



Denton County Lawyer

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We All Swear At Once

By Jill E. Jester; Minor & Jester, P.C., www.minorandjester.com.

Every attorney remembers the moment they became a “real” lawyer. Years of study, payments in law school, and months of stressing over the Bar exam finally pay off in the moment we take our oath, allowing us to legally practice in the State of Texas. It is the end of one chapter of our lives and the beginning of another.

The State Bar provides a mass swearing in ceremony in Austin, Texas, but not every new attorney can make the trip or wait for the Austin date to begin their practice. Taking a cue from larger cities, the Denton County Young Lawyers Association (DCYLA) wanted to provide a special ceremony to commemorate what has been years in the making for our own attorneys. On November 8, 2012, the DCYLA hosted our first ever “Swearing In” Ceremony. Family, friends, and colleagues of eight area



attorneys who passed the bar filled the ceremonial courtroom as the Honorable Bruce McFarling swore them in.

Addresses were made by DCYLA President, Brook Stuntebeck, DCBA President, Duane Coker, and District Judge Bruce McFarling. Candidates were then introduced by board members, family, and colleagues before Judge McFarling administered the official oath. Each new attorney received a Welcome Packet that included a welcome letter from Brook Stuntebeck, DCYLA contact information and event calendar, an application to join the Denton Bar, and a Denton County court information list among other helpful items.

The new attorneys sworn in included Christine Bruno, Natalie Cepak, Christopher Kelly, John Lackey, Austin Lanham, Blake Penfield, Lauren Wallis, and Adam T. Whitten.

A reception followed for the newly sworn in attorneys, their family and

friends, and other members of the Bar at Sweetwater Bar and Grill. Flowers were donated by Denton Florist and an amazing cake was donated by attorney and our Texas Young Lawyer Association (TYLA) Delegate, Cameron Cox.

This event was made possible by our wonderful Board members, a grant from Texas Young Lawyers Association, and generous donations from Cameron Cox (in kind), Denton Florist (in kind), and the following law firms: Koons Fuller; Minor & Jester; Neal Ashmore Evans & Stuntebeck; and Wood Thacker Weatherly. We could not do the good things we do without support, and we wanted to thank those firms listed above for their continued generosity to us and our community.



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From the President

After all the debate - some of it good, some of it nonsense, and all of it extremely tiresome - on Facebook the past couple months over gun control, presidential elections, and whether or not Morgan Freeman is dead, it's with some trepidation that I let our members know that the Denton County Bar Association will soon be Facebook friendly.

Actually, I'm excited to make that announcement! DCBA, a largely social organization, is finally stepping into the world of social media.


Within in the next few weeks, we should be up and running and, for those of you on Facebook, you'll get an invitation to "Like" the page. It will be a private group, meaning that only our members can be a part of it and we'll be able to use it for many of our announcements, activity planning, to get feedback from our members, and to stay in touch.

Event RSVPs will become almost effortless, and members will have an easy way to double check what's going on and when it's happening.



Duane L. Coker, President

DCBA is excited to take this step. Anything we can do to better serve our members, and aid in promoting the collegiality for which our association is envied, is a step in the right direction!



Report your PRO BONO Hours!

DCBA is known for its active volunteers in the legal community—YOU.

Tracking Pro Bono hours shows lawyers' good deeds; provides testimony for legislative sessions; and improves our reputation.

Log your hours at www.texasbar.com/mybarpage. Let's make DCBA the best local bar in the State!

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 Jill O'Connell
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.

Denton County Bar-Nanza

Andrew M. Lloyd, Lloyd Law Firm; www.lloydfirm.com

If you didn't attend the December meeting, you missed being serenaded by the Bench-Bar IV committee via a special invitation to the 2013 Bar-Nanza to be held April 26-28 at the Mayan Dude Ranch in Bandera, TX. Never fear, however, you can relive the moment of this band of wranglers singing to the tune of Hotel California with their lively video on YouTube (<http://youtu.be/U1yaJjBGMaw>).

Contact Erin Manley at emanley@dentonbar.com by January 30 to reserve your spot at the inn and to take advantage of early-bird registration pricing.

In you'd like to sing along, here are the words of the ditty....

*Driving down on the highway, cool wind in my hair
Weird smell of the dude ranch, rising up through the air
Up ahead in the distance, I caught my cabin's first sight
My heart grew anxious for that C L E
I had to stop for two nights –*

*There I was in Bandera;
A "yeegah" I did yell;
And I was thinking to myself,
"This Bar Conference will be fun as Hell"
Then I got on a horseback and I moseyed away
There were voices in that valley ranch,
I thought I heard them say...*

*Welcome to the Denton County Bar-Nanza
See the Judges here (schmooze the Judges here)
Learn some law down here
Fun and CLE at the Denton County Bar-Nanza
April time of year (April of next year)
Hang with lawyers here*

*Getting away from the office, your paralegals, your
Mercedes-Benz
Traveling through the countryside – to make new ones
and be with old friends
Kickin' heels at the ho-down, sweet summer sweat.
Some dancing like cowboys, some just can't dance yet*

*So I called up the President,
"The application is mine"
He said, "Price is four hundred fifty, but for you, I'd say*

*four forty-nine"
And still those ranch hands are calling from far away,
Get involved with a group that's right
Join the DCBA...*

*Welcome to the Denton County Bar-Nanza
See the Judges here (schmooze the Judges here)
Learn some law down here
Cowboy Olympics at the Denton County Bar-Nanza
Win a fabulous prize
For all girls and guys*

*Saddle up with a partner,
Drink a beer that's on ice
And you'll say "We're all just learning here, how to
give good advice"
And near the chuckwagon,
They gathered for the feast
By hand, with fork, spoon and knives,
Free food and drink, to say the least*

*Last thing I will tell y'all, before you're
Running for the door
It helps your business and it helps our cause
Better than it was before
"Come to Bar-Nanza,"
"We are ready to proceed."
You can check-out any time you like,
But you'll never want to leave!"*



Denton County Adoption Day: The Best Part of Being a Family Law Attorney

By Victor Rivera, Rivera Legal Group, PLLC; www.riveralegalgroup.com

How often are you asked what you do for a living? I know I answer this question at least four times a week. When I say that I am a family law attorney, the typical response is, “So you do divorces?” The public misconception is that divorces are the only thing a family law attorney handles. While it is true that divorces make up a large part of my practice, I usually take the time to mention the other areas of family law, like adoptions, modifications, child support, etc. I always lead off with adoptions, because this is the one area of family law that truly brings me joy. One reason is because my wife and I have personally experienced the blessing of adoption, not only for our son, but for us as his adoptive parents. Another is that it is a much needed breath of fresh air from the ugly, contested divorces that are part of my daily grind. These are two of the many reasons why I participate in the annual Denton County National Adoption Day.

Although still in its infancy here in Denton County, National Adoption Day has been taking place in various counties throughout Texas and other parts of the country

since the year 2000. Denton County first participated in this national event back in November 2008, and this year marked the 5th Anniversary. National Adoption Day was created to help foster children, who are typically in the Child Protective Services system, find a “forever” family. It began with nine cities: New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, Washington D.C., Omaha, Nebraska, and Columbus, Ohio. Last year there were 400 events in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam. Nationally, it has been reported that over 4,500 children were adopted this year.

National Adoption Day is celebrated nationwide on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Denton County typically celebrates this day the week prior to avoid scheduling conflicts with neighboring counties that also participate in this event. This year’s event in Denton County was organized by Tiffany Haertling of Holmes, Diggs & Eames, PLLC. Nineteen children were blessed with a “forever” home, a chance to experience stability, happiness, and a brighter future. This was made possible because of



Community Outreach



Tiffany's leadership and the hard work and dedication of countless volunteers. Organizations like CASA, CPS, Friends of the Family, UNT, and TWU all came together to make sure these children would be able to celebrate this special day. In addition to these organizations, over 40 attorneys volunteered their time, talents, and treasures to make sure Denton County could help out every possible child available for adoption. One of the biggest contributions this year came from the students at TWU and UNT, who provided all the teddy bears that lined the courtrooms as gifts to the children and their siblings, as well as all the books that the kids took home.

Most of the attorneys who helped with adoptions this year had never participated in National Adoption Day before, but I'm sure many will be back. It truly is a rewarding experience for a family attorney to participate in and is well worth your time. If you are interested in volunteering next year, please do not hesitate to contact me, and I will make sure you are able to take part in this very worthy event.



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UNT Alpha Honor Society



From the Social Committee

Wassailfest 2012

By John C. Rentz, Law Office of John C. Rentz; www.rentzlaw.com

Warm wassail, holiday music and the City of Denton tree lighting. What better way to spend an evening with your fellow bar members? How about adding good German beer and hot pretzels?

Your Denton County Bar gathered up for the City of Denton Annual Tree Lighting and wassail competition by spending the early evening at Gerhard's Restaurant, a Roanoke German favorite that recently relocated to just off the square in Denton. There members enjoyed some tasty appetizers and beverages, including Gerhard's own homemade wassail, before heading out to enjoy the festivities with the rest of Denton.

From FFA hay rides for the kids and young-at-heart to an eleven-piece orchestra playing holiday tunes, the square was full of holiday cheer and merriment. Additionally, our newest lawyers and their mentors used this as an opportunity to meet and greet more senior bar members while enjoying a

local tradition with other members of their new profession. All in all, it was a great way to ring in the holiday season with our fellow lawyers.



DCBA UNT Tailgate

By Daniel Abasolo, Hayes, Berry, White & Vanzant, LLP; www.hbwvllaw.com

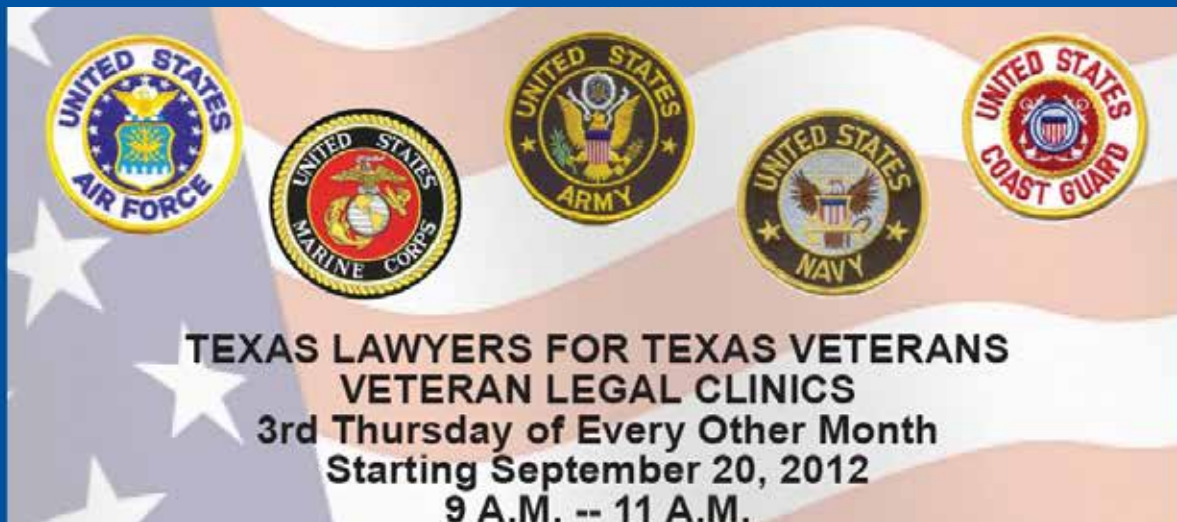
On November 3rd, our Mean Green took on the Arkansas State Red Wolves at Apogee Stadium. The Mean Green was a little short in their homecoming game, but the DCBA show our support in force. The weather was perfect for tailgating. Members and their guests lounged in the parking lot enjoying chicken wings and cold drinks as they watched NCAA action and discussed the fate of their alma maters. Earl Dobson provided DCBA T-shirts and koozies as well as 40 sideline tickets. Judge Garcia of County Court 2 showed his Mean Green pride by generously providing his RV and satellite TV. Social co-chair Leah Harbour worked with Earl Dobson to arrange Chick-

fil-A and refreshments. Treasurer Travis Biggs emceed, encouraging members to play tailgate games.

After losing some big names to graduation, this has been a rebuilding year for the Mean Green. Still, big things are on the horizon for UNT football. On November 18th, two UNT products, Lance Dunbar of the Dallas Cowboys and Craig Robertson of the Cleveland Browns, faced off on opposite sides of the ball in Cowboys Stadium. This NFL success highlights an ever improving UNT football program. Coach Dan McCarney puts an exciting product on the field each week, and freshman running back Antoine Jimmerson is providing

the electrifying plays UNT fans have come to expect from that position.

UNT finished its season as part of the Sun Belt Conference, and will move up to Conference USA in 2013 season. This new affiliation will mean more television exposure, and several in-state rivalries including UTEP, Rice, and UTSA. Apogee Stadium rivals any venue in the area, and the new bridge over I-35 makes parking and tailgating very accessible, inexpensive, and the best football value in the Metroplex. Supporting Mean Green football is a great way to get out and enjoy our beautiful community. UNT football never disappoints. I hope to see you all at a game next season.



This is an advice-only clinic open to all honorably discharged veterans, regardless of their income status. The clinic works closely with Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, who is providing support staff to help with intake as well as malpractice coverage to the volunteers while participating at the clinic. We are always looking for volunteer attorneys to help advise clients, non-attorney volunteers to help with intake, as well as donations for coffee and light snacks for those volunteering. Legal primers will be available for attorneys to help answer general questions on areas of law they might not regularly practice in. This is a great opportunity to help give back to those who have served our country, and we hope you can volunteer and support our veterans.

Announcements and Events

February Bar Luncheon

Date:

Friday, February 1 at Noon

Location:

Oakmont Country Club

Program:

Banter with the Bench—Ask the Judge(s)

Topic:

Judges will answer YOUR questions. Please submit your questions to Erin Manley, emanley@dentonbar.com, by January 24 for consideration.

Speakers:

Panel of Denton County District Court Judges

March Bar Luncheon

Date:

Friday, March 1 at Noon

Location:

Oakmont Country Club

Program:

The Brain Science of Decision-Making Under Duress

Topic:

This presentation describes what happens when the limbic system kicks in, and how people change the way they make decisions when they are under duress.

Speaker:

Jayne Beach-Lafferty

Condolences

DCBA would like to extend our condolences to Judge Rivera-Worley on the passing of her father, Jose Rivera, on December 26, 2012.

**Be a part of our
DCAP Program!**

**Contact
Erin Manley**
(emanley@dentonbar.com)

**to schedule a
time for your
mediation!**

Monthly Meetings

Collaborative Professionals

DCCP will meet at **12:00 PM** on Tuesday, **February 5**, at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Dr. in Corinth.

Family Law

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

Paralegals

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

GDCYL

GDCYLA will gather for their monthly meetings on the first Thursday of each month. Contact Brook Stuntebeck at lbs@nakfamilylaw.com for meeting times and location.

REPTL

- Meeting from 11:45 am to 1 pm on Wednesday, **January 23** at the Oakmont Country Club.