



Note: Media representatives wishing to cover this event as guests of the Commission should RSVP to Catherine Galloway by April 19, 12pm.

For Immediate Release: April 17, 2018
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Media Advisory

Champions of Justice Gala to Benefit Legal Services for Texas Veterans

Wednesday, April 25, 6:00 p.m.

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Access to Justice Commission will host the Champions of Justice Gala Benefiting Veterans at 6:00 p.m. at the AT&T Executive Education & Conference Center in Austin. The gala raises funds for the provision of civil legal aid for low-income Texas veterans.

The Honorable Nathan L. Hecht, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, will deliver the keynote address. The 27th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, Nathan L. Hecht is the longest serving member of the Court in Texas history and the senior Texas appellate judge in active service. Chief Justice Hecht has been an unwavering advocate in the Court's efforts to assure Texans living below the poverty line, as well as others with limited means, have access to basic civil legal services.

The James B. Sales Boots on the Ground Award will be presented to Israel Reyna, attorney and branch manager in the Laredo Office of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid. The award recognizes a legal aid attorney or pro bono attorney who gives selflessly of his/her time and talent to provide legal help to low-income Texans. For nearly four decades, Mr. Reyna has served the civil legal needs of his Laredo community and also educated residents and clients so they are able to advocate for themselves.

The Emily C. Jones Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to David G. Hall. The award reflects the highest honor given for a career dedicated to supporting legal aid for low-income Texans. Under Mr. Hall's leadership, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid has not only grown geographically, it has also increased the types of legal services provided to clients. For half a century, his dogged determination has given a better life and a new beginning to hundreds of thousands of low-income Texans. Due to his guidance, TRLA has become legendary for its fearless social justice work, defending the most impoverished and oppressed Texans.

What: Champions of Justice Gala Benefiting Veterans

When: Wednesday, April 25
6:00 p.m. Reception
7:00 p.m. Dinner

Where: AT&T Executive Education & Conference Center
The University of Texas at Austin
1900 University Ave.
Austin, TX 78705

The State Bar of Texas is a co-sponsor of the gala and has ensured that proceeds raised will directly support civil legal aid for low-income Texans. Gala Co-Chairs include prominent Texas attorneys who have donated their time to the effort: Jerry K. Clements of Locke Lord LLP in Austin; Randall M. Ebner of Exxon Mobil Corporation in Houston; David R. McAtee II of AT&T, Inc. in Dallas; Richard Warren Mithoff of Mithoff Law in Houston; W. Wayne Watts in Boerne; and Marie Yeates of Vinson & Elkins LLP in Houston. Harry M. Reasoner, of Vinson & Elkins LLP in Houston, serves as chair of the Texas Access to Justice Commission, and G. Thomas Vick, Jr., of Vick Carney, LLP in Weatherford, serves as president of the State Bar of Texas.

Respected law firms, law schools, companies, and nonprofits all contributed to the effort. Additionally, justices of the Supreme Court of Texas will attend to applaud and recognize the efforts that everyone involved has put forth for the cause.

Sponsorships and individual tickets are available for purchase at www.texasatj.org/champions-justice-annual-gala.

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*The **Texas Access to Justice Commission** was created in 2001 by the Supreme Court of Texas to develop and implement policy initiatives designed to expand access to and enhance the quality of justice in civil legal matters for low-income Texans. The Commission has created several initiatives to increase resources and awareness of legal aid. For more information, please visit www.TexasATJ.org.*