210

Program:

Annual Business Meeting

Speaker:

Annual Business Meeting

June Bar Luncheon

Date:

Friday, June 1, Noon
Meal included

Location:

Oakmont Country Club
1901 Oakmont Drive
Corinth, Texas 76210

Program:

TBA

Speaker:

TBA

Announcing

DCAP will now be charging for DCAP Mediation reschedulings or cancellations that fall within 10 days of the scheduled date of mediation, starting immediately.

Dues Deadline!

June 1, 2012

**Make sure your money is
in on time to enjoy**

uninterrupted

news and referrals!

Monthly Meetings

Collaborative Professionals

DCCP will meet at **12:00 PM** on Tuesday, **May 1**, at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Dr. in Corinth.

Family Law

Family Law will meet at **12:00 PM** on Thursday, **May 17**, in the Central Jury Room, 1450 E. McKinney St. in Denton.

Paralegals

DCPA will meet at **12:00 PM** on Thursday, **May 24**, at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Dr. in Corinth.

GDCYLA

GDCYLA will gather for their monthly:

- Meeting at **11:45 AM** on Thursday, **May 3**, at Greenhouse, 600 N. Locust St., in Denton.
- Happy Hour at **5:00 PM** on Thursday, **May 10**, location to be determined in Denton.

REPTL

REPTL will meet at **11:45 PM** on Wednesday, **May 23** at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Dr. in Corinth.

Denton County Bar Association

2012-13 Membership Application

Required Information (for directory, membership, and website use)

Name: _____ Texas Bar Number: _____
 Business Phone: _____ Facsimile: _____
 Firm/Company: _____
 Business Address (including City & Zip Code): _____
 Email/Web Address: _____ Keep my email private.
 Texas Board Certifications (TBLS): _____
 Law School/Graduation Date: _____
 List All Other Degrees: _____

If you are younger than 37 years OR have practiced in Texas for less than 5 years, please check here

Primary Areas of Practice* (select two):

** Having two areas of practice listed in the web directory is included in the fee for bar membership. If you would like three to five areas of practice listed, there is an additional \$75.00 posting fee. Choose from the following:*

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative & Public | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADR | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor-Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Antitrust | <input type="checkbox"/> Creditor-Debtor | <input type="checkbox"/> Government/Administrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Office Management | <input type="checkbox"/> School Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appellate | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Securities Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration | <input type="checkbox"/> Litigation: Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Litigation: Personal Injury | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental | <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics-Legal Malpractice | <input type="checkbox"/> International | <input type="checkbox"/> Oil & Gas | <input type="checkbox"/> Wills-Trusts-Probate |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Workers' Compensation |

Optional Information

Home Address: _____
 Home Phone: _____ Birthdate: _____
 Spouse's Name: _____ Number of Attorneys in Firm: _____
 Date Licensed in Texas: _____
 Other State Bar Admissions/Dates/License Numbers: _____
 Do you speak a foreign language? _____ If yes, what language: _____

If you would like to post your photograph on the DCBA website, email your photo to Michelle Houston at mhouston@dentonbar.com. The website will be updated periodically throughout the membership year.

Application Certification

I, the undersigned, do hereby make application to the Denton County Bar Association for membership and, in making such application, I certify that I am validly licensed to practice law or am a law student of an accredited law school, that I promise to uphold and support the By-Laws of the Association and the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct in all respects and to the best of my personal and professional ability, that all information provided by me in this application is true and correct.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Application Submission

Please mail this application along with a check made payable to **Denton County Bar Association** in the amount of **\$195.00** or **\$150.00** (licensed in Texas less than two years) to DCBA at 512 W. Hickory, Suite 202, Denton, TX. 76201. Please **DO NOT** include Collaborative Law, Family Law, Criminal Law or REPTL (Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law) Section dues with your DCBA payment. The DCBA membership year runs from May to May and dues are not pro-rated.

If you have any questions about the DCBA, please call the Denton County Bar Association at 940-320-1500; Duane Coker President at 940-566-6649, duane@cokerlegal.com or visit our website at www.dentonbar.com/membership.shtml.