



## MY OPINION

BY ALYSSA J. LONG

CHAIR, TEXAS YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

# A Primer on TYLA

I am tremendously proud to serve as the 2012-2013 Chair of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. In thinking about what to write during my turn at this page, I thought it best to get back to basics and explain who we are and how one can get involved. What is the Texas Young Lawyers Association? TYLA is the public service arm of the State Bar of Texas. All Texas-licensed lawyers age 36 and younger as of June 1, or in their first five years of practice, are automatically members of TYLA. The TYLA Board of Directors is made up of an executive committee of eight members and approximately 40 directors representing geographic districts all over Texas. Each representative director can serve two, two-year terms and serves on the board doing the good work of TYLA, as well as liaising with their local affiliates.

As you probably noticed in prior issues of the *Texas Bar Journal* and this column, TYLA puts on amazing programming with the support of the State Bar of Texas and the Texas Bar Foundation. Indeed TYLA presents law-focused banner projects, such as the upcoming *Slavery Out of the Shadows: Spotlight on Human Trafficking*, featured in last month's edition, and last year's national-award winning, *The Unconscious Truth: The Physical and Legal Effects of Underage Binge Drinking*. However, TYLA also creates less hyped, but often more downloaded, resources such as the *Pro Se Divorce Handbook*, *Office in a Flash*, and the *Probate Passport*. Every TYLA project can be found on our website, [tyla.org](http://tyla.org), and I encourage you to take a moment to explore it.

As stated above, one is automatically a member of TYLA upon bar passage (con-

grats to our newest members sworn in Nov. 12). Once an automatic member, how does one get involved with TYLA? A good place to start is with your local affiliate. My local affiliate, the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association, is an incredibly active, energetic local affiliate that puts on great programming and projects for the young lawyers and the greater San Antonio community. If you are unsure who to contact at your local affiliate, you can also find that information on our website. If, after that, you still cannot find your local affiliate, TYLA can help. TYLA's Local Affiliates Committee can come to your town and put on a "road show" to help organize the young lawyers in your area and jump-start your affiliate with some off-the-shelf project ideas ready to be implemented.

Since TYLA projects are ready-to-present, it is easy to roll them out in your community. In this presidential election year, TYLA conducted wide scale rollouts of *Vote America: Honor the Fight, Exercise Your Right* in conjunction with getting those who were 18, or would be 18 before the election, registered to vote. *The Unconscious Truth*, based on the true story of the death of Shelby Allen from underage binge drinking, is another effective, easy project to rollout to high school students, as it comes with a guided classroom discussion teaching students about the difference between civil and criminal legal liability, as well as the legislative process. Several of TYLA's projects come with curricula designed to be STAAR compliant. Last week, the San Antonio TYLA crew (TYLA Vice-President **Alfonso Cabanas**, TYLA Directors **Priscilla Camacho**, and

**Sam Houston**) as well as TYLA President **C.E. Rhodes** presented *Healing the Wounds: Navigating the Legal System after Surviving Domestic Abuse* in both English and Spanish at the Battered Women's Shelter of San Antonio. We answered relevant questions and also brought a volunteer hair stylist and some handmade jewelry to make the evening more entertaining.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [alysajanelong@yahoo.com](mailto:alysajanelong@yahoo.com) if you have questions about getting involved in TYLA or rolling out TYLA's projects. The invaluable ladies of the TYLA team/TYLA family — Tracy Brown, Bree Trevino, and Michelle Palacios — can also connect you to the right resources.

Finally, I wanted to use this closing opportunity to remember my dear friend and TYLA family member, **Keith Krueger**. Keith epitomized the spirit of volunteerism while maintaining more humility than any person I have ever met. Keith, I think about you almost every day, especially on Saturday, Nov. 3, during the 20-mile Walk to Action for Prevent Child Abuse Texas in San Antonio with the San Antonio TYLA crew and Austin TYLA Director **Sally Pretorius**. Last year when we walked together, even though it was not a race, Keith realized around mile 15 that we were near the back of the pack. His competitive nature kicked in, and we ended the last five miles at a race pace. Well, this year in Keith's honor, despite blisters and hamstring cramps, we finished a close second. ✪

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