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Special Thanks

The *Texas Bar Journal* would like to thank the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program Mental Health Subcommittee for providing the article "Take Action to Prevent Lawyer Suicide," which appeared in the January 2013 issue of the magazine.

A Story to Remember

It takes fortitude to read through a January *Texas Bar Journal* issue with its pages of "Year in Review" [2013]. But we were rewarded, again, by Michael P. Maslanka's coverage of Labor and Employment Law. His style and tone are delightful, and I suspect we will remember one of his topic sentences: "There is the cut and dried and there is the vague and confusing . . ." Great job!

Terri LeClercq
Austin

Talk About It

Thank you for your valuable information on lawyer suicide ("Take Action to Prevent Lawyer Suicides," January 2013). Suicide is becoming a major problem in almost all professions. We know it is particularly true with returning war veterans whose deaths now exceed the deaths each week in

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Afghanistan. As a Catholic chaplain in the 101st Airborne Division, I suffered silently for more than 40 years that I was considered a traitor to America. There were few resources to treat my agony until I found a talk group of former combat soldiers from Vietnam. After a year, I could finally talk of the experience after all the nightmares, sweats, and screams that woke me up—and constant desires of suicide and death. I know the feelings of despair and loneliness among lawyers. So call on me in any way I can help, night or day, seven days a week. You have my address and phone number, so don't hesitate. It will be an honor.

Peter J. Riga
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Houston

Persuasive Argument

The "problem" posited in the January 2013 "MythBusters" [President's Opinion: "Happy 50th Birthday Mr. Gideon"] is itself a misstatement of the problem. The unnamed U.S. Supreme Court decision (I assume it refers to *Keller v. State Bar of California*, 496 US 1 [1990]) does not "set the parameters for what any mandatory bar can do in terms of legislative advocacy."

The Keller case arose out of objections by some members of the California Bar to that Bar's lobbying activities. The Supreme Court did not restrict or prohibit the Bar's lobbying activities. It merely said that the Bar could not use the mandatory dues of members over their objection to pay for such activities. To this day, the California Bar (as do many other mandatory bars around the country) continues to lobby, allowing members who object to withhold a stated amount from their dues and paying for its activities with the mandatory dues of members who do not object.

The State Bar of Texas is not unaware of the correct interpretation of Keller, and its stubborn insistence over a period of years on perpetuating the myth that Keller prohibits most lobbying activities suggests that its misrepresentation is intentional. Ironically, Section 81.034 of the Government Code does prohibit the State Bar from using any funds, from any source, "for influencing the passage or defeat of any legislative meas-



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ure unless the measure relates to the regulation of the legal profession, improving the quality of legal services, or the administration of justice . . .” but the State Bar ignores Section 81.034 in favor of continuing its false characterization of Keller.

That is just dishonest, and we as members have a right to expect more.

Ralph H. Brock
Lubbock

Fill in the Blank

I wanted to express my disappointment that the Texas Supreme Court has chosen to approve a set of divorce forms for (alleged) indigent litigants with no children or property (Supreme Court: “Order Approving Uniform Forms—Divorce Set One,” December 2012). Aside from my primary

concern, that pro-se litigants will think that “Supreme Court Approved” forms are an adequate substitute for an experienced attorney, I am having trouble following the logic that was used to push for the approval of these forms. Apparently, it is: There are many people living in poverty in Texas, and what they need more than anything else is . . . an uncontested divorce? (See “A Report to the Supreme Court Advisory Committee From the Texas Access to Justice Commission on the Court’s Uniform Forms Task Force,” April 6, 2012, page 3.) Additionally, if the purpose is to help those in poverty, why is the distribution of these forms not limited to those litigants who can show that they cannot afford an attorney?

What I also did not see was evidence showing just how little some attorneys charge for an uncontested

divorce, nor did I see conclusive evidence that distributing these forms will cause no harm to practicing attorneys, many of whom are trying to pay off substantial student loans. The Access to Justice Commission claims in its report that distribution of these forms will cause “no harm to lawyer incomes,” but the citation for this claim is “personal interviews with those involved in promulgation of forms.” (See *Id* at 7.)

Finally, attorneys who practice in the areas of bankruptcy, criminal, debtor/creditor, landlord/tenant, social security/disability, immigration, and so forth need to support the Family Law Section in its efforts against the adoption of additional forms. Once our practice manual has been plundered, yours is next.

Wayne Sorrels
Plano

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