



## WILLIE MELTON LAW LIBRARY NEWS

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STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

### AT A GLANCE

- What's going on at the Law Library!
- How you can access resources from your home or office.

### HOURS

Mon	8 am - 5 pm
Tue	8 am - 5 pm
Wed	8 am - 5 pm
Thu	8 am - 5 pm
Fri	8 am - 5 pm
Sat	CLOSED
Sun	CLOSED



### What's New

#### UPCOMING PROGRAMS



LONE STAR  
LEGAL AID

- **LAWYER IN THE LIBRARY**  
hosted by Lone Star Legal Aid EVERY MONDAY from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm - [More Information Here](#)
- **PRO SE BASICS** at 10 am EVERY TUESDAY - Learn about basic court procedures and resources.
- **EXPRESS CLASSES** at 10 am EVERY THURSDAY - Learn basic legal technology.
- **TRELLIS TRAINING** at 1 pm, Jan 24, 2024, on Zoom - Register on our website.

#### UPDATES AND CLOSINGS

- The Law Library and the Justice Center will be **CLOSED** on **Fri, Dec 22**, and **Mon, Dec 25**, for **CHRISTMAS**, and on **Mon, Jan 1, 2024**, for **NEW YEAR'S DAY**.
- The **Virtual Court Kiosk**, through a grant by Texas Legal Services Center, can be reserved for virtual court hearings in the mornings from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, and in the afternoons from 1:30 to 5:00 pm.  
[Reserve the Kiosk Here](#)
- New **Trellis Database** IS AVAILABLE NOW - Access Fort Bend County and other Texas counties' Trial Court Records.

**TEXAS  
LEGAL  
SERVICES  
CENTER**



## UPDATED RESOURCES

- O'Connor's Texas Business & Commerce Code Plus, 2023-24 Edition
- O'Connor's Texas Employment Codes Plus, 2023-24 Edition
- Texas Drunk Driving Law, 2024 Edition
- Texas Rules of Evidence Handbook, 2024 Edition
- Texas Criminal and Traffic Law Manual, 2023-24 Edition

## THIS MONTH IS CRIMINAL LAW MONTH!

- We have lots of resources on this topic this month! Come and let us show you!

## Past Program Recordings

### ATTORNEY LECTURE SERIES

- **Attorneys and Burnout** - Speaker Attorney Cynthia Rendon - Find it [HERE!](#)
- **10 Lessons I Wish I Had Learned Earlier** - Speaker Attorney Rocky Pilgrim - Find it [HERE!](#)

## Online Resources

### REMOTE DATABASES

- **Lexis Nexis Digital Library** - Collection of ebooks from publishers LexisNexis, Matthew Bender, and James Publishing
- **Gale Legal Forms Library** - Collection of Civil Forms on various topics that can be used in Texas and Federal Courts



[Sign up for an eCard here to access](#)

### PRO SE HANDBOOK - FORMS AND INFORMATION

- General Civil and Family Law Forms and Information from Texas Law Help, Fort Bend County District and County Courts at Law, Fort Bend County District and County Clerks, the Fort Bend County Law Library, and other Texas Governmental Agencies. [Check it out here.](#)



## Featured Resource: *Texas Criminal Law Resources*

by *Andrew Bennett*

The Law Library has a number of Texas Criminal Law Resources both in print and digital. Our print collection is anchored by the multi-volume *Texas Criminal Practice Guide*. This guide is the most used Criminal Law Resource in our collection and comes in both print and digital formats including being able to access the ebook from home or office through the Lexis Digital Library. Other titles include the James Publishing combination set of *Texas Criminal Law Handbook* and the *Texas Criminal Law Forms*. Both are easy to use, and the forms and information can be downloaded from Lexis Digital Library as well. Other titles include the *Texas Criminal and Traffic Law Manual*, *Texas DWI Manual and Drunk Driving Law*, *Texas Criminal Jury Charges*, and more. The *Texas Criminal Pattern Jury Charges* from the State Bar is only available online and you will need to come into the library to access. For more information, contact the Law Library.

## Librarian Musings: *November... 'Tis the Season for CLE!*

by *Jonathan Briggs*

It is that time of year...Thanksgiving, college football is winding down, I'm getting another year older, and my State Bar of Texas Continuing Legal Education (CLE) requirement comes due. This year, I was only able to earn a few hours as I went long, so I ended up with a good chunk of coursework to attend here and there to finish up my 15 hours over a long weekend filled with many other activities. But, I put in the time and got it done!

I try to take classes that have relevance to my work here at the Law Library that will help me assist our attorney and pro se patrons. I would like to share with you a couple of the courses I attended that were of particular benefit and interest. I also downloaded the course papers and PowerPoints in PDF and am glad to forward them to you.

The Covid-19 Pandemic ushered in the prevalent use of Zoom and other online meeting applications for trials and hearings. Even with the resumption of normal operating procedures in most courts, they retain the option of holding hearings online. Many courts have parameters for what kind of hearings they are likely to conduct by Zoom...often uncontested matters such as agreed divorces, name changes, certain probate matters, etc.

It is here to stay in some measure. That is why I took Justice Emily Miskel's course, *Zooming to Back to the Future? In-Person, Remote, and Hybrid Appearances*, presented as part of the State Bar's 49th Advanced Family Law Course in August of this year. Judge Miskel, of the 5th Court of Appeals in Dallas, gave her perspective on the ongoing use of this tool and the relative pros and cons. One thing she emphasized is the benefit to pro se litigants as online participation allows greater access to the courts. She provided some statistics that really put things in perspective: In 2019, there were 364,125 new family law cases filed in Texas; 40% of these were filed by self-represented parties; 39% were Title IV-D cases generally filed by the State, with most respondents being pro se; and only 21% of family law cases were filed by attorneys. We, here at the Law Library, assist numerous pro se family law parties every day. Recognizing the patrons we serve and the ongoing prevalence of remote proceedings, in 2023, we were able to benefit from a grant by the Texas Legal Services Center for a Virtual Court Kiosk in the library's Viewing Room to provide a place for parties to have a reliable and secure location to attend court proceedings remotely.

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## *November... 'Tis the Season for CLE continued*

One other stat Justice Miskel imparted that I found eye-opening is that in 2019, there were 1,618,000 civil cases filed in Texas...39% of these were filed in justice court, 36% in municipal courts, 16% in district courts, and 9% in county courts. Twenty-five percent of these cases were debt cases and 16% were landlord-tenant matters...matters that involve a high amount of self-represented litigants. This class definitely reflected our daily experience here at the Law Library and gave me some valuable information and insight.

National Adoption Day was on November 21, and it brought some happy children and families to the end of their journey here at the Justice Center...probably the single most positive day of the year here. It is a regular occurrence for me to provide adoption materials to parties seeking to begin the adoption process. With the materials, I always also include resources for seeking legal counsel for this process. I was glad to be able to take the *Adoption 101: Basics and Beyond* course presented as a State Bar webinar by attorneys Heidi Cox and Eric Freeby. It provided a depth of useful information. Key issues included notice requirements; whether to pursue it as dual or single proceedings on termination and adoption; and so many other nuts-and-bolts details that must be considered. For parents and/or their attorneys, this was definitely a worthwhile class.

Aging parents and family members -- and the legal, practical, financial, logistical, medical, and familial dynamics involved -- was the subject of *Caregiver Do's and Don'ts*, given by attorneys Christian Kelso and R. Shaun Rainey. They did an excellent job of weaving together these issues into a cohesive narrative and touching on many issues that people in this situation are well aware of and many things that may not have even occurred to them. It can be overwhelming. They identified key issues and tools to use to address them. I'd recommend this to anyone, be they an attorney or lay person...it is something we will all deal with in some shape or form.

A topic attorneys and parties may not give much thought to is the propriety of online communication and social-media activity, and the rules, best practices, and just good sense that need to be brought to bear in managing this aspect of party, client, and counsel relationships and behavior. Attorney John Browning gave an informative and entertaining look at this issue in his class *No Tweeting After Midnight: Ethically Communicating with Clients in the Digital Age*. It was an eye-opening course.

I also took classes on legal writing; employment law; sexual discrimination, harassment, and retaliation cases; and ethical perspectives on lawyering and negotiation, by James A. Baker, III.

I try to earn CLE throughout the year, but I always have some hours left to complete. I'm kind of glad I did...it allows me to sit and focus on the materials and I end up getting a lot out of them that helps me in doing my job better and assisting our pro se and attorney patrons. Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas to you all!