

# BAYLOR

UNIVERSITY

January 26, 2015

Waco-McLennan County Bar Association  
P.O. Box 1219  
Waco, Texas 76703

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to share my enthusiastic support for the inaugural *Pro Bono* Challenge as Baylor Law School partners with the Waco-McLennan County Young Lawyers Association for such a worthy undertaking. There is significant need in our community and we all must join together to meet the challenge.

As you may know, we have several *pro bono* programs and clinics here at Baylor Law. Below is a description of these clinics, the services of which are provided to families making less than 200% of the federal poverty level (which is less than \$47,700 for a family of four). Volunteer opportunities are available to students and local attorneys in all of these programs and clinics. I encourage you to participate in them – in addition to helping those in need, you'll get the opportunity to mentor future lawyers.

### *Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals Immigration Clinic*

On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that certain undocumented young people who were brought to the U.S. through no fault of their own may qualify for deportation relief. Baylor established a Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Immigration Clinic to assist qualified individuals with the application process. To date, the Baylor Law School DACA Immigration Clinic has served over 180 low income Waco-area residents with their immigration needs. This Fall, the Immigration Clinic has helped with 11 initial applications and 35 renewals. Because of President Obama's recent Executive Order, we anticipate that client demand in the clinic will be meaningfully increasing.

### *People's Law School*

Free and open to the public, the People's Law School offers a half-day curriculum featuring volunteer attorneys and legal experts who teach courses designed to educate members of the community about their legal rights and to make the law "user friendly." This has become an annual event sponsored by Baylor Law School and other organizations for the benefit of the Central Texas community.

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### ***Pro Bono Litigation Team***

Our *pro bono* litigation team is a unique opportunity that has been designed to accommodate and work with our distinctive Baylor Law quarter system and our rigorous and time-consuming third-year Practice Court program. Student team members take on increasing responsibility for briefing for the team as they progress through law school, and post-Practice Court team members are given the opportunity to participate (under the supervision of the attorney leader of the team) in any court proceedings that might arise. The team is supervised by Prof. Jim Wren and administrative duties are handled by a full-time staff member, Stephen Rispoli, who is also a Baylor lawyer.

To date, we have handled sixteen matters. Based upon our experience, we believe this is an outstanding model for providing volunteer local attorneys with continuing student support while offering full-fledged *pro bono* opportunities to our students, who are key to the development and staffing of this clinic project.

### ***Pro Bono Transaction Team***

Due to the success of the *pro bono* litigation team, Baylor recently developed a *pro bono* transactional team. Much like the litigation team, the transactional team is comprised of students in their 2L and 3L years, and have decided to concentrate in areas related to transactional work. The team is supervised by Prof. Bridget Fuselier for all real property related matters, Prof. Beth Miller for all business planning and drafting related matters, and Prof. Tom Featherston for all probate related matters. The team is assisted in all administrative duties by Stephen Rispoli. So far, the team has handled a non-for-profit start-up, and is currently working with a local church in drafting their legal documents.

### ***Veterans' Assistance Clinic***

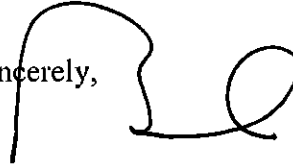
Beginning in 2012, Baylor has been offering a *pro bono* legal clinic to a deserving and under-served segment of our community, our veterans. With 19,000 veterans residing in McLennan County (and of course we are in proximity of Fort Hood, the largest U.S. Army installation in the world), there is need to provide *pro bono* legal services to this highly deserving segment of our population. Since the clinic's inception, we have served over 225 veterans.

During each monthly clinic, veterans who have current legal problems can meet with a law student and volunteer attorney for a brief advice and counsel session. Some problems may simply require advice and a plan of action, while others may require the opening of a file. If there will be an ongoing legal matter, the clinic seeks a volunteer attorney willing to take on representation of the client, who can then partner with a law student or the *Pro Bono* Litigation Team to work on the case. In addition to the monthly advice and counsel clinics, the clinic also provides a special program on Veterans Day. Annually, in conjunction with Veterans Day, Baylor Law offers veterans a Saturday clinic for preparation of wills, powers of attorney and directives to physicians.

I strongly encourage you to participate in the Inaugural *Pro Bono* Challenge. If the Bar is able to meet the 1,000 hour challenge, Baylor Law School will host a luncheon and CLE for all who participated. If you would like to learn more about our programs and clinics, please visit [www.baylor.edu/law/public](http://www.baylor.edu/law/public).

With very best regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'B' followed by a smaller 'T' and a final flourish.

Bradley J.B. Toben  
Dean