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Hispanic Issues Section

of the

State Bar of Texas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Message from the Chair](#)
- [James R. Wray, Jr. Founders Award](#)
- [Case Notes](#)
- [Legislative Recap 2013](#)
- [News from around the State](#)
- [State Bar News](#)
- [Section News](#)
- [2013 Annual Meeting Award Recipients](#)
- [2013 Annual Meeting Recap](#)
- [Spotlight Issue: Public Health](#)
- [From the Editor](#)

[Message from the Chair](#)

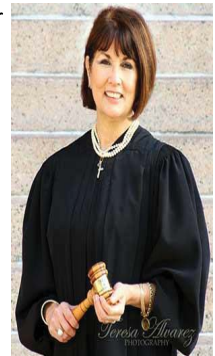
The Council and I want to wish you the best of holidays, and may next year be full of blessings to you and your family!

Our theme for this year is: "Outreach to Communities, Lawyers and Law Students." To this end, we expanded our board to include committees focused on Access to Justice initiatives, expanding our membership and services, and improving our student outreach efforts. Our council members and committee chairs are a talented and active group of attorneys and professors. Together, we will make this coming year a great one for you!

We developed a short term and a long term strategic plan. These have focused on building bridges with local Hispanic bar associations and law schools across our state and networking/educational opportunities. CLE continues to be one of our priorities. To better serve our members, we sent a survey to determine interests in various areas of the law. Based on the survey's results, we are planning a Spring CLE that will be educational and allow for networking opportunities. Also based on the survey, legislative issues are of concern to our membership. Under the direction of Celeste Villarreal, we are preparing for the next legislative year. If you are interested in any issue, please [contact us](#)!

We are looking forward to your participation in achieving our goals – visit our [website](#) and become active! Together, we will make HIS stronger!

[Justice Patricia Alvarez](#), Chair
Hispanic Issues Section
State Bar of Texas



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[Hispanic Issues Section Presents the Inaugural James W. Wray, Jr. Founders Award](#)



The Hispanic Issues Section is thrilled to announce the creation of a new Chair's Award, to be given by the Chair of the Hispanic Issues Section each year to a member or former member of the section to recognize exceptional achievements on behalf of the Hispanic legal community in Texas. The award is being named after its first honoree, Mr. James W. Wray, Jr. of Corpus Christi. The award was presented to Mr. Wray at a small ceremony in October 17, 2013, that was attended by, among others, Mr. Wray's daughters.

We are delighted to recognize Mr. Wray's achievements on behalf of the Hispanic legal community, are honored to name our Chair's Award after him, and look forward to giving the award to other important contributors to the growth of our community in the coming years. [Read more](#) about Mr. Wray's contributions to the Hispanic community.

[See a slideshow](#) of the award luncheon.

[Case Notes](#)

Criminal Evidence Admissibility - *Burch v. State of Texas*

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Rudolfo "Rudy" Mata
Steven Wolfson

LINKS

Donate to Access to Justice

State Bar of Texas

State Bar of Texas
2014 Annual Meeting

Texas Young Lawyers

Texas Bar CLE

Burch was convicted of possession with intent to distribute a controlled possession. The report stating that the substance was cocaine was presented by the lab reviewer, not the lab analyst who conducted the lab test. [Read More](#)

Family Law - *In re Stephanie Lee*

In a plurality opinion, the Court addressed whether a mediated settlement must be enforced that provides, in the absence of family violence, a divorced mother's periodic possession of her 7-year-old daughter, when the mother is married to a registered sex offender, had to be enforced. [Read More](#)

Legislative Recap 2013

by Gloria Leal, Attorney and Government Affairs Consultant

The 83rd Legislature passed more than 1,000 new laws during the seven months it was in session and most went into effect September 1, 2013.

Download the Entire 2013 Legislative Recap

Regular Session: Legislators met many challenges. It is undisputed that the State's oil and gas boom and its revenue boost to the economy allowed legislators to work together in a bipartisan manner during the 83rd Legislative Session.

Key Legislation passed included:

- Budget –Funding for education, roads, water, and tax relief made contingent on approval of key revenue bills
- Water – Priority issue for leadership receives consensus support
- Roads – Counties successful in obtaining state assistance for shale roads
- Taxes/Business –Even without full margin cut, business did well in session
- Higher Education- South Texas

Special Sessions: Political agendas emerge:

- First Special Session – abortion legislation takes center stage
- Second special session passes refiled bills

Note: The views expressed above are those solely of the author.



GLORIA LEAL is a solo-practitioner in Austin, Texas, whose practice areas include oil and gas, environmental law, insurance and international transactions. She was formerly International Regulatory and General Counsel for the State Board of Insurance and an Assistant Attorney General in the Transportation and Energy Sections. She is former chair of the HIS Section, former president of the Mexican American Bar Association of Texas and served on the State Bar Board of Directors.

News from around the State

Hispanic Bar Association of Austin holds its 17th Annual Hispanic Heritage Luncheon. On Friday, October 18, 2013 the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin held its 17th Annual Hispanic Heritage Luncheon. This year's keynote speaker was Congressman Henry Cuellar and the cultural speaker was Tish Hinajosa. Over 200 guests were in attendance including state, county, and city officials and many local judges. Several local middle school students were on hand to receive prizes for award winning essays written on the topic of "Diversity in the Legal Profession." Pictured to right is the luncheon committee with section member and ex-chair, Jana Ortega (third from right) with Miguel Alexander Pozo, President of the National Hispanic Bar Association (second from left).



The event raised over \$42,000, all of which will benefit the HBAA Charitable Foundation. The Foundation grants scholarships to students at all levels of education who express an interest in attending law school. Recipients of past scholarships were also in attendance to meet HBAA

members and thank the supporters of the luncheon and HBAA. Pictured below are the 2013 scholarship recipients.



The **Mexican American Bar Association of Houston ("MABAH")** held its annual MABAH Gala on Thursday, October 17, 2013 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Houston. See [pictures of the gala](#) on the Hispanic Issues Section website. Visit the [MABAH Facebook page](#).

The **El Paso Bar Association** will hold its **18th Annual Trial Practice Seminar** on February 13-15, 2014, in San Diego, California. The course will provide 13.25 hours of MCLE, including 2.5 hours of Ethics. Door prizes will be given throughout the seminar. For more information, please contact the El Paso Bar Association at 915-532-7052, or visit the [online registration site](#). Registration is now open through January 3.

Member Benefits

Iolita Prime Partner Bank Program. The State Bar of Texas announced that it is moving its accounts to a **Prime Partner Bank**. Prime Partner banks voluntarily pay higher interest rates on IOLTA accounts, which help close the gap in legal services funding. These banks have contributed millions of dollars in IOLTA revenue throughout Texas. The Hispanic Issues Section will join the State Bar of Texas and will be moving its bank account to PlainsCapital Bank, a Texas IOLTA Prime Partner Bank. The Texas Access to Justice Foundation is proud to recognize the Hispanic Issues Section in making the move to help increase funding for the IOLTA program and is grateful that the State Bar of Texas has taken a leadership role in this effort. To join in the efforts, [find a Prime Partner bank](#) near you.

State Bar of Texas Insurance Exchange. The State Bar of Texas is now offering a wide range of insurance choices for you, your dependents and your staff via the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange. The Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange is a multi-carrier private exchange designed for State Bar of Texas members, their staff and their dependents. Available to both individuals and employer groups, the exchange offers a wide range and variety of insurance options, including health, dental, life, disability and even pet insurance. Check out the [October 2013 Texas Bar Journal](#) and the [State Bar of Texas Member Benefits webpage](#) for more information.

The Hispanic Issues Section Launches a New Website

The Hispanic Issues Section launched an updated website earlier this year. The section invites everyone to visit the new [Hispanic Issues Section website](#). **Here are some highlights from the new site:**

Easier to Navigate: Use the navigation buttons along the top of the page to get almost anywhere on the site. Also check out the special "pages" links at the bottom of the home page.

News, News and More News: We want to keep our members informed about what is going on in the section with our [News page](#). We also want to tell everyone about the great accomplishments of our members on our [Members in the News page](#). We need your help keeping this information updated and fresh - please [email us](#) about your newsworthy items!

Learn about HIS: The [About Us page](#) on the site has tons of new information about our committees, history, awards and events!

Statewide Repository of Hispanic Bar Events: We want our [Events page](#) to be the go-to place for finding statewide and local events focusing on Hispanic attorneys. [Email us](#) the details of events you would like to see added to the list!

Short-form URL: That 20+ character website address too long to remember or to tell a friend (or to type without missing a letter or two)? You can also access the website using [tx-his.com!](#)

The Website Committee welcomes any suggestions you have for new content on the website. Please email me with any comments and/or suggestions. We want the website to be your favorite place to find information that you need! Enjoy!

[Manuel Escobar](#), Chair
Website Committee

**Reynaldo G. Garza Lifetime Achievement Award
and Pete Torres, Jr. Community Service Award**

The Hispanic Issues Section honored members of the Hispanic legal community at the 2013 State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting by honoring two exemplary individuals who represent the best of our profession.

Reynaldo G. Garza Lifetime Achievement Award
Rosa Rodriguez Orenstein

Pete Torres, Jr. Community Service Award
Benny Agosto, Jr.

[Read the full story.](#) The 2014 awards will be presented at the [State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting](#) in Austin, June 26-27, 2014.

2013 Annual Meeting Recap

The Hispanic Issues Section held its annual meeting on June 20th, as part of the State Bar of Texas annual meeting in Dallas, Texas. The section also hosted a CLE that included presentations on *Jury Instructions and Voir Dire and Their Impact on Minority Jurors* by Carlos Soltero of McGinnis Lockridge, and an *Immigration Update* by Robert F. Loughran of FosterQuan, LLP. As always, the Section's annual meeting and reception were a time for bringing together minority lawyers from around the state and to enjoy some professional networking, a free CLE, and some good food!

Spotlight Issue: Public Health

Dr. Catalina Garcia: Bird's-Eye View of Latino Public Health, By: Rodolfo Mata

Dr. Catalina Esperanza Garcia has a simple proposal for how the legal profession can serve a critical role in public health for Latino communities.

One of the biggest public health challenges, Dr. Garcia indicated, is a lack of resources for particular population groups. Latinos tend to be a forgotten group in relation to public health, and issues as basic as access to clean water supplies are insufficiently addressed. However, Dr. Garcia finds encouragement in recent funding for research on health care issues in border communities. The Federal Government has new programs – some just a few years old – to provide funding to schools to assess the issues and determine what steps should be taken to improve matters. Latinos as a group will benefit from such studies because of their high population density in border regions.[Read More](#)



A native of El Paso, Texas, Dr. Garcia received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Texas at El Paso, and a medical doctorate from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School. She has served on the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners and has also dedicated her time to serving on the boards of directors for several organizations, including KERA, the National Hispana Leadership Institute, and the Dallas Mexican American Historical League. Through her education and community involvement, Dr. Garcia has become quite familiar with the public health issues of the Latino population, particularly in the border communities of Texas. Dr. Garcia recently was featured in an interesting article published by the Dallas News ([read article](#)).

From the Editor

The Newsletter Committee hopes you enjoyed the section's new and improved e-newsletter. If you have any comments or suggestions for articles, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Hispanic Issues Newsletter Committee

[Dolores Alvarado Hibbs](#), Chair
Hon. Gina Benavides
Rodolfo "Rudy" Mata
Steven Wolfson

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