

# It Is ABOUT PAYING It FORWARD



**Let's focus on what we can do to make our profession, our state, and our justice system better than it was before we got here.**

***I AM ONLY ONE, BUT I AM ONE. I CANNOT DO EVERYTHING, BUT I CAN DO SOMETHING. AND I WILL NOT LET WHAT I CANNOT DO INTERFERE WITH WHAT I CAN DO.***

**—EDWARD EVERETT HALE**

We have heard about or maybe been a part of the story where a kind individual ahead of you in line pays for your order. We can all point to one person who has given us an opportunity that we would not have otherwise had but for his kindness and investment in us.

Serving as State Bar president-elect remains an incredible honor, and the historical significance of my election is humbling and inspiring. Many paved the way for me, and it is my responsibility to continue that effort. History, particularly the civil rights movement, illustrates so many who stood firm to ensure I could obtain a quality education, become an attorney, and be positioned to be elected president-elect of the State Bar of Texas. Some would say this journey took too long and the battle is not over. Next year, my focus will be on acknowledging those who came before, strengthening who we are now, and ensuring those to come have an even greater opportunity.

A year is not much time to make a big impact. I believe working together with all of our gifts we can do something about the challenges that face our profession. I want to emphasize the areas I believe are important in this place at this time. (1) In July, we will launch a program celebrating “firsts” in American, Texas, and State Bar history—people who were first to accomplish something huge in their field and impact our society. The program consists of a book for grades 1-5 and an electronic version with an interactive online program for elementary school students and educators and online materials for all ages. It is important to remember who the firsts were and understand what it took for them to get there. (2) I want to help lawyers help citizens who need legal services. The Access to Justice Commission, local bar associations, legal aid, and various church and pro bono programs work diligently to ensure our justice system works. Working with these entities, we will find ways to expand programs like Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans and the Community Justice Program throughout the state. (3) We will celebrate diversity within our profession and learn from each other. We each have our own story about how we got to where we are, and those stories create a magnificent tapestry of the legal profession in Texas.

Let's focus on what we can do to make our profession, our state, and our justice system better than it was before we got here. I hope you will join me on this journey. I look forward to hearing from you.

**LISA TATUM**

President-elect, *State Bar of Texas*