



## ENFORCING THE LAW

The Court of Criminal Appeals and the State Bar of Texas, with the help of TexasBarCLE, collaborated to produce a training video for police officers. *Brady: A Simple Approach* is a 58-minute video based on *Brady v. Maryland*, the U.S. Supreme Court case governing the disclosure of favorable evidence in criminal cases. The video is divided into three segments: the story of a conviction that was overturned after DNA evidence cleared the suspect 23 years later, the *Brady v. Maryland* case and what it means to law enforcement officers, and a series of hypothetical scenarios based on real cases. The video will be distributed to every police jurisdiction in Texas. Above, from left: State Bar of Texas President **Buck Files**, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Judge **Barbara Hervey**, and State Bar of Texas Professional Development Division Director **Pat Nester**.



Photo by Jim Olive [www.jimolivephotography.com](http://www.jimolivephotography.com)

## HISTORY LESSON

Special-needs students from the Houston area learned about the justice system and Law Day through a new program sponsored by the Houston Bar Association Law Week Committee. On Feb. 15, teachers and students with cameras in tow toured the historic Harris County 1910 Courthouse, which was reopened in 2011 after a multiyear \$65 million renovation, and watched an abridged reenactment of the oral arguments made to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 decision that brought an end to segregation in public schools. Nine judges and four Houston attorneys participated in the tailored presentation, which was organized by **Justice Kem Thompson Frost** of the 14th Court of Appeals, Supreme Court of Texas **Justice Eva Guzman** explained the significance of the case to the more than 30 students from Bellaire High School, Summerhouse, West Memorial Junior High School, Avondale House, the Monarch School, and Waller High School. In addition to exploring *Brown*, lawyers talked about Law Day, a May 1 national celebration of the rule of law, and encouraged students to enter the poster and photography contests focused on this year's theme—Realizing the Dream: Equality for All. Top left: Justice Eva Guzman explains the judicial system to special-needs students. Bottom left: Summerhouse students behind the bench with Summerhouse Director Donna Fruge (in black sweater).

## Making Her Mark

**Charlye Ola Farris**, the first African-American woman licensed to practice law in Texas, was honored on Feb. 23 at a ceremony at the Wichita County Courthouse, where Farris's 107-year-old mother, Roberta, and a large crowd watched the unveiling of Farris's official Texas Historical Marker. Farris died Feb. 28, 2010, but her accomplishments have made a lasting impression on her friends, family, community, and colleagues. Not only was she the first African-American woman admitted to the State Bar of Texas, but she was also the first African-American judge in the South since reconstruction and the first woman to practice law in Wichita County. Farris graduated valedictorian from Booker T. Washington High School in Wichita Falls and earned her law degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. During Farris's last year of law school, her civil rights class worked on the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Lawyers such as George E.C. Hayes, James M. Nabrit, and Thurgood Marshall, who later became a U.S.

Supreme Court justice, practiced their arguments in front of her class. Farris was awarded many accolades throughout her career, including the Texas Bar Foundation Outstanding Fifty-Year Lawyer Award.

## Cool Idea

In 2011, the heat inside homes, apartments, rooms, and other indoor living spaces claimed 31 lives in Dallas County. A fan or window unit would have made a life-changing difference, which is why **Peggy Heller**, the chair of the Dallas Bar Association Community Involvement Committee, decided to do something about the problem, which has plagued the poor, elderly, and disabled for so many years. This year the group founded the Community Involvement Committee Fan Drive to help those who don't have air conditioning survive the brutal Texas summers. From April 13 to April 26, Dallasites were encouraged to drop off gently used AC window units and new fans (small, large, box, or tower) at a donation site on Strichter Avenue.

**HEAD OF THE CLASS**

Smith College alumnae, members of the Black Alumnae of Smith College, and members of the State Bar of Texas celebrated the many accomplishments of State Bar president-elect **Lisa Tatum** at the Belo Mansion in Dallas on April 4. Tatum is the first African-American woman to be named president-elect of the State Bar of Texas. Tatum grew up in San Antonio and attended Incarnate Word High School before heading to the East Coast to attend Smith, an independent women’s liberal arts college. After a few words from Pamela Nolan Young, the director of Institutional Diversity and Equity at Smith College, Tatum addressed the crowd and spoke about her journey—the guidance along the way from her supportive parents, the hard work and drive during her education, and the mentors who imparted their wisdom as she began navigating her professional life. Top right, from left: State Bar of Texas Special Projects Director Ray Cantu, Lisa Tatum, State Bar of Texas Executive Director **Michelle Hunter**, and State Bar of Texas Board of Directors Chair **Frank Stevenson**. Bottom right, from left: Smith College alumna Peggy Allison, Lisa Tatum, and Smith College alumna Leslye deRoos-Rood.



**Call to Duty**

Giving a hand to someone in need is a way of life for many, including the members of the Woodlands Bar Association. After 9/11, a committee of Woodlands Bar Association board members began a community program to give back to the first responders in Montgomery County. “As lawyers, we strive to use our legal skills to help others—and what more worthy folks than firefighters, police officers, and first responders who put their lives on the line every day,” said Woodlands Bar Association President **Angela Speight**. Originally called Wills for Heroes (the name must be changed because it is trademarked), the program first assisted members of the Woodlands Fire Department with estate planning services such as wills, powers of attorney, and directives to physicians. About 100 attorneys participate annually in the program, either as drafters, volunteers, or notaries, and they have worked with the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, the Montgomery County Hospital District, the Shenandoah Police Department, and the Montgomery County Precinct 3 Constable’s Office. The lawyers of the Woodlands Bar Association drafted more than 1,000 first responder estate planning documents before discovering what could be a



problem with the state’s public official anti-bribery laws. With the assistance of Sen. Tommy Williams and State Rep. Steve Toth, **James Stilwell**, one of the program’s founding attorneys, penned an amendment to the existing statute that would allow the Woodlands Bar Association to continue its program. HB 758 and SB 148 are making their way through the legislative process. Above, from left: Lieutenant David Dottei, former Woodlands Bar Association Vice President of Community Affairs **Susan A. Turney**, James Stilwell, and former Woodlands Bar Association President **A. Karen West**.