

TYLA in Action



The National Trial Competition, co-sponsored by the American College of Trial Lawyers, is designed to expose law students to the nature of trial practice and to serve as a supplement to their education. TYLA presents the competition, which attracts teams from more than 160 law schools and involves more than 1,000 law students each year. In 2018, the competition took place April 4-8 in Austin.



The NTC Committee in Austin on April 7. *Back row from left:* Joel T. Townner, Kimberly C. Clark, Tim Williams, Judge Andrew Dornburg, Alex J. Bell, Zeke Fortenberry, and Brantley Jones. *Front row from left:* Jefferson W. Fisher, Bree Trevino, Courtney Barksdale Perez, TYLA President Baili B. Rhodes, TYLA President-elect Sally Pretorius, Ashley Hymel, Jonathan Zende Del, Michelle Palacios, and Tracy Brown.



From left: American College of Trial Lawyers President Samuel H. Franklin; national finalist NTC Team 3 (Wake Forest University School of Law) members Zachary Lynn McCamey, Joe Karam, and Virginia Lee Stanton; 2018 national champion NTC Team 27 (Wake Forest University School of Law) members Tracea Lachelle Rice, Jonathon Bryant Salmons, Darius Ladetric Lamonte, Nick Bedo, and LeRon Byrd; TYLA President Baili B. Rhodes, and coach Mark Boynton. Not pictured: coach Aindrea Pledger.

Find Your Vision

In the blink of an eye, I find myself writing my final article as president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. This was not only a year of leading, but also one of learning. I can think of no better way to celebrate than to share some of the lessons I have learned.

I began planning my year as TYLA president long before my term began. My vision for TYLA did not hinge on completion of a certain project, but on the overarching theme “Ignite and Unite.” I hoped to use this year to ignite a passion for service in young lawyers across the state and to unify them in their desire to serve others. At the start of my presidency, I presented the TYLA Board of Directors with a list of projects I had developed to support that vision. It was inevitable that the projects morphed and changed as the year progressed. Without an overarching vision, it would have been easy to become frustrated when things did not go exactly as planned. Helen Keller, who lived her life without hearing or sight, wisely said, “[T]he only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.” Any leader should consider those words when making plans—start with a vision; the details will follow.

I learned to step back and let others lead. I have fought the tendency to step in and do things myself since I was an elementary school student tasked with her first group projects. Taking over for the sake of getting the task done is not leadership. Leadership is giving others tools, direction, goals, and guidance, and letting them have the opportunity to ensure a project is completed. When we give others the opportunity to take charge, we see new leaders emerge. I certainly did.

Finally, I learned that no vision can be realized without the support of others. I am immensely grateful for the support of the State Bar of Texas, its staff, and the Texas Bar Foundation. TYLA’s success is due in large part to the contributions of each of you. Thank you especially to Tracy Brown, Bree Trevino, and Michelle Palacios, who make our organization run smoothly and who help TYLA members turn visions into realities. TYLA’s success this year is due to the TYLA Board of Directors and other young lawyer volunteers who worked tirelessly to complete a number of projects that will serve attorneys and the public across Texas. With the hard work of young lawyer volunteers, guides were drafted to educate non-lawyers about legal issues following a natural disaster; web-based resources were created to provide guidance on legal issues in the school setting and tools for domestic violence survivors and survivors of sexual assault; a video Spanish for Lawyers course was created; a CLE for attorneys and police officers about enhancements in hate crime cases was produced; and pamphlets addressing a number of discrete legal issues were drafted, including an FMLA guide, HIPAA At a Glance, an FLSA guide, a privilege guide, and a victims guide. TYLA local affiliates also worked hard to develop their own projects and to bring TYLA programs to their communities. Thank you to everyone who worked on a TYLA project this year. Our state will be a better place because of your service.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the state of Texas and its attorneys this year. As I step away, I pass the baton to a president and executive committee who will continue ensuring that TYLA and its leaders meet their full potential during the upcoming bar year. TYLA is in great hands next year; I cannot wait to see what we accomplish.

If you are interested in learning more about these or other TYLA projects, go to tyla.org.



BAILI B. RHODES

President,
Texas Young Lawyers Association