



2013–2014 TYLA President-elect Candidates

The Texas Young Lawyers Association Board of Directors approved the nominations of **Rebekah Steely Brooker** of Dallas and **Alfonso Cabañas** of San Antonio as 2013–2014 president-elect candidates. This year, nominees for president-elect are from metropolitan cities. Biographies of the candidates, in alphabetical order, are included here. An interview with the two candidates will be included in the April issue. Votes for TYLA president-elect and district directors can be cast either via paper ballot or by voting online from April 1 to April 30. On April 1, attorneys eligible to vote will be mailed an election packet, including a paper ballot and campaign brochures. Attorneys may either submit their paper ballot via mail or vote online using the information provided. The deadline to cast ballots is 5 p.m. CST on April 30.



Rebekah Steely Brooker

Dallas

Rebekah Steely Brooker is an attorney with Passman & Jones in Dallas, where she manages the firm's estate planning and administration and probate practices. Brooker primarily focuses on administering trusts and estates and counseling clients on estate planning, charitable planning, asset protection, and estate and trust management. She also has experience in probate litigation, commercial litigation, and oil and gas transactions.

Brooker has served as TYLA treasurer and as a director from 2011 to 2013 and is an executive advisor to the Low Income Texans and Community Education committees. Among the many TYLA public service projects she has been involved with, Brooker is the creator and co-author of *Texas Probate Passport* and co-creator and co-author of *Dealing with Dementia*. She also serves on the board of the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (DAYL). She is a two-time recipient of the TYLA President's Award of Merit and was named DAYL's Outstanding Committee Chair in 2007.

She earned a B.B.A. Magna Cum Laude from Texas A&M University and a J.D. from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law.



Alfonso Cabañas

San Antonio

Alfonso Cabañas is the managing attorney of Cabañas Law Firm, P.L.L.C., in San Antonio. His practice focuses on federal white-collar criminal defense, business immigration, and business transactions with a focus on U.S. companies investing in Mexico and Mexican companies investing in the U.S. He has served as TYLA vice president, chair, and as a director from 2008 to 2010. He is a member of the Long Range Planning Committee and has served as vice chair for the National Trial Competition. He is a recipient of a TYLA President's Award of Merit and was named Outstanding Director of the Year in 2007–2008.

Cabañas is a former president, vice president, and board member of St. Mary's Hispanic Law Alumni Association. He served on the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association Board and is a member of the State Bar Hispanic Issues Section. He has volunteered for multiple TYLA public service projects, including serving as co-producer and Spanish translator for *The Little Voice* and *Healing the Wounds*.

He earned a B.B.A. from Baylor University and a J.D. from St. Mary's University School of Law.



2013–2014 TYLA Officer Nominations

At the January meeting of the TYLA Board of Directors, the Nominations Committee interviewed directors to ascertain interest and qualifications for officer positions. The committee recommended two candidates for each position, which were unanimously approved. The nominees are listed here in alphabetical order. TYLA directors elect these officers.

CHAIR-ELECT OF THE BOARD



Sam Houston

is a shareholder in Houston Dunn, P.L.L.C., a civil appellate law firm in San Antonio. Board certified in civil appellate law, Houston handles appeals and provides law-intensive support to trial lawyers. As a member of the TYLA Board, he has been integral to the *What Do Lawyers Do?* project, moderating discussions with high school and college students and developing the project's web presence. In addition, he has also contributed to the *Preventing Fraud on Veterans* pamphlet, and he has presented *The Unconscious Truth* and *Vote America!* initiatives to high school students. He received a TYLA President's Award of Merit in 2012.



Dustin Howell

is an assistant solicitor general in the Office of the Texas Attorney General in Austin. He served as co-chair of TYLA's *Slavery Out of the Shadows* project and has served as vice chair of numerous TYLA projects, including *Breaking the Silence* and *Lawyers as Leaders*. In recognition of his service, Howell received a 2012 TYLA President's Award of Merit. Prior to his service on the TYLA Board, Howell served as a director of the Austin Young Lawyers Association, where he received the 2011 Outstanding Committee Chair Award.

VICE PRESIDENT



Victor Villarreal

formed Villarreal & Romero, P.L.L.C., with Eduardo Romero in 2008. His Laredo-based practice focuses on commercial litigation and mediation. Prior to becoming TYLA secretary, Villarreal led the initiative to invite the Texas Supreme Court to hold oral arguments in Laredo—a first in the court's history. He has served on the Local Affiliates, Diversity, Marketing, and Long Range Planning committees. Villarreal currently serves on the TYLA Executive Committee and the State Bar District 12, Panel 1 Grievance Committee. He is a past president of the Laredo–Webb County Bar Association.



Brandy Wingate

is a board-certified appellate attorney with Smith Law Group, P.C. She is a member of the Texas Supreme Court Rules Advisory Committee and is the immediate past president of the Hidalgo County Bar Association. Wingate has served as TYLA's District 13 director for the past two years, but her dedication to TYLA began years earlier, including service as a contributing author to TYLA's *Texas Lawyers' Professional Ethics*. During her term as director, she contributed to the *Slavery Out of the Shadows* project, the State Moot Court Competition, the Member Services Committee, and the Law Focused Education Committee.

SECRETARY



Priscilla D. Camacho

is an associate with the San Antonio firm of Plunkett & Gibson Inc., which focuses on family law litigation. She currently serves as co-chair for the *Slavery Out of the Shadows* project as well as the 38th Annual National Trial Competition. Camacho has also served as a vice chair or co-chair for the Family Law, Community Education, and Diversity committees and *The Unconscious Truth*. Prior to joining the TYLA Board of Directors, Camacho served as a committee member of the TYLA National Trial Competition and State Moot Court Competition committees. She received the TYLA President's Award of Merit in 2009 and 2012. Camacho is a past president of the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association and a past director of the San Antonio Bar Association.



John W. Shaw

is an attorney at Whitaker Chalk Swindle & Schwartz, P.L.L.C., in Fort Worth, where he practices business, commercial, and general civil litigation. Shaw is the District 10, Place 2 director and the immediate past president of the Fort Worth–Tarrant County Young Lawyers Association. As a TYLA director, Shaw has not only co-chaired the Low-Income Texans Committee but also co-authored the *Tenant's Rights* pamphlet. He is currently working on another project, *Guide to Traffic Court*, which will be released in 2013. Shaw is a vice chair of the Local Affiliate and the On-Line Member Services committees.

TREASURER



Amanda N. Torres

is an associate at Branscomb, P.C., in Corpus Christi. She was a prosecutor and justice of the peace. Torres, who currently serves as a chair of the Low Income Texans Committee and a vice chair of the Member Services Outreach Committee, played an instrumental role in the development and creation of the *Truancy* pamphlet and has contributed to other TYLA publications, including *Survival Guide*, *Guide to Traffic Court*, *Landlord Tenant Issues*, and *Slavery Out of the Shadows*. This is Torres' first year on the board of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, and she serves as the minority-at-large director, small city. Torres was the recipient of the 2012 Corpus Christi 40 Under 40 Award and the Coastal Bend Aids Foundation 2012 Service Provider of the Year Award.



C. Barrett Thomas

is a felony prosecutor in the 32nd Judicial District Attorney's Office and operates a family practice in Sweetwater. He has been a TYLA director since 2011, working on the Budget, Long Range Planning, Law Focused Education, and Local Affiliate committees. Thomas was instrumental to the TYLA project *Remaining Civil: An Officer's Guide to Responding to Non-Criminal Calls for Service*. He is the current president of the Abilene Young Lawyers Association. He holds degrees from Texas Tech, Tarleton State, and Hardin-Simmons universities. Thomas also holds a Master Peace Officer Certification and serves as a law enforcement instructor and reserve deputy.