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Lawyers as Public Servants

Co-Sponsored by: Baylor Law's LEAD Counsel, part of the LEAD Conference

Lawyers have historically played a vital role in the preservation in society. As guardians of democracy, this role can be fulfilled in a variety of ways: whether it be with a pro bono case, through the cost-effective delivery of quality services to the underserved, in the state or local bar to benefit other lawyers and encouraging them to serve as well, or as publicly-elected officials. This panel highlights opportunities and benefits of service.

Moderated by:

Judge Ed Kinkeade

District Judge, U.S. District Court Northern District of Texas

Panelists:

Kyle Deaver

Mayor, City of Waco

Britney E. Harrison

President, Texas Young Lawyers Association

Judge Lora Livingston

261st Civil District Court, Travis County, Texas

Sen. Kirk Watson

Founding Dean of Hobby School of Public Affairs, University of Houston

Leah Teague:

Today, our focus is on why. Why are we preparing lawyers as leaders? In law school, we are teaching our students to be advocates, but for what purpose? We want them to help right a wrong. We want them to seek redress when there is an injustice. And we know that that need for advocacy sometimes involves conflict, or, perhaps, a lot.

But in those moments, we know that if [00:00:30] we, as lawyers, are looking for the opportunity, we can also be peacemakers. We know that lawyers are not often portrayed this way, but, in fact, we are ones in a

position to reconcile broken relationships. We can build stronger partnerships. We can find compromise that can lead to progress. And, as lawyers, we're also trained to be problem-solvers. But for what purpose?

To improve a client's situation, yes, to close a deal, forge a relationship, [00:01:00] to save a job or even a whole organization, or even to improve a community. These are but a few of the reasons that our legal education, our training, and our experience as lawyers make us better leaders. If you think about it, and this is how we think about it, good lawyering is leadership at its very essence.

Lawyers guide and counsel clients. We influence colleagues and associates. [00:01:30] We give voice to those who need our skills so that their plight can be heard. We create visions and then action steps towards a better future. And then we as lawyers are equipped to take that action to make it a reality.

So as a profession, we have an obligation, yes, to serve our clients, but not only our clients. We have an obligation to serve society. So this week, as we celebrate and reflect on lawyers as leaders, [00:02:00] we are so honored to have this next panel join us. They are all model lawyer leaders, bringing them to this place through a journey that has allowed them to use their own unique skills to make a difference in the world.

As with each of our sessions, we're going to just briefly, very briefly, introduce our speakers, really just highlights. We strongly encourage you to go to our website and to [00:02:30] see their full bios. They are amazing and accomplished individuals.

So I quickly want to give introductions to each of the presenters, and, Judge Kinkeade, I see that you join me, but I'm saving you for last. So I am going to start with Kyle Deaver, who is currently mayor of the city of Waco. Now, I will tell you that Kyle is actually in overtime as mayor of Waco. He had planned and was looking forward to finishing his duties in May of this year, 2020, [00:03:00] but like everything else in the world, our local elections were postponed because of the COVID pandemic.

But the truth is, many of us in Waco, we wish that Kyle would continue on for many more years. He is respected. He's revered. He's admired. He is loved by all of us who know him well. We know him to be the real deal. We see him calm and collected as he is generally listening to all sides of some pretty difficult and thorny, sometimes complicated challenges. [00:03:30] And yet, he is open and listening, and then he very calmly leads us through a decision and to move forward.

So we have so appreciated his excellent leadership. And we know that in this community and in all of his areas of influence, he will continue to be instrumental and influential for years, years to come. I will share with you that he's, what we call, a double bear. Like me, he has a [00:04:00] business degree from Baylor, and he also has a law degree from Baylor. We call those double bears, and that's because at Baylor, oh my goodness, roots go deep and wide in terms of service, which is exactly how Kyle has devoted his life and his career.

Our next panelist will be Britney Harrison. She is currently the president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. For those of you joining us from other places, the Texas Young Lawyers Association is large [00:04:30] and a force. Within that organization, she is just exemplary. She is tenacious. She is able to get things done, and like Kyle, she has a calm presence to her during these very turbulent and uncertain times. So we have certainly needed her leadership during these times.

She has a warrior's heart for serving others, and so for that, we appreciate and recognize her for her efforts. [00:05:00] She is also known for her skill in bringing together diverse and unique groups who have a common passion and a desire to tackle whatever the task is at hand.

We will also be joined today by Judge Lora Livingstone. Livingston, excuse me. We have a president named Livingstone, so I now stumble over those two names. Judge Livingston, she is the Travis County District Court for the 261st [00:05:30] Civil District. She is known for giving her time selflessly to all of her causes. She's passionate about pro bono and access to justice, and with that work, she has had a positive impact on just millions of lives in America as she has been part of countless workgroups and commissions.

One of those efforts was to serve as a commissioner on the ABA 2016 groundbreaking report [00:06:00] on the future of legal services in the United States. I have to share that that report has inspired many, including a number of us at Baylor Law School, who know that we need to do more to solve the access to justice issues.

She also devotes her time to students of all ages, from high school to undergrad students, and even to our own law students. She is there when we need her, including accepting an invitation to become an adjunct at [00:06:30] our Baylor Law Academy of the Advocates at Saint Andrews. So we so appreciate her dedication. Even though she is not a Baylor grad, we like to now claim her as part of the Baylor Law family and appreciate all she does for us.

Next, we have Senator Kirk Watson, who is assuming the duties as the founding dean of the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston. As we were having a conversation with him, "Okay, Senator, [00:07:00] Dean, what do we call you?" He suggested a new term, which I'm taking to heart. So he is Deanator to me from now on.

He is the perfect first dean for this School of Public Affairs. His years of experience in some pretty significant hot seats, first as mayor of the city of Austin, and then for a number of years now as a Texas senator. He [00:07:30] is one of those rare politicians in today's very challenging environment that he is respected and admired by both parties, from individuals from both sides of the aisle, and his counsel is sought.

I think it is for those reasons that he was asked to assume that important role. I'm looking. I want to read to you something from an announcement. He was part of an announcement [00:08:00] last week to announce that the Hobby School is establishing, from a very generous donation from Elizabeth Rockwell, a Rockwell Center on Ethics and Leadership. Oh, my goodness. Do we need to continue to tie those two concepts together?

In that announcement, Deanator Watson shared a poignant point from a lecture given by Bakari Sellers, who is his friend, but also [00:08:30] the CNN commentator, author, and former state representative of South Carolina. And what Sellers said was, "We have to dream with our eyes open. That makes it important for us to be very intentional about our efforts to improve our world and our society." So I thought those were just very pertinent words of wisdom there.

Judge, I have saved you for the last. Our dear moderator, thank you for being with us. Judge Ed Kinkeade [00:09:00] is U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas, but we at Baylor know him as our jurist in residence. He teaches our Professional Responsibility course, which, for our students, comes at a difficult time. It's in the third year as part of our infamous Practice Court Program. They're tired. They're exhausted. They're sometimes beaten down, and yet, on Friday afternoons, they have Judge Kinkeade to look forward to for Professional Responsibility.

Now, I know when I say [00:09:30] federal judge, and I say Professional Responsibility, you are thinking, how can that be? How can they look forward to a Friday afternoon? I will tell you. He is not the typical federal judge. When I say that, I think many of us understand through experience or reputation, federal judges are sometimes a little reserved, perhaps aloof. You will soon find that that is not our Judge Kinkeade, not at all.

Although, I can attest to the fact that his federal judgeship does appear [00:10:00] when it's time to get busy and to get to work and to get things done, whether moving a case or a cause. Speaking of causes, one that is dear to his heart is providing service dogs for those that have disabilities. During his time as chair and trustee of the Baylor Scott & White Healthcare System, he was known for taking his dear dog, who is trained as a therapy dog, Bo, to visit patients in the hospital.

From that time, a collaboration [00:10:30] was born, and we now have in Irving, Texas, it is the ... I know Judge it's got your name in it, the Kinkeade Campus of Canine Companions. So it's through his efforts and his passion for that cause that we now have a facility in Irving that turns out more than 60 trained service dogs.

Now, Judge, I'm told that they honored you by naming one of their trainee pups after you. [00:11:00] I'm also told, I don't know if it's rumor or truth, but that puppy washed out of the program. So I don't know.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: No, no, no, no.

Leah Teague: Oh, he didn't?

Judge Ed Kinkeade: He did not.

Leah Teague: [crosstalk 00:11:12].

Judge Ed Kinkeade: No, no, no. He did great.

Leah Teague: Perfect.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: The truth is, he was going to be a breeder, and I said, "Oh, my dog survived all the other dogs to be a breeder," and he had been in surgery and became [00:11:30] a regular service dog. It was not a breeder after that. So that was the difference, is that I did not he had gone from being in his status as a breeder to his status differently.

Leah Teague: I got it. I apologize for, in any way, indicating that your named puppy was less than stellar. With that, Judge, I'll turn it over. I will remind the audience that if you want to submit questions, [00:12:00] you can do that through our chat feature.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Listen. I want to thank everybody for being on here. I understand Tom Nesbitt is on here, who went to Baylor, and he and I worked on an interesting project together to try to settle some ... I don't know about other people in other places, but apparently, Baptists like to fight. And Tom helped me through a difficult time. Kirk was involved in that, and

[00:12:30] I give him a hard time, the same as I'm going to give Kirk, because they live in Austin, which is different than the rest of the state. I call it Austinchusetts.

So it's great, and we all want to go there. And it's a great place to visit. I'm sure it's a great place to live too, and Kirk would tell us that, and Tom would too. Now, I want to bet by using that word because Tom sent me that, so Tom, you owe me. And I hope that our [00:13:00] prize that we will give will be more than a Yeti cup. I understand that it's a Lexus and that Kirk is going to provide that as a former wealthy plaintiff's lawyer before he went into public service, so we would appreciate that.

But let's start, and I'm just going to go across. I'll talk about mine a little later on. Let me introduce again the Mayor. You may not know, but the Mayor [00:13:30] was also a banker, and he had the round bank that we all see in Waco, Texas, that is now a rubble. It's been torn down, and we're building a new bank there. And it was the location of the very last Robert Redford movie, The Old Man and the Gun.

Mayor Deaver's wife was, I believe, a teller in the movie. Maybe she was the one that was robbed. [00:14:00] I don't remember, but in that. But let's start. Mayor Deaver, why in the world did we get you involved? I know you don't like to be called a politician, but why did you take that mantle on of being mayor? Tell me what motivates you?

Kyle Deaver:

That's a great question, Judge, and yes, we did tear down the round bank over the last couple weeks. Now that Robert Redford had showed how you could rob the bank, we felt it wasn't safe to keep the bank [00:14:30] in that current condition anymore.

Good afternoon, everybody. It really is an honor for me to be here on this program and to be here with these distinguished panelists and Judge Kinkeade. For those of you that don't know, Judge Kinkeade, in addition to all the other things that Leah talked about, is a real estate developer and has done some great developments in Waco, including his newest development, which is one of the first redevelopment projects on Elm Avenue, which is the historically Black portion of town, right across [00:15:00] the river from downtown.

Our city is growing in that direction. Really excited about what's happening there. Judge, you all just did a great job on that and did such a great job engaging with the community-

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Thank you.

Kyle Deaver:

... because that was really important for that project to work.

Judge, you asked how I got involved in politics, and I can tell you it was a complete accident. That was not ever my goal. I didn't ever have any ambition to hold elected office. I do believe strongly that [00:15:30] each of us has a responsibility to make use of the education we received as lawyers to do public service in some form. Each lawyer's work situation is different, and I'm fortunate to have been in private practice with my brother for the last 27 years. We each have a lot of flexibility with our time, and we've both been very involved in civic matters in our city.

It's also every lawyer has a different personal or family situation. I have been incredibly blessed to have a wife [00:16:00] who is interested and supportive of the work that I've been doing. She and I met at Baylor. I married her as soon as she graduated from Baylor, and we've had a great life here in Waco. And it's been so much fun to watch Waco grow and sort of become the city that we always knew it could be.

Most of my work has been in nonprofits and volunteer boards. I've chaired a couple of private school boards. [00:16:30] I've been on the Cameron Park Zoological Society, the Waco Planning Commission, and the Waco Foundation is one of the boards that I currently serve on. As an attorney, we have special training that helps us identify issues, solve problems, and persuade others. And all of those qualities are important for leadership and for public service.

Like I said, I never intended to hold public office. I was actually moving my daughter from her apartment into a house at Baylor [00:17:00] one afternoon and got a phone call from a friend who asked me whether I would be willing to put my name in the hat for city council for District 5. Our mayor that preceded me, Malcolm Duncan, Jr., had been elected mayor and vacated that seat.

When that happens, the city council appoints a representative to serve that district until the next election, which was a year later. I can tell you when I got that call, my heart really sank. [00:17:30] This was not something that I thought I wanted to do. But I took a couple of days and thought about it, and realized all the work that I had kind of done up until that point had led me to be prepared to take that seat and to do it, hopefully, well.

The fact that I was a lawyer, the fact that I had a business background, and that I knew a number of people in the community just led me to say, "Yeah, okay. I'll go ahead and do this." And so I served [00:18:00] that year, ran for reelection, got reelected, and then that was the only election

where I ever had an opponent. I ran for election again without an opponent and served another year before Mayor Duncan vacated the seat as mayor, and I ran for mayor, and nobody else ran.

I've been in that seat now for a little over four years. It should have been over in May, as Leah mentioned. But hopefully, we are going to have an election in November. I'm pretty sure we're going to have an election in November. So [00:18:30] that should be the end of my term, and I will look forward to that.

I want to just talk briefly about, obviously, the strangest thing that has occurred, which is the coronavirus, and the fact that I've been dealing with that here in our city for the last six months. You never know what is going to come at you when you're in a role like this. I had to do the unthinkable, which was to issue an emergency order shutting down our businesses. That is something that I [00:19:00] never, ever contemplated as I took that role on.

One of the great things that has come out of this coronavirus is we established four working teams to address the recovery from the virus, not the recovery for each person, but the health response of our community was one of our working groups. We also had a group for individual business financial recovery, one for education and social services, and one for strategic communication. [00:19:30] And these community collaborations that were formed have really helped our city weather the storm. In many ways, they've helped us thrive through this storm.

Seeing that collaboration and the work of all these great leaders all around our community, each one of those working groups was chaired by a city council member and a subject matter expert in the community. We've just had great success.

Speaker 4: Sorry. I didn't quite-

Kyle Deaver: I think she thought I said Siri. [00:20:00] Anyway, that's been really rewarding.

I want to point out how rewarding this community service is. It is a lot of work, but I would really challenge each of you to find some way to plug in. Whether it's through pro bono work or through community service, whether it's on a nonprofit or a city or your church or your school, get involved. [00:20:30] I know you're busy. I know many of you are busy lawyers, many of you are law students who will be busy lawyers. This work is fulfilling, and it will make a huge difference in your life, and you will be changing your community for the better.

So that's a long answer to your question, Ed.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Well, you're so modest about the kind of service that you have and do provide, [00:21:00] and it's great to get a chance to work with you. I won't go into any details, but when you're a little, small-town developer trying to do some things, you've got to have a good mayor to help you through some difficult times. And Mayor Deaver did that.

It's been a joy to work with him, and I look forward to seeing what his next step is going to be. I'll be trying to think of some way to volunteer [00:21:30] him for some other project. So either that, or he'll get jury duty. That's the way it works, so it will be a great time.

Well, I want to introduce, again, Judge Livingston, who is a judge in Austin and has been ... We had a little pre-meeting, and I was excited to find out that she was a grad of UCLA. One of my closest friends is a reporter and graduated from UCLA. Just [00:22:00] every time I see him, he hates USC, so I always bring USC up with him. And I won't do that with you, Judge Livingston, because you're such a fine judge and a wonderful servant for Texas. And we appreciate what you're doing.

The same sort of question I had for you is why move from practicing law and [00:22:30] from what you had done, your prior background, to doing this and being a judge? I don't think they pay judges in Austin a whole lot of money because I used to be one of those, and you're not getting rich. I do know that. So, I'm wondering why would someone as talented as you are make this kind of change and be dedicated to all these many things you're involved in?

Judge Lora Livingston: [00:23:00] Well, thank you, first, for inviting me to join the panel. I will say that once I became a judge, I had to learn to stop hating any and everything. I no longer hate USC. I don't hate anybody because once you become a judge, you have to love everybody and appreciate all the gifts that they bring, whether you used to appreciate them or not in the past life.

My transition to the bench was really easy. When I was an advocate, which I loved being ... I enjoyed [00:23:30] advocacy. I enjoyed picking a side. I enjoyed trying to advance a goal of my client, but the beauty of being a judge is that you get to be the one person in the room that is 100% focused on the solution. It's great to be an advocate. It's great to hear both sides arguing their different perspectives, but it's even better to be the one person in the room who is trying to find the right, the just, the best decision under the circumstances.

And there's just [00:24:00] no better place to be in a courtroom than in that position. So, for me, the transition was a pretty easy one, despite my love of advocacy. My love of justice, and my love of access to justice for everyone, and my love of finding the right solution outweighed any of the benefits of being in private practice despite the pay cut I took when I took the bench.

Judge [00:24:30] Kinkeade, I think you're muted.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: ... didn't mean to be. Tell me about your coming to Texas and that sort of thing too, and how that transition.

Judge Lora Livingston: I was born and raised and went to school in California for most of my education. I got a fellowship to join the Legal Aid Office in Austin. I did that fellowship for a couple years here because, [00:25:00] when I was a law student, and I do want to talk a little bit about that, when I was a law student, I learned what it meant to be a public servant early on.

I knew when I went to law school that I wanted to be a lawyer because I wanted to speak on behalf of those who really didn't have a voice of their own. I wanted to be that voice for people who were voiceless. So I knew that and was driven by that interest before I got to law school. But while in law school, being a law student, I learned [00:25:30] what it meant to be a lawyer. I knew what it meant to be a change agent.

I learned while I was in law school what it meant to be someone who could make a difference, not only in the lives of individuals but also in a much greater sense as part of a community that had a lot of challenges that needed a solution. So I learned all about what it meant to be a public servant and to do things for individual clients, but also to do things to be a change agent in a community. [00:26:00] I learned the power that having a legal degree could get for you.

So I learned that that power is the kind of power I wanted to have because I wanted to be a change agent. So I came to Texas on this fellowship to work for poor people because I felt like poor people were the folks that couldn't speak for themselves, didn't have a voice, needed to have someone articulate and advocate for them [00:26:30] their concerns and issues. So I took that fellowship, which was probably the best decision I've made in my career.

From there, I went into private practice. From there, I went to the bench. So, for me, that natural progression to what I'll call higher positions, both physically and literally, in my work has just been a natural progression of my interest in wanting to make a difference, a big a difference as I possibly can.

Along the way, [00:27:00] both in law school and as a lawyer and certainly now as a judge, I've also learned that those of us that are in positions of authority are the best folks to be able to affect change. If something needs to happen statewide in this state related to access to justice, my first call is to Nathan Hecht, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, because it's that court with that kind of interest in judicial leadership that's going to [00:27:30] make a difference.

That happens on my court. All the judges on my district court are the same kind of change agents. We do what we do locally because we have the power to make those changes. People on appellate courts and intermediate appellate courts, they have the opportunity in their positions to make a difference statewide or in a larger district. So it's at every level you have an opportunity as a public servant to make a big difference [00:28:00] or even a small difference. As long as it's making a difference, I'm good with that.

For me, it was sort of natural progression and a natural interest in wanting to have as much of an influence as possible. That started while I was in law school when we started walking on the Public Interest Law Foundation and when we learned about these fellowships that were going to send us off to legislative offices and legal aid offices and congressional offices and other places that were going [00:28:30] to be places where we could train and learn how to use our influence, use our legal training, use our skills as advocates to make a difference in the world.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: And as a judge, we're not Republicans, Democrats, or Whigs, but we have to run that way traditionally in Texas. How have you reached out to Nathan, who's always been a Republican? Tell me about that, sort of how you manage that. A lot of [00:29:00] lawyers seem to have the idea that there's this us and them mentality. Talk to me a little bit about that and the panel.

Judge Lora Livingston: Well, I'll harken back to when I was first sworn in in my first judicial position. I was appointed as a judge before I became an elected judge, and I remember at one of my swearing-in ceremonies, what I said to the public then, and I still believe today, is that you [00:29:30] run in Texas on a partisan ballot. But once elected, you represent everybody. If you're in a representative capacity like Senator Watson or the president or anybody else, the mayor, once you get elected, you represent everybody.

The same is true for judges. It doesn't matter whether you were first elected as a Republican or a Democrat or the Independent or the Green Party or the Purple Party. It just does not matter. Once you are entrusted with the public's business, it is [00:30:00] incumbent upon you to take

care of all of the public's business in the best way you can, with your knowledge, with your skill, with your interest in a just outcome.

You aren't a Republican judge or a Democratic judge. You are simply a judge, and it's your job to judge. It's your job to administer justice. It's your job to interpret the law. It's your job to make sure that not only procedural justice is achieved, but actual justice is achieved. So it doesn't [00:30:30] matter how you got there or who contributed or didn't contribute to your campaign. It matters that when you take that bench, when you put on that robe, you have an awesome responsibility, and it is incumbent upon you to do your job as a judge and leave the rest aside.

I think everybody on the Supreme Court understands that. I think everybody on every appellate intermediate court understands that. And I know for a fact, everybody I work with on the district court understands that.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Wow, that's great. I [00:31:00] knew that was the answer. We need to remind ourselves that at all times, especially in an election year like this one where things are so contentious and reaching across lines to work is always critical to get anything done. My goodness.

Ms. Harrison, you don't have any gray hair, and you are nice. You are the [00:31:30] age I sort of remember, and all of us wish we were still. I'm jealous. I know you've done a lot of good things while you've been practicing and at TYLA, but talk to us from your perspective, both as a young person, as a young woman, as a young woman of color, and help us with how you navigate this area of service.

Britney Harrison: Well, for me, it just really [00:32:00] goes back to kind of my roots. I've always been one that likes to give back. My first mentoring gig was in seventh grade as a friendly helper as Westview Middle School. So it's just kind of been instilled in me to always give back to others and help those that are less fortunate than you are. Just having that kind of ingrained in me, I just knew that once I became a lawyer, I was going to have to find some way to give back, either through public service, pro bono cases ... And I kind of did a little bit of everything.

And also, just do random [00:32:30] volunteer things as well just because I like to have my hands in a lot of different pots. It keeps things interesting. And with me being a family lawyer, it's nice to have these good feel-good things. Also, I do have gray hair because I am a family lawyer, but just a little side note there.

It's just a part of who I am, and one of the reasons I went to law school was just to serve others. I can't really imagine not having some form of

public service or pro bono service in my practice [00:33:00] because I think it was Honorable Deaver. He was saying that it's kind of our responsibility. We have this education. We need to give back, and so it's just kind of been instilled with me since I was a young person, and I want to continue doing that.

And also kind of inspire others, especially if they've never seen someone that looks like them. If I look like them and I'm inspiring them to do something, I want to do that and give back, and just be sort of a role model.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: That's great. Do you find it harder [00:33:30] being young breaking into the opportunities of service? Talk about that a little bit.

Britney Harrison: That part can get a little bit hard to navigate because as soon as you get out of law school, you want to get into all these things, but you also have to hone your practice and learn your skills as a lawyer. You have three years of law school, and you're going to learn a lot there, but it's completely different once you get out and actually start practicing law. So it's kind of hard to find a balance [00:34:00] between wanting to give back and making sure you become a great lawyer.

What I found was the easiest way was to kind of take on small roles. So I started at the local level. I was an Austin attorney when I first began practicing. So I had an Austin Black Lawyers liaison position with the Austin Young Lawyers. So it was a small thing that kind of got my foot in the door, and just kind of learning because sometimes you really just have to pay your dues. So you start small and work your way up, so that's what I basically did. Start at the local level, [00:34:30] kept moving up, and then eventually got on with TYLA.

Now, I never thought it, but I became president. It was a journey, but you just have to put in the time, do the work, and have fun while you're doing it.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: So you would say, don't be shy about doing the hard work that's not going to get a lot of notoriety. Don't feel like you have to begin at the ending, later. Be [00:35:00] willing to do some of that harder work. I call it latrine duty sometimes, but that's it. Would you agree?

Britney Harrison: Completely agree with that. Yeah, like I said, I found the position online. First, you have to be willing to go after things, so you don't wait for things to just be handed to you. So I was just looking on the Austin Young Lawyers website, and I found that they had a liaison position. So I was like, "Well, why is there no one in that? Can I do that?" So I just

asked the president of the [00:35:30] ABLA, and they're like, "Sure. We can sign you up."

So it wasn't a whole lot of duties, but it was just a way to kind learn a little bit about what it's like to be a young lawyer in Austin and how to work your way up. Yes, I did things that may not have been as grandiose as being president, but they're still important jobs, and you have to start somewhere.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Isn't it fun, and isn't it important that now that you are the president looking back on how ... You've got to get started somewhere.

Britney Harrison: [00:36:00] Exactly.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: And I agree with you. You start where that opportunity is. So many times, people feel like, "Well, I need to go be president of the Young Lawyer's Association right out of ... No. No, no, no, no. That's not the way it works, and kind of work your way up.

I've always appreciated the English way in politics is their folks that run to MPs, members of parliament, they go through a vetting process, [00:36:30] and they work their way up. I kind of wish we did that in our politics, and people would kind of learn how to navigate ... No, we don't. People just jump in and whatever. There's not any training for how we do it, so I really appreciate your comments about that and how that works.

All right, and I don't know whether to call you Mayor, Senator, Dean. I'm just going to call you Your Holiness. [00:37:00] Mayor Watson, Senator Watson, Dean Watson, you have been active at lots of different levels. You were active when you were a trial lawyer. You have been active in a lot of causes. I know you helped Baylor when Baylor was going through some issues at the university. And you've always been willing to give back to your city.

I know that there were no big [00:37:30] issues in Austin, and everyone loved you, and everyone agreed with you all the time as they do with Mayor Deaver.

Senator Kirk Watson: All the time.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: So I know there were not, but talk about because you done a lot of different things, and talk about that.

Senator Kirk Watson: Well, first, thanks for you doing this. You're a great friend, and we share so much. This is a wonderful panel. I'm good friends with everybody,

and it's great to also hear Britney talk about TYLA because that's [00:38:00] one of my all-time favorite organizations.

The way I kind of came at it is the idea that the itch that I always had probably started as a young man because I felt like opportunity was in front of me. I felt like my parents had laid opportunity at my feet, and they were always kicking to make sure I seized that opportunity and tried to push the limits of it.

[00:38:30] But it wasn't lost on me that I was being given the opportunity to do certain things that not everybody had. That meant something to me and caused me to kind of have an itch about service. I didn't really know what that might look like at the time, but immediately getting into law school, I had another learning experience about opportunity, and that was that we as [00:39:00] lawyers are given basically a monopoly on one of the branches of government.

The average person can't even access the judicial branch of government absent having a lawyer as a mouthpiece that will get them through the doors. I must admit, it was not until law school that that became, and some of the folks at Baylor Law School helped me see [00:39:30] that. So that added to this sense of obligation, I guess, would be the only word I can think of, that if you have opportunity kind of given to you and then you are part of a profession that has an enormous opportunity given to it because it dominates a part of our government ...

By the way, I can't identify any other profession that does that with any other part of government, right? And so [00:40:00] that added to that. Then I'll add one other thing. I got involved very early on. Britney, part of the reason I smile and focus on that is I moved to Austin to work for a federal judge, and when Liz and I decided to stay in Austin, one of the first things I did was I got involved in the Austin Young Lawyers Association and Austin Legal Services for the Poor.

But you don't have to [00:40:30] just do your public service in doing pro bono work, although I served as the state bar chair of the Committee on Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters for multiple years. But then what happened to me was I got sick and got real sick. I ended up with three surgeries and chemo, and then a couple years later, on a routine CAT scan, they found another tumor in my abdomen that was related to it. So, as we say in Texas, they [00:41:00] went in, and field dressed me and removed the lymph nodes.

That was another glance of opportunity because here I was, it looked like I was going to survive, I was going to live. By the way, that was back in April. The last treatment I had of any kind was April of '95. So

one of the things that I decided was with that kind of opportunity, it's time to have kind of a short-term focus [00:41:30] maybe with a long-term vision. If I'm given a good long life, hopefully, it will work out that that vision will play out. But right now, I'm going to focus on something else.

We didn't know what that would be. We decided that January of '97, we would make a decision. It might be working half-time. It might be doing more volunteer work. I didn't know what it was going to be. People started coming to me in '96, and they were saying, "You know, the mayor's not running for reelection. You ought to run for mayor. You've always loved politics. You've always [00:42:00] loved public policy. You've been involved in that. You're looking for something to do."

And, of course, along the lines of what you already said, I started telling people, "My goodness, if I ran for mayor right now, that'd make me the only guy in America that thinks being mayor of Austin's better than chemotherapy." My other thought was, "What's it going to do? Give you cancer? So go do it. See if you like it." Well, it didn't give me cancer, [00:42:30] and it was better than chemotherapy. I actually loved it, and I loved that aspect of public service.

Part of what I loved about it was it gave me the ability, even in the times when people are yelling at you, when they're not happy with you ... There's only a few of those with me, but they're loud. I tease about that, but even one of the things that being a lawyer helped with and representing some clients [00:43:00] across the board in different things, when they're not at their best because something serious has happened in their lives, and it's had a negative impact on them, or they're fearful of something like that, the training as a lawyer always was helpful in that regard.

So, I found that I really love the hands-on aspect of that. I've run and lost. Mayor Deaver did. [00:43:30] I can win an election I've got no opponent in. Man, that's a good thing. But I've lost one, but came back and ran for another office because I wanted to continue serving. Then I've been given this interesting opportunity out of nowhere, and, again, probably some sense of obligation of how do you give back. How do you continue to give back? So now, I'm serving as the dean.

I think it comes out of the fact that we are [00:44:00] blessed people as lawyers. I'm not suggesting that a lot of folks don't have to scrap to get the opportunity to be a lawyer. But once you are a lawyer, you have special opportunity, and I think that creates a special obligation,

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Wow. I almost don't want to say anything because you all have done such a great job. Let me give my perspective on [00:44:30] this. When I grew up, I grew up in a town, Irving, a suburb of Dallas long before the cowboys came. It was the fastest-growing city in the United States in 1954 and 1955. And it was the Wild West. It was known where the developers were building these little two-bedroom homes for folks who work in Grand Prairie at Chance Vought and the other plants around there. [00:45:00] And there was some bad things going on.

They would put the rebar in the houses that night and get the inspection, and then take the rebar out and move it to the next house. So I can't tell you how many houses in South Irving have no rebar in the foundation. It was such a wild, wooly, and people doing things they shouldn't do. In the late 50s, the school board fired [00:45:30] all the teachers in Irving. You can kind of Google this and go back and look at it. And the school system lost its accreditation.

They fired them because they went and voted for Ralph Yarborough. They didn't think that was a good thing. You see, this is pre-1964 Civil Rights Act. So fired them all. All the churches in Irving split except where my dad was pastor at First Baptist. It did not, but there were people on both sides that would get angry.

There were three lights in Irving. Irving now [00:46:00] has a couple hundred thousand, but there were only three traffic lights. They would stop at the first traffic light and get out and fight. The light would change. They'd get back in and go to the second light and fight. Get back in and go to the third light. I saw that as a child going on, and I thought, "What in the world.?"

I realized the people leading what was going on there, good and bad, a lot of them were lawyers. There weren't any lawyers in our family. My dad was a pastor, [00:46:30] and everybody loved my dad. He was a man that even his enemies loved him. When we did his eulogy, it was one of the things. And he was the conscious of our community.

So I thought, "Man, I think I kind of would like to be in a position of helping solve that kind of craziness." So when I went to Baylor, I first thought I was going to be an actor. My teacher at Irving High put his arm around me [00:47:00] and said, "You're not a very good actor. You better not do that. You better go to law school." Then I thought I was going to be a rock and roll star, and our garage band didn't find a hit song.

Then I thought I was going to be ... I was a walk-on basketball player at Baylor, I was convinced I was going to be a pro after that. At the end of

that year, the coach at Baylor informed me that ... I had told him I wasn't going to go to law school until I finished playing basketball, [00:47:30] and he informed me that I was going to law school now. So, I did, and that's where it went.

By the time I got out, I thought, "I'm not going to do pro bono work. I want to go make money." I had counseled with Abner McCall, who, those of us who went to Baylor, was such a saint. He was a great man, and that's who I had for Ethics. And he had encouraged me to do pro bono work like what we're talking about here today. And I thought, "I'm not doing that. [00:48:00] I want to make money. I don't care about that. My dad's taking care of all that good stuff, and I'm going to do it."

Then, something happened to me. I got a conscious. Nope, nope. Not what you think. No, no, no, no. My conscious was my father, who would bring people and have me do their work for free. And I would say, "No, no, no," and then I would eventually agree. He finally brings the Dallas Baptist Association consisting of 350 churches, [00:48:30] and, "Ed, you need to represent them in this tax suit where they're being taxed at their church camp as it not being an exempt use." And I said, "Well, I don't know."

So it went on for years. I represented them. I would go to these meetings, and people would talk about Brother Ed is doing a great job, and we love Brother Ed. And they would pray for me. At the end of them, one of them said, "Is there anything else we can do for you, Brother Ed?" And I said, "Yeah, you can give me a [00:49:00] check." I thought it was funny. They didn't. Some guy in the back in the room hollers, "Sounds like we need to pray for him some more," so they did.

But what happened out of that was one of the most profound things that ever happened to me, dummy that I was. All of those churches didn't have lawyers. So I started building a whole practice on all of these churches. It would be an estate, or it would be somebody's son got a DWI, [00:49:30] or there needed to be a real estate contract, or there was a divorce. So I got huge amounts. I got to feeling so guilty. It was God's way of kicking me in the head that I felt I ought to pay them to handle the case.

Now, that's just my experience of kind of where things had gone. I had a fun experience as a young lawyer. Britney, you will appreciate this. I wrote a letter in [00:50:00] 1976 during the election to all the candidates on both sides, and Texas Stadium was relatively new. Let's see, was that '76? I think it was, yes. Jimmy Carter was running, and Gerald Ford was running to try to get elected.

So I wrote Gerald Ford, and Reagan was running. Then there were 10 or 12 Democratic candidates, of which Jimmy Carter was one. [00:50:30] Out of that, six or seven Democrats and Gerald Ford accepted to come speak at the Irving Bar Association meeting, and we were having it at Texas Stadium. They came down and showed up. There I was about 24, 25 years old, and they were like, "Maybe we made a mistake."

But eventually, the president of the United States came. Jimmy Carter wanted to come, and I would have loved to have had him come, but he [00:51:00] wasn't president at the time. I can't turn the president down, and so he came. It was really fun, and we won the Small Bar Award for that year. I remember doing that and giving that time to do it. It was so much fun. We had a great time, met a lot of great people.

We raised a lot of money for the bar, and we were able to do a lot of things that we weren't able to do before for folks that weren't getting represented. So what I'm encouraging [00:51:30] you is to think differently about service. Maybe you won't get cases out of it, but I'm going to tell you, you're going to get a lot of great payment in other ways.

I once represented a young man whose son continued to get in trouble. He ran out of money, so it was pro bono for the last time. And he said, "Ed, do you like fish?" I'm probably going [00:52:00] to say yes, didn't matter. "Yes" "Well, I'm going to bring you some fish, and I'm going to leave it, some white bass, also known as crappie. I'm going to leave it at some point," but he didn't tell me when. We were on vacation. It was in July. He left it on my front porch. We came back two weeks later. I came in the back door, opened the front door, and I still have that smell in my nostrils from [00:52:30] that bad fish.

Then I hope God forgave me because I lied and told my client how good that fish was. But I remember paying me in fish. That was one of the highest things I was ever paid, ever, as a result of representing him. He died not too long ago. He was a fella that detailed cars, and I just have a special spot.

I want to tell you all, this will be some of the best [00:53:00] work you will ever do. I'm so thankful for each of these folks for what they've done and what they're continuing to do, and what you need to do. I'm sorry. I get into preaching sometimes. I thought about passing the plate here today a little bit. That's kind of what Baptists do at the end of every sermon, maybe two or three times if you don't give enough.

But I want to leave some time here for [00:53:30] each of the panelists to anything else that we need to emphasize. I've been making notes, and

I'm sure each of you have, about what you're thinking about. So let me just go down, and Mayor Deaver, is there something else that you would like to add that you thought about?

Kyle Deaver: A couple of things. Deanator Watson and I both mentioned [00:54:00] the training that you had as lawyers and how that helps prepare you for leadership, but I would also encourage you, if you haven't already, to do some leadership training. There are lots of good programs available in your community, and also some governance training because that doesn't come naturally a lot of times.

I think continuing to do those things, and even if you've done them, continuing to do those kind of programs can really help you [00:54:30] guide your organization, whatever it is, through challenging times.

Senator Kirk Watson: Can I add to that, Judge?

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Yes.

Senator Kirk Watson: Yeah, I really like what the Mayor's saying there because one of the thoughts I have about the legal education done right. A legal education done right teaches the skills that I think translate well into good leadership. [00:55:00] For example, one of the rules that I think, and you and Judge Livingston talked about this a little bit when she was talking, one of the rules that I think we ought to follow, one of the ground rules all of us ought to have, is we ought to do a better job of throwing away the labels, particularly right now.

We get everybody all labeled up, and once we put a label on them, then we never listen to them again. Because once I get a label on you, oh, you're a federal judge? Well, that's all I need to know about you. [00:55:30] But you get my point. Well, lawyers have a special training, if trained well and right, that they understand those labels may not mean everything. There may be some good idea on the other side, or they may find themselves representing somebody on the other side the very next time and if they're paying attention.

And that's just one example is throwing away the labels. But another example I'll give quickly is [00:56:00] also trying to figure out new ways to hear each other. Good leaders figure out ways to hear each other. The legal system is a very adversarial system. I'll grant you that. But as we've seen the change over the last couple of decades, where mediation becomes an important part of it, if lawyers are doing it right and they're well-trained as lawyers, they get that there are ways to hear each other so that now I understand what you really may be saying once I get out of

the adversarial [00:56:30] mode so maybe we can come to an agreement or conclusion.

Now, back to what the Mayor said. Putting that to work outside the purely adversarial system, or the legal system, or even if you're not in the adversary system in the sense that you're an advocate in a courtroom, but you're the one drawing up the documents, taking some leadership training so that the good, basic legal training you [00:57:00] have becomes something that translates into day-to-day practicality, I think the Mayor's on to something.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Oh, that's great. Judge Livingston, you looked like you were about to say something.

Judge Lora Livingston: Yeah, a couple of things come to mind. I want to really take sort of two comments and go in two different directions slightly. One is about how law school, I think, has an obligation to inspire its students. I think legal education is where many of us caught the bug, if you will. [00:57:30] We caught the bug about being joiners, joiners into causes that are meaningful, and that do good work.

So law schools, as it seems to me, have a responsibility to inspire in what they teach, how they teach it, and how they help students experience what is possible with a legal education. Whether they become a litigator or a public policy expert or general counsel to a symphony, it doesn't matter. It's the skills and [00:58:00] the learning about how to advance a goal that, I think, is really important. So I want to see law students be inspired by the legal education that they receive.

I also think that law schools have a responsibility to teach by experience and lead by example. I love the Baylor Practice Court because it teaches you litigation skills. But I also love clinical programs in other institutions, for example, that teach policy development, that teach diversity of thought, that [00:58:30] teach how to include and be much more inclusive than some institutions have been in the past in terms of seeking input from various stakeholders.

The problems in the 21st Century are complex. They require a great deal of thought about how to solve some really big problems and some really big issues. We have to have some very difficult conversations. And if you teach us how to have those conversations, [00:59:00] how to not be disagreeable, but how to disagree agreeably, those are the kind of skills. We can debate an issue all day long, and we may not agree, but we must agree to be civil.

So civility is something that I think can be taught at a law school. So leadership training, advocacy skills, policy development, and how you do that, how you include and [00:59:30] not exclude interested parties and important stakeholders, and how to listen, just how to listen is so important to all of these things.

The other thing I would say in kind of response to your earlier question, Judge, was about the things that you get inspired to do in law school education, both in terms of clinics, but also in terms of the entry into bar service. The American Bar Association has a very robust and active law student division. I would encourage people to look into that.

Once you're [01:00:00] admitted to a bar, the bar service provides you incredible information and opportunities, not only for business development but to do some good work. For example, just a few things. Now, you are 18. Know your rights. That pamphlet has been published, republished, photocopied, uploaded, downloaded a million times because it is so relevant. It is so important, and it's so useful to people who are just turning 18. [01:00:30] And that's a production. That's a publication produced by a Young Lawyer division.

Texas Lawyers for Veterans. Texas Lawyers for Veterans, started by Terry Tottenham when he was president of the state bar, has now been replicated in other jurisdictions, in other states. We taught other communities what it was like to set up a program that would provide free legal services to people who are vets, who need [01:01:00] it, can't afford it.

All the work that's being done. There's a program in Kentucky funded by the American Bar Endowment, for example, that purchased something called the Justice Bus. It's a bus, literally, a rolling bus of a law office that travels into rural communities in Kentucky to provide legal services to poor people who can't afford a lawyer and who don't have a legal office anywhere in their vicinity, so the [01:01:30] Justice Bus takes it to them.

We're using technology in new and different ways to reach people. Zoom is just scratching the surface. There are bankruptcy programs because they deal with federal law, somebody in Illinois can help somebody in California. You don't have to walk down the street to get to the lawyer's office to get help. So we're using our talent, our resources, our gifts, our treasure. We're using all of these things as lawyers, things we learn about in law schools, things that law schools [01:02:00] inspire us to do to ultimately do something good for the communities we serve and the communities in which we live.

That's what law school, I think, can do. Those are some of, what I would say, the skillsets and topics that I would love to see on a law school curriculum.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Man, that's great. We really should pass the plate after that. That was really great, great preaching there. And Ms. Harrison, I didn't mean to not give you a chance.

Britney Harrison: [01:02:30] No. No, worries. Just from the Young Lawyer perspective, leadership training is very ... You do need to have it. And it's not always available everywhere. I personally benefited from it because I was in a bigger city, so we had our Austin Young Lawyers, Austin Bar Association, as well as Leadership SBOT.

But I noticed that in some of the smaller, rural communities, they don't necessarily have all those same sources. So this year, we're putting together a leadership toolkit for local affiliates across the state that will include topics such [01:03:00] as racial bias, implicit bias training, things like that, how to have diversity in leadership, how do you start up a defunct affiliate, just different things like that to kind of help others in some of the smaller communities also get those leadership opportunities.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: That's great. I want to encourage you all to think about mentoring. It's one of the things the Judge was talking about is that it's very, very needed. Doctors have it formalized. [01:03:30] We really don't, but we need it. I wanted mentors. I've got a good one when I went to the law firm where I eventually worked and really loved the senior partner. He was great about helping me in a lot of different ways.

You were asking about the dog. I have another dog who's here. Falco sit. Falco sit.

Judge Lora Livingston: Judge?

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Here's Falco.

Judge Lora Livingston: Judge? [01:03:59].

Judge Ed Kinkeade: [01:04:00] Am I muted? No?

Judge Lora Livingston: Judge? [01:04:03].

Judge Ed Kinkeade: I wanted you all to see that's Falco down there, and he goes to hospitals. He's the successor dog to my other dog that died.

Judge Lora Livingston: Judge?

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Yes, yes.

Judge Lora Livingston: I was going to just point we got a couple of questions in the chat that I would love to-

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Oh, no. We're going to address those. I promise.

Judge Lora Livingston: I was going to offer a suggestion and answer to at least a couple of them if that's okay.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Great. Great. You bet. There you go.

Judge Lora Livingston: One with regards to law firms, [01:04:30] I'm going to offer an example of a program that's currently now in its 11th year here in Travis County. The local bar association started something called the Austin Bar Fellowship Program. When I was in law school, it was traditional for the second-year law students to have clerkships and jobs and summer internships in the law firms, and then they would get sort of vetted. And many of them would get offers.

But the first-year students were always sort of scrambling around [01:05:00] about what they were going to do in the summer. This program focuses on first-year students, after their first year of law school, and we place them for five weeks with a judge in our courts, and then five weeks in a law firm. So they split their summer after the summer of first year, and they are spending five weeks working with courts, five weeks working in law firms. The program comes with a stipend, a financial stipend [01:05:30] that is supported by local law firms.

We're now in our 11th year. It's been super successful, and those students get to work, both in the courts, but also in the private practice. From there, they walk through open doors that would have been otherwise closed to them. So that's one example of how law firms can be involved and support, in a very meaningful way, opportunities, especially for first-years. [01:06:00] Obviously, there are other ways that you could tweak that program.

So I would say law firms not only have a responsibility to contribute in that way, but I think also you ought to have policies as a law firm that encourage credit for billable hours when people that are in your firm, your young associates, are doing pro bono work. I think you ought to rethink, right, the pressures that you put on those young associates. I'm not trying to redo your business model, but I am suggesting that you allow credit and opportunities for your [01:06:30] younger associates not only to go with you in some of those important business meetings but

also to help develop programs that give back and do good things in the community. Let them do pro bono. Give them credit for doing it toward their billable hour requirements and so on.

So those are a few things that I think law firms could do. In terms of the burnout, during COVID, we've spent a lot of time trying to revamp the way we do business. We're doing virtual hearings. And whoever heard of that six months ago? We had [01:07:00] to adapt. We had the skills because we're lawyers, and we learned many of those in law school to adapt, but that also becomes an issue for judges, later for lawyers. Everybody's got to have self-care.

So I just want to remind everybody, like they remind over and over on an airplane, put on your yellow mask first before you can help anybody else. If you're not up to par, you can't do any good for anybody else. So self-care, be aware of the possibility of burnout, and guarding against [01:07:30] it is really important. So I think that law schools, law firms, courts, public policymakers, everybody has a responsibility to not only worry about self-care for themselves but also the people that support the work that they do. And law schools are no exception. I would encourage law firms and law schools to be thinking about those things as well. [01:07:53]

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Thanks, Judge. Go ahead.

Senator Kirk Watson: I'd be happy to address another [01:08:00] couple questions that are in the chat room too.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Great, great. Go ahead.

Senator Kirk Watson: Following up on what Judge Livingston has said, we have a couple questions here about if you don't have any experience as a leader, how do you go about doing that? Mayor Deaver talked about taking training and that kind of thing. I want to just mention two or three things.

I think it was you, Judge, who mentioned mentors. I think it's important [01:08:30] if you want to be involved ... I guess lawyers, we're always trained that we want to be first chair. We've got to be the one doing the talking. We got to be the one that's out front. In fact, frankly, if I'm not one talking, probably nothing's being taught, right?

Well, the truth of the matter is that when you get out of law school, you're ready to get at it. You want to get at it. You're champing at the bit, but we need to go find a mentor. Go find an organization [01:09:00] that is doing really well that you like and that you want to learn from or

you want to be a part of, and take time to be a student again. Be mentored. Listen and watch.

The other thing is to actually study a little bit. I know people don't like to talk about that, but there are some really good things to read that you can learn from. You'll find something that fits your personality in terms [01:09:30] of how to go about leadership. But if I were to talk to law schools, one of the things that I would say is you ought to use the opportunity to bring in people that can teach about decision-making, about setting goals.

Too often, the law becomes a binary thing. If it's a piece of litigation, it might be you owe me X. [01:10:00] And the other side says, "I'm only going to pay you Y," and that's all it's about. So you go in, and you creatively fight over just that. The judges get to rule on that issue, so it ends up being a very specific, binary issue. If you're doing contracts, it's all about that agreement and what's going to go into that agreement.

But leadership is not just binary. [01:10:30] By the way, our politics has gotten to where it's way, way, way too binary right now. But teaching in the law school, which is sometimes counter-intuitive for law schools because they think they're teaching you how to just win for your client, but the truth of the matter is that they ought to be teaching decision-making. How do you set goals? What processes do you put into place so that you're making sure you hear from everybody, [01:11:00] even the naysayers and know-it-alls in the group? But you're going to hear from everybody.

Then what you're going to do is take it to the next step, which is how do I make this practical? And you educate on practicality. I want to go back to goals real quick, and you do the goals where they're not just binary choices. One simple declarative sentence may have in it three or four different goals, [01:11:30] but you do that. Then, like I said, you create process, you create practicality, and then you get to a plan, and you teach decision-making on how to put that plan into place.

Law schools have a unique opportunity because you're already teaching the hard skills of leadership: communication, advocacy, mediation, so you've got collaboration involved in that. [01:12:00] You're already teaching those hard skills. Now, take it to the next step, which is how do you teach how to use metrics and data and research to create new constituencies?

Judge Ed Kinkeade: That's all great. When Dean Watson was talking about take the labels off, I think of the piece of legislation that I thought very unique that Senator Tim Scott from South Carolina and Senator [01:12:30] Cory

Booker from New Jersey, very different kinds of politicians, both happen to be African American, but from different political perspectives, came up with what's known as Opportunity Zones.

Now, whether you agree or don't agree, it was a very forward-thinking piece of legislation that has been ... Without the leadership from each of them, it wouldn't have happened. That's so rare today that we all, "Oh, my goodness." [01:13:00] I would encourage law schools to bring in people that reach out, that aren't so insular, that they're the kind of folks that, oh, my goodness, they reach across the aisle. They make friends. They solve these issues because the last thing we need is, "Are you in your corner? Are you in your corner?" We've got enough of that.

That's [01:13:30] what I've seen over and over again by folks that are on this panel. I didn't know how my dad voted until ... And there were people that were from the far left or the far right in our church. I never knew until I was an adult, and we talked about politics all the time. But he was open enough to talk about it from the perspective of we're here to kind of work with everybody, [01:14:00] and I've got to work with everybody.

We don't view life like that, and that's one of the things law schools need to step in. Unfortunately, we're not doing it as well in churches. We're not doing it as well in a lot of other places. And I hate to tell you, law schools, you're going to have to take this up. We put too much on some school. It's just going to have to be done. I think we would encourage more people to be lawyers if we did this.

Senator Kirk Watson: By the way, in Texas now, in [01:14:30] the past, I don't remember how many years, we've changed the oath that lawyers have to take when they become lawyers. We've included in that oath a requirement that you swear you're going to try to be civil. I know about that because I've taken that oath because I was the senator that passed the bill that required it as part of the oath.

It may be one of my [01:15:00] worst pieces of legislation because I hope it's working. But here's what I really think that law schools ought to do. When you're teaching leadership skills, you're going to necessarily have to teach how to not create unnecessary enemies. One of the things that law school ought to be doing is helping create a more civil law practice by teaching people how to be leaders where they don't ... You may need that person the next time, [01:15:30] so you don't want to do it in such a way that they hate your guts.

Well, figure out ways to teach leadership where you don't create unnecessary enemies, and people will ... Like you said about your

daddy, that pastor, even his enemies liked him. Well, you don't want to have enemies if you can avoid them, but when you go to them the next time, and you need them, you hope they'll talk to you. We need to be teaching that in law school as [01:16:00] leadership skills.

Judge Lora Livingston: You learn that lesson very early on when you're a lawyer, particularly if you're a solo practitioner or in a very small law firm. You learn that quickly because you might be archenemies on case A, but on case B, you might be co-counsel. So you can't afford to burn bridges because you have to have relationships with people. After this case is over, we have to have a relationship on the next case.

Down the road, I might even [01:16:30] have to hire you personally because you have an expertise in the area of law that I need to fight my insurance company or whatever. So you can't afford to let these professional fights get in the way of your personal commitment to civility and loving your neighbor. I think those are the kinds of reminders that we can begin to set those seeds to plant while in law school. And as we do continuing education, remind people about [01:17:00] those very important principles.

We're not going to let our professional disagreements get in the way of our personal relationship. And I think not only must you remember that, but you also tell your client that. Any lawyer that is going to let their client dictate who they can have lunch with or who they have a phone call with or whether or not they can agree to a simple continuance as a courtesy to opposing counsel, that is not the way to do business, and that's certainly not the way to live into the creed, the lawyer's [01:17:30] creed or into your professional responsibilities.

I think your point is well taken, Deanator, and I think we should take that to heart in many respects.

Judge Ed Kinkeade: Ms. Harrison, you're a young lawyer. Can you tell us about facing it as a young lawyer?

Britney Harrison: For sure. I was going to answer also one of the questions about why you should get involved in local bar. These are really good reasons why you should because you learn how to work with people outside of work. You're working with them on community service things, kind of finding [01:18:00] common interests. I find, personally, it's harder to be mean to someone for no reason if you know them personally. So I think it helps with the civility to get involved.

But also, in addressing another question, it does benefit you personally and professionally. For me, I was a civil litigator. I didn't do anything

with family law, but I took a pro bono case to kind of learn a little bit more about family law. I wanted to figure out how do I get into family law. I didn't network with any family lawyers because I was in a different part [01:18:30] of the bar.

But because I was involved in the Austin Young Lawyers, I got to meet another family lawyer and kind of start to build a relationship with her, and that's how I got into the field that I'm in now. It's through my bar service, and also just with running for president for TYLA. That's the best business development I could have ever done. I now have contacts all over the state, and so they're like, "Hey, I remember Britney from her campaign. She's a family lawyer up in Dallas, but also takes Austin cases."

So I get cases referred to me from other people just [01:19:00] because I built that relationship with them through the campaign, but also just working with them through public service.

Judge Ed Kinkeade:

Oh, that's great. I want to testify to what both Dean Watson and Judge Livingston said. I had a case. It was a family law case, and my client was very difficult to handle. I don't know about other lawyers. I always thought I was going to represent the good guy. It doesn't always work that way. I represented the outlaw [01:19:30] side a lot.

I guess because my dad was such a good guy, the outlaws wanted to hire me because they thought that would rub off. I don't know. But anyway, my client was very difficult. One day, her husband shows up at my office, not my client, the other side. My secretary didn't know who he was. Puts him in my office, and I go in there. I've been having all kinds of contentious conversations with the lawyer on the other side.

And I said, "That's the client. What are you doing? He's in my office." [01:20:00] So I go in the other office, call that lawyer. He begins to berate me again. I said, "Look, I'll do whatever you want me to do. I'm going to suggest that my secretary hand you the phone in my office," and he leaves. So I called the lawyer later that afternoon. He begins to tell me how terrible I am, and I need to be disbarred, and it's awful. And we're terrible. My client's terrible, some of which was true.

Then he said, "But you did do this the right way." Fast forward, [01:20:30] eventually, we worked that case out, became good friends. Our daughters lived down the hall from each other at Baylor. Don't burn these bridges, and this is a great way to learn that. When my daughter told me that, I said, "You're his daughter?" And I thought, "Thank you, Lord, that I didn't blow that," which I'm sure I did sometimes.

Well, we're getting close to the end of our time, Dean [01:21:00] Teague and Dean Rispoli. Are there comments you all would like to make or questions we haven't addressed, things like that that we needed ... Do I see anything else in our chat?

Kyle Deaver:

There is one question about how young lawyers could get leadership training if they hadn't gotten it so far, and there are programs in most cities that offer that. We have Leadership Waco, and we also have a program called Leadership Plenty that is designed specifically to help train [01:21:30] a diverse group of new leaders for our city. Most communities have that. Check with your local community foundation or other experts in the area, and they'll be able to help you find the right kind of program.

Judge Ed Kinkeade:

That's great. That's great. Those of you that haven't found a pro bono, come work with us with these dogs. We just have expanded to working with ... We just gave two dogs from Irving, both to soldiers, one a Caucasian, one [01:22:00] an African American fella. And a lot of people don't know that dogs can help folks with PTSD unbelievably because they are hypervigilant. Once they get their dog, they're not so afraid that someone in the night's going to stab them. They'll trust the dog when they wouldn't trust other people.

Secondly, the dogs are trained to make room if they're standing in line at Wal-Mart. They don't like being in crowds, folks that have PTSD. [01:22:30] And they move the people. The dog will scoot the people out. I kind of want to take one with me that way when I go to the grocery store, scoot those folks away, make sure they're social distancing.

Well, we want to thank everybody for being here and participating. I want to thank the panelists. They did a fabulous job. You all were just wonderful. I hope I get to be on some other panels with y'all. It [01:23:00] was great, and I will call it Austin from now on, but I had to win that bet. I'm sorry from Tom Nesbitt. So I hope you forgive me, Judge Livingston and Dean Watson.

Mayor, thanks for all you're doing. Look forward to the new bank out there, and I'm sad that Luby's is not going to be open anymore, but they're opening a gas station there. So I'm going to go eat at Luby's tonight, and just as I leave, [01:23:30] turn and say thank you for all the wonderful, good years. Thank y'all.

Leah Teague:

Judge, thank you so much. Judge Livingstone, thank you as well. Britney and Kirk, thank you all so much. It's just been wonderful. I am especially appreciative of the messages to law schools and to law firms about how important these efforts are. Most of us, except maybe

Britney, we went to law school at a time when had no idea of the [01:24:00] leadership opportunities that would be available to us nor the training that we were getting for that, so thank you for helping us spread the word, raise the awareness that as lawyers, we really are leaders, whether we recognize that or not.

So we need to own that obligation, and then to seek out those opportunities to use our skills and our knowledge and our experience for good. So thank you so much.