TEXAS BAR FOUNDATION

AWARD RECIPIENTS

2020
MISSION

The Texas Bar Foundation solicits charitable contributions and provides funding to enhance the rule of law and the system of justice in Texas, especially for programs that relate to legal assistance for the underserved, the administration of justice, ethics in the legal profession, the encouragement of legal research, publications and forums, and education of the third branch of government.
While we cannot celebrate together in person, please join us in recognizing and honoring the recipients of the Texas Bar Foundation’s 2020 Awards.

We look forward to reuniting and bringing everyone together for the 2021 Annual Dinner on Friday, June 18, 2021 in Fort Worth.
AWARD RECIPIENTS

2020
OUTSTANDING 50 YEAR LAWYER AWARD

The Outstanding 50 Year Lawyer Award was the first award established by the Texas Bar Foundation in 1974. The award recognizes attorneys whose practice spanned fifty years or more and who adhere to the highest principles and traditions of the legal profession and service to the public.

George W. Coleman

Dallas | Life Fellow

George Coleman received his B.S. in Petroleum Engineering from University of Oklahoma, before graduating from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in 1963. Upon graduation, George went to work at Jenkens, Anson and Spradley, and continued to work for Jenkens and Gilchrist, as it became known, for 43 years. He went into private practice before joining the firm of Bell Nunnally and Martin, and served Of Counsel to the firm until June 30, 2020. His practice focused on corporate and securities, and mergers and acquisitions, with extensive experience in structuring and negotiating complex business transactions, partnership and LLC structures.

George chaired the State Bar of Texas Partnership Law Committee and Business Law Section. He was also Chair to the American Bar Association LLCs, Partnerships and Unincorporated Entities Committee and as Chair of the Limited Partnerships Subcommittee. He served as an adjunct professor at Texas A&M University School of Law.

George is a prolific writer, having co-authored a treatise on Texas limited liability companies under the Texas Business Organizations Code. He is the recipient of the Dallas Bar Association’s 2007 Justinian Award and the American Bar Association Business Law Section’s 2007 Martin I. Lubaroff Award. George also serves on many nonprofit organizations in the Dallas community.

George and his wife, Jean, have two children, Ann Coleman Fielder and David Coleman, who have blessed them with grandchildren.
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John T. Montford
SAN ANTONIO | LIFE FELLOW

After graduating from UT Law in 1968, Montford became a JAG officer in the United States Marine Corps. Upon completion of active duty, he went into private practice in Lubbock, Texas. In 1978, he was elected District Attorney followed in 1983 by election to the Texas Senate. Texas Monthly named him one of the “Ten Best” Legislators for five sessions. He chaired the powerful Senate Finance Committee until he left the Senate in 1996 to become the first Chancellor of Texas Tech, where he completed a highly successful five-year tenure.

In 2001 he joined SBC as President of External Affairs for Southwestern Bell. He held several Executive Leadership positions as the company grew, ultimately being named as President of the U.S. Western Region for AT&T, covering states west of the Mississippi.

In 2010 he joined General Motors as “Senior Advisor for Global Public Policy” and was on the Executive Committee and also served as chair of the GM Foundation until 2012.

Currently he is CEO of JTM Consulting, LLC, a government regulations firm. He has served on numerous corporate and non-profit Boards. Since 2002 has served as an Independent Director of Southwest Airlines. His latest publication of “Board Games”, a guide for new directors and good governance, is an Amazon Best Seller.

John and Debbie are the proud parents of three children and six grandchildren.
OUTSTANDING 50 YEAR LAWYER

AWARD

The Outstanding 50 Year Lawyer Award was the first award established by the Texas Bar Foundation in 1974. The award recognizes attorneys whose practice spanned fifty years or more and who adhere to the highest principles and traditions of the legal profession and service to the public.

Dudley Oldham

HOUSTON | SUSTAINING LIFE FELLOW

After graduating from UT Law in 1966, Dudley then joined the firm of Fulbright & Jaworski LLP (now Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP). Over the 50+ years of his litigation centered law and arbitration practice, Dudley has been lead counsel in many domestic and international cases.

Dudley is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and chaired its Judiciary Committee, a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and served on its National Board of Directors and as President of its Houston Chapter. He has also served as Chair of the Tort and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar Association, Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Independence of the Judiciary, the ABA Commission revising the Model Code of Federal Judicial Conduct.

Dudley served on the Advisory Council of the National Judicial College and the National Center for State Courts where he was honored with admission to the Chief Justice Warren Burger Society. He has served as the Chairman of the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, and of the Advisory Council for the Institute for Molecular Medicine, on the Executive Committee at UT Health and on the Advisory Council of the McGovern Medical School. He continues to serve the University of Texas as a member of the President’s Associates, on the School of Liberal Arts Advisory Council, and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Chancellor’s Council of the UT System.

Dudley is now a retired partner of his firm and resides in Houston with his wife of 55 years, Judy. Their two sons, Steve and Mike, along with their wives and five children all reside in Houston.
The Outstanding 50 Year Lawyer Award was the first award established by the Texas Bar Foundation in 1974. The award recognizes attorneys whose practice spanned fifty years or more and who adhere to the highest principles and traditions of the legal profession and service to the public.

Lee Yeakel, United States District Judge

Lee Yeakel is a United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas. He was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the United States Senate in 2003. Before becoming a federal judge, he served as Chief Justice and Justice of Texas’s Third Court of Appeals and was in private practice in Austin, where he has spent his entire legal career.

He received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Laws degree from the University of Virginia.

The Texas Bar Foundation awarded him the 2012 Samuel Pessarra Outstanding Jurist Award. The University of Texas Law School’s Review of Litigation named him the 2014 Outstanding Texas Jurist. He is a sustaining life fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, a life fellow of the American Bar Foundation, and a member of the American Law Institute. The Honorable Lee Yeakel Intellectual Property American Inn of Court is named in his honor.

He presently serves as a Texas commissioner to the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. Recently he served as a member of the United States delegation to the Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters and was a signer for the United States of the treaty that resulted from the convention. Yeakel is a former president of the Rotary Club of Austin.

He and his wife Anne have two children and three grandchildren.
Karen S. Gerstner
HOUSTON | SUSTAINING LIFE FELLOW

Karen S. Gerstner is the sole shareholder of Karen S. Gerstner & Associates, P.C. Ms. Gerstner received her undergraduate degree (B.A. with honors - Phi Beta Kappa) in Political Science from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in 1977, and her law degree (J.D.) from Case Western Reserve University School of Law, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1980. Ms. Gerstner is Board Certified in Estate Planning and Probate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, and is a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, where she serves on the Employee Benefits in Estate Planning Committee, the Practice Committee and the Communications Committee. Ms. Gerstner is a frequent speaker at Continuing Legal Education programs on various trust and estate topics. Ms. Gerstner is also a member of numerous professional organizations in which she has served in various officer positions. Karen has been married to Jim Gerstner for over 40 years. Karen and Jim have three children: Laura Walbridge (married to Paddy Walbridge), Allison Hemwattakit (married to Lee Hemwattakit), and Libby Gerstner (who will graduate from Tulane Law School in May and will begin working for Vinson and Elkins in Houston after taking the Texas Bar Exam in July). Karen and Jim also have one grandchild, Winnie Walbridge, who is a total delight!

A $1,000 donation has been made to Texas Tech University School of Law for publishing Ms. Gerstner’s article.
The Lola Wright Foundation Award, established in 1985, is presented in memory of Coleman Gay, who was a distinguished Texas lawyer and who exemplified the highest standards of professional ethics. The award is presented in recognition for outstanding public service in advancing and enhancing legal ethics in Texas.

Kevin Dubose

Kevin Dubose is an appellate lawyer in Houston, and a founding partner of Alexander Dubose & Jefferson LLP. He is a former Chair of the State Bar of Texas Appellate Section, and of the Appellate Section of the Houston Bar Association.

Kevin first wrote about legal ethics in the early 1990s, and since then has written and spoken about that subject numerous times. He is a lawyer who other lawyers frequently turn to for ethical advice.

When Chair of the State Bar Appellate Section, Kevin appointed, and served on a committee to draft standards of professionalism designed for appellate law. Those efforts culminated in the creation of the Standards for Appellate Conduct, which was adopted by the Supreme Court of Texas and Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in 1999. It became the first ethical standards for appellate practice in the United States.

In 2012, Kevin received the Chief Justice Jack Pope Professionalism Award from the Texas Center for Legal Ethics (TCLE). In 2015, he joined the Board of Directors of TCLE, and currently serves as Chair-Elect of that board. Since 2017 he has participated in over 30 CLE programs on behalf of TCLE.

Mr. Dubose designated Books for Development to receive a $5,000 donation from the Texas Bar Foundation.
SAMUEL PESSARRA OUTSTANDING JURIST AWARD

In 1987, the Texas Bar Foundation created the Outstanding Jurist Award to honor an active federal or state judge. In 1995, the Foundation received a bequest to the endowment from the estate of Mrs. Samuel Pessarra in honor of her late husband for the purpose of funding the Outstanding Jurist Award. The award was renamed the Samuel Pessarra Outstanding Jurist Award in 1995. The recipient must have served on the bench for a minimum of 10 years and exhibit an exceptionally outstanding reputation for competency, efficiency and integrity.

Chief Justice Sandee Bryan Marion, Fourth Court of Appeals

Chief Justice Sandee Bryan Marion was elected in 1992 as Judge of Bexar County Probate Court No. 2 where she served until her appointment to the Fourth Court of Appeals in 2002. In 2014, she was elected to serve as Chief Justice of the Court.

Chief Justice Marion graduated with honors from the University of Texas at Austin in 1977 and from St. Mary’s University School of Law in 1980. After law school, Chief Justice Marion practiced law for twelve years in Boerne and San Antonio until her election to the Probate Court bench. She is board certified in Family Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.

In 2008, Chief Justice Marion was named Distinguished Graduate of St. Mary’s University School of Law. She is a past President of the Board of the St. Mary’s Law Alumni Association. Chief Justice Marion is an active member of the Rotary Club of San Antonio and served as the first woman President of the Club in 1998-1999. In 2016, she was inducted into the San Antonio Women’s Hall of Fame. In 2018 and 2019, Chief Justice Marion served as Chair of the Texas Council of Chief Justices.

Chief Justice Marion and her husband reside in San Antonio, Texas.

Chief Justice Marion designated St. Mary’s University School of Law to receive a $1,000 scholarship donation from the Texas Bar Foundation.
The Dan Rugeley Price Memorial Award was established by friends and family and endowed through the Texas Bar Foundation in June 1996. The recipient exemplifies the qualities of an accomplished legal writer and researcher, a talented and dedicated practicing lawyer, a servant of the profession as a volunteer and an advocate on its behalf. The recipient exhibits an unreserved commitment to clients and to the practice of our profession, and demonstrates dedication to the Bar and service to the public with the same commitment, dedication and zeal which defined Dan Price’s life and work.

Neal W. Adams

Neal earned his B.B.A. in Marketing from Texas A&M University in 1968, and obtained his Juris Doctor in 1970 from Baylor University School of Law. Neal served in the United States Army as trial counsel for Headquarters Command, Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Neal has been practicing law in Texas and Tarrant County, Texas since 1972. He is President of the law firm of Adams, Lynch & Loftin, P.C., located in Grapevine, Texas. Neal was a member of the District 7A Grievance Committee (2000 through 2002) and Chair in 2002. He was a member of the Board of Directors for the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (2000 through 2003).

Neal is a Member of the State Bar of Texas School Law Section since 1987, serving as Chair in 1999 and 2000. Neal was awarded the 2016 Kelly Frels Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the State Bar of Texas, School Law Section.

Neal was a Member of the Board of Directors for the Texas Bar Foundation (2010 through 2012). Neal is a Charter Fellow and Charter Member of the Tarrant County Bar Foundation from 1998 to date and a Sustaining Charter Member of the Tarrant County Bar Foundation since 2013. He was a Member of the Board of Directors in 2013 through 2019, and served as Chair in 2018.

Neal and his wife, Sonja have 2 daughters, Marti Morgan ’93, Texas A&M University, and Paige Petro ’98, Texas Tech University.

Mr. Adams has designated Texas A&M University School of Law to receive a $1,000 donation in honor of his acceptance of the Dan Rugeley Price Memorial Award.
The firm of Beck Redden LLP established the award in honor and memory of Mr. Secrest, a gifted trial lawyer and a founding partner of the firm. The Ronald D. Secrest Outstanding Trial Lawyer Award was established to recognize an active trial lawyer. The award recognizes a trial lawyer who, in his or her practice, has demonstrated high ethical and moral standards and has demonstrated exceptional professional conduct, thus enhancing the image of the trial lawyer.

Kenneth Tekell, Sr.

HOUSTON | SUSTAINING LIFE FELLOW

Kenneth Tekell, Sr. has been a jury trial lawyer for over 57 years. He was a founding partner of a Houston law firm bearing his name for 52 years. He has tried over 225 cases to jury verdicts. His practice has included Mom and Pop grocery stores, small business, and major corporations. He has specialized in business, tort and personal injury defense. His clients have included Texas Gulf Coast refineries and chemical complexes, U.S. and international pharmaceutical and medical device companies, and product liability. He has also practiced legal malpractice defense and has represented oil well service companies and drilled facilities.

Mr. Tekell has been honored as a Founding Member and past President of the American Board of Trial Advocates Houston Chapter, a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, an Emeritus Fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and the International Society of Barristers. He is an Emeritus member of the International Association of Defense Counsel and has been active in legal and professional organizations his entire career. Mr. Tekell is a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law, was the recipient of the Law School’s Award for Achievement in Trial Advocacy, Tex ABOTA Trial Lawyer of the Year, TACTAS Lifetime of Advocacy Award, and the Joe D. Jamail Award of Excellence in Courtroom Advocacy.

Kenneth and his wife, Meredith and his three children are graduates of the University of Texas. His son, Kenneth, Jr. is a lawyer in litigation for Exxon Mobil Corporation.

A special thank you to Beck Redden LLP for their continued annual $10,000 unrestricted contribution to the Texas Bar Foundation in support of this award.
The Gregory S. Coleman Outstanding Appellate Lawyer Award was established in 2011 in honor and memory of Gregory S. Coleman. The award celebrates the high ideals and standards that Greg demonstrated in his appellate practice and personal life. The recipient should exhibit an outstanding appellate practice while maintaining a strong commitment to providing legal services for the underserved. Dedication to mentoring young attorneys should be evident as well as a strong moral compass to guide both professional and personal pursuits.

Reagan W. Simpson
HOUSTON | LIFE FELLOW

Reagan is a partner with Houston-based firm Yetter Coleman LLP. After 43 years of practice, Reagan is one of the few lawyers in the country who has been elected to the American Academy of Trial Lawyers, the American College of Trial Lawyers, and the American Board of Trial Advocates. Reagan was elected to the American Law Institute in 2013 and is Board Certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Civil Appellate and Civil Trial Law. Reagan is regularly recognized for his practice excellence by Chambers and Partners, Best Lawyers in America, and Texas Super Lawyers.

Reagan was born and raised in Jacksboro, Texas. He attended the University of Texas for undergraduate and law school, graduating from both with high honors and then clerked for the late Thomas Gibbs Gee of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. After his clerkship, Reagan moved to Houston to marry his wife of 42 years, Nancy Foster Simpson. They have four children and five grandchildren. In Houston, Reagan began his legal career with Fulbright & Jaworski. After 24 years, he moved to King & Spalding, practicing there for nine years before joining Yetter Coleman in 2011.

A special thank you to Yetter Coleman LLP for their continued annual $10,000 unrestricted contribution to the Texas Bar Foundation in support of this award.
The Terry Lee Grantham Memorial Award was endowed through the Texas Bar Foundation in 2014 by Terry Lee Grantham’s family and friends. As an enduring tribute to Terry’s life and work in the practice of law, this award is made annually to an outstanding Texas lawyer. The award celebrates Terry’s life as a gifted and committed man and lawyer who devoted himself completely to every task he undertook. Each recipient of this award must exemplify the qualities of an accomplished, talented and dedicated practitioner, a servant of the profession and an advocate for those we serve, demonstrating dedication and service with the same passion that defined Terry’s life and work.

Sara E. Dysart
SAN ANTONIO | SUSTAINING LIFE FELLOW

Sara E. Dysart is a graduate of St. Mary’s University (BA magna cum laude & JD with distinction) and UTSA (MA). Practicing law as a sole practitioner, Sara is Board Certified in Commercial Real Estate Law and a fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers. An advocate of SBOT CLE programs, Sara serves on planning committees, as course director, and frequent author and presenter. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Broadway Bank, the Texas Bar College, and local non-profit organizations. She has been Chair of the SBOT Real Estate Forms Committee, Trustee of the Texas Bar Foundation, Director of the SBOT, Co-Chair of the 2015 SBOT Annual Meeting, Council Member of REPTL, President of St. Mary’s Law Alumni Association, and Chair of the San Antonio Bar Foundation. She is a recipient of the SBOT President’s Award, a SBOT Presidential Citation, three San Antonio Bar Association President’s Awards, San Antonio Business Journal Outstanding Lawyer Award, the San Antonio Bar Foundation Peacemaker Award, the SBOT CLE staff’s Standing Ovation Award, the SBOT Advanced Real Estate Weatherbie Workhorse Award, the Association of Corporate Counsel South Texas Chapter C. Lee Cusenbary Ethical Life Award, the Lawyer’s Concerned for Lawyer’s Ralph Mock Award, and the Bexar County Women’s Bar Foundation’s Belva Lockwood Outstanding Lawyer. St. Mary’s University honored Sara as a 2019 Distinguished Graduate.

Texas Tech University School of Law received $5,000 in honor of Ms. Dysart’s receipt of the Terry Lee Grantham Memorial Award.
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