



AUSTIN BAR FOUNDATION

Press Release

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Austin Bar Foundation Holds Annual Fundraising Gala and Honors Area Attorneys with Awards

AUSTIN, TX – More than 550 members of Austin’s legal community attended the 15th annual Austin Bar Foundation Gala on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2018 at the JW Marriott in downtown Austin. The evening’s theme was “Midnight in Miami” and featured palm trees, a neon art deco backdrop of the Miami skyline, sleek modern furniture, and a photo booth complete with a life-sized cardboard standup of Don Johnson. In addition to enjoying cocktails, dinner, dancing, and casino games, attendees generously raised funds by purchasing raffle tickets for a variety of exclusive gift baskets, and bidding on luxurious live auction items including trips to locales such as Crested Butte, CO., Costa Rica, and Argentina.

The purpose of the Gala is to raise funds for the Austin Bar Foundation, which supports and expands the provision of legal-related charitable and education programs in Central Texas, including Austin Adoption Day, Free Legal Advice Clinics for Veterans, the Self-Represented Litigant Project, the Diversity Fellowship Program, and scholarships for Texas LGBT law students, in conjunction with the Austin LGBT Bar Association. The Foundation has also awarded over \$132,000 in grants to organizations in Central Texas such as CASA of Travis County, American Gateways, Austin Tenants Council, Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts (TALA), Volunteer Legal Services, and many others. For more information on the many programs, scholarships, and grants provided by the Foundation, visit the website www.austinbar.org/foundation/about.

During the evening, seven outstanding attorneys were honored for their immense contributions to Austin’s legal community, and the community at large. The awards and award recipients were:

DISTINGUISHED LAWYER AWARD – Clarke Heidrick, Jr., Rev. Joseph C. Parker, Jr., and Betty Balli Torres

The Distinguished Lawyer Award recognizes the dedication and hard work of attorneys who have practiced law for 30 years or more and have significantly contributed to the legal profession and the greater community.

Clarke Heidrick, Jr.

Clarke Heidrick, Jr. is an attorney with the firm of Graves, Dougherty, Hearon & Moody where he has practiced law since 1977. A former president and managing partner of the firm, he specializes in business organizations and transactions, mergers and acquisitions, banking, and finance.

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Heidrick is involved in a variety of community organizations and activities, including current service as chair of the board of Shivers Cancer Foundation, executive chair of the board of Seminary of the Southwest, chair of the board of Rebekah Baines Johnson Center (a housing project for low-income seniors), and a member of the board of managers of the Travis County Healthcare District (now Central Health). He was a member of the Organizing Committee for the creation of the Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin, and he currently serves as a member of the steering committee for the Live-Strong Cancer Institutes. He is also a member of Austin Area Research Organization where he serves as chair of the Transportation Committee. He was awarded the David H. Walter Community Excellence award by the Austin Bar in 2007, and in 2014 he was named Austinite of the Year by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce.

Rev. Joseph C. Parker, Jr.

Joseph C. Parker, Jr., is the senior pastor of David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. He was licensed to practice law in the Texas and federal courts in 1983, and practiced as a trial attorney and mediator prior to becoming pastor in 1992.

After graduating from the University of Texas School of Law, he served as a prosecutor and chief of criminal litigation in the Travis County Attorney's Office; civil litigator, director and vice president with the firm Long, Burner, Parks & Sealy; and chief of litigation for the State Bar of Texas. He was elected the first African-American president of the Austin Bar Association in 1996.

He has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the 2013 Heman Marion Sweatt Civil Rights Legacy Award, presented by the University of Texas. He was honored as a "Trail Blazer" by the State Bar of Texas. He is a Master of the Court Emeritus in the American Inns of Court, and a Fellow of both the Texas Bar Foundation and the Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the University of Texas School of Law. His framed photograph, biography, and autograph are on permanent display in a UT School of Law classroom as a part of the Distinguished Minority Alumni Portrait Collection.

Betty Balli Torres

Betty Balli Torres has dedicated her professional career to public interest work serving as an advocate for civil legal services for the poor. She has served as the executive director of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, the largest Texas-based funding source for legal services to the poor, since 2001. She began her career as a staff attorney at Legal Aid of Central Texas after graduating from the University of Texas School of Law. Torres has held various public-interest law positions, including executive director of Laredo Legal Aid Society, Inc., legal director of Volunteer Legal Services of Central Texas, managing attorney of Legal Aid of Central Texas, and staff attorney at Advocacy, Inc.

She is a past president of the National Association of IOLTA Programs. She serves as co-chair of the board of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees and the American Bar Association's Working Group on Unaccompanied Minors. She serves on the boards of Management Information Exchange (MIE) and Pro Bono Net. She serves as chair of the Hispanic Issues Section of the State Bar of Texas and is a member of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force.

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DAVID H. WALTER COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARD- Randy Cubriel and Caitlin Haney Johnston

The David H. Walter Community Excellence Award is presented to an attorney or judge who has recently made a significant impact in the community and, at the same time, raised the profile of the legal profession. This year, the two recipients are the co-founders of the Cancer Law Clinic, CANLAW.

Randy Cubriel

Randy Cubriel has a solo transactional practice and a governmental consultancy where he advises and represents corporate clients before the Texas Legislature and state agencies. A survivor of Hodgkin lymphoma, he co-founded CANLAW to provide pro bono estate planning services to cancer patients and survivors. He was the 2014 Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's (LLS) Austin Man of the Year, and he chaired the Man & Woman of the Year campaign during its recent record-setting year. Cubriel is a director on, and the 2018 chair-elect of, the Austin LLS board. He also serves on the boards of the Texas Eggfest Association, a political action committee, and nonprofits that engage in voter education.

Caitlin Haney Johnston

Caitlin Haney Johnston is an associate at The Haney Law Firm. Her practice includes estate planning, probate, probate litigation, and general civil litigation. A graduate of the Austin Bar/AYLA Leadership Academy, Johnston co-founded CANLAW, and gives presentations on estate planning to local cancer-survivor groups and at CancerCon, the largest gathering of young adult cancer survivors in the country. Johnston's commitment to the cancer community stems from her own battle with cancer and Crohn's Disease. She served as an associate editor for the American Bar Association's *Litigation News*, and is on the board of directors for the Austin Young Chamber of Commerce, and Horselink, a nonprofit providing equine assisted therapy to survivors of traumatic events.

LARRY F. YORK MENTORING AWARD – Tracy Walters McCormack

The Larry F. York Mentoring Award is given to a local lawyer or judge who has demonstrated exceptional skill and generosity in mentoring younger members of the bar. Nominees must have practiced at least 10 years and have served as role models and counselors to other lawyers, distinguishing themselves as leaders of their profession while fully embracing life's experiences.

Tracy Walters McCormack

Tracy Walters McCormack is a senior lecturer and director of advocacy at The University of Texas School of Law. Before she began teaching full-time in 2000, she practiced as a trial and regulatory lawyer with Akin Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld. McCormack created and teaches courses in evidence (specific to litigators) and other advocacy-related subjects. She co-authored the book, "The First Trial: Where Do I Sit? What Do I Say?," and has written various articles on the importance of advocacy, privatization of the justice system, and mandatory mediation. She is a certified arbitrator, and has been an active member in bar activities, legal boards, and foundations. She currently serves on the boards of the National Board of Trial Advocates and the Austin Bar Association. A member of the Austin American Inns of Court, Litigation Council of America, and National Institute for Trial Advocacy, she is a frequent speaker at Continuing Legal Education programs.

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JOSEPH C. PARKER, JR. DIVERSITY AWARD – Richard Peña

This award, named in honor of Rev. Joseph C. Parker Jr., honors a firm or an individual who has led the way in bringing diversity to Austin’s legal community and who exemplifies Parker’s commitment to championing the equal, ethical, and fair treatment of all people, while raising awareness of the need to diversify our legal community.

Richard Pena

Richard Pena is president and CEO of The Law Offices of Richard Pena. He is a past-president of the State Bar of Texas and the Austin Bar. He served as president of the American Bar Foundation and was on the Board of Governors for the American Bar Association (ABA). He is former chair of the Texas Bar Foundation, and former chair of the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation. He was a director to the State Bar of Texas and a state delegate to the ABA. Pena has received three Presidential Citations from the State Bar of Texas for his meritorious service to the profession, and has been selected as a member of the American Inns of Court. He received the Austin Bar’s Distinguished Lawyer Award in 2007. In 2014, the Texas Bar Journal recognized him as one of 20 “trailblazers”. He is currently the chair of the ABA’s Commission on Hispanic Legal Rights and Responsibilities, for which he also served on the board of directors.

PICTURED IN ATTACHED PHOTO: (L-R) Richard Pena, Randy Cubriel, Betty Balli Torres, Clarke Heidrick, Jr., Tracy Walters McCormack, Rev. Joseph C. Parker, Jr., and Caitlin Haney Johnston.

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